The Production of Joy:

Joy and the poetry of Yeats, Harwood and Josephi

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Contents

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Abstract

This thesis examines the production of joy in selected poems by W.B.Yeats, Gwen Harwood and Beate Josephi. It is argued that, by undertaking close analyses of key poems and by applying the interdisciplinary perspectives of affect studies, new insights into the poems concerned can be obtained. A basic assumption of the thesis is that the production of joy informs the poems in multiple ways, intersecting with the thematic material and, in certain instances, the social conditions and concerns at the time of writing.

Central to my theoretical approach is the tenet that joy has been variously conceptualized: a brief overview is given in the body of the introduction and in the notes. Until recently, conceptions of joy found theological reflection in the image of joy as a gift bestowed by God upon humans, an idea affirmed in certain poems under study. Additionally, I argue that the poets' understanding of joy and the ways in which it is produced reveals different levels at which joyous experience might take place. Within the poem, metaphysical conceptions of joy are not necessarily applicable, and in the elaboration of the textual space, images and metaphors from the material realm can be appropriated to assist the exploration of new understandings of joy.

Considering this possibility, I argue that recent theories of production and joy can usefully be applied to poetry study. Throughout the study, I use two definitions of joy: contented pleasure and *jouissance*, or quasi-erotic joy. I also refer, however, to recent 'happiness' studies, such as those by Sara Ahmed and David Malouf. While essentially phenomenological, my critical approach may best be called 'nomadic' in the Deleuzian sense, since it incorporates different theoretical touchstones: among these are works by Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Derrida, Paul Ricoeur and Gilles Deleuze. Kristeva's explication of melancholy and joy provides valuable insights into aesthetic, imaginary and fictitious representation within a new and promising 'economy' of production (1989: 24). Although the artistic

process is not the same as the psychoanalytical course aimed at dissolving the patient's symptoms, literary creation in all societies possesses 'a real and imaginary effectiveness' in counteracting depression: 'Literary creation is that adventure of the body and signs that bear witness to the affect – to sadness as an imprint of separation and beginning of the symbol's sway; to joy as an imprint of the triumph that settles me in the universe of artifice and symbol, which I try to harmonize in the best possible way with my experience of reality' (22).

Kristeva's 'economy' of artistic production provides one important touchstone, and Derrida's elaboration of investigative practices is equally promising. Derrida raises similar concerns to those confronting the author, and at least one of his theories is affirmed throughout this thesis: criticism must be 'democratic', that is, open to multiple positions, without becoming simplistic and irresponsible (Derrida 2002: 57). This study also takes heed, however, of Ricoeur's carefully argued, phenomenological critique of Derrida's claim that semantic analysis must necessarily be kept within a 'metaphysically neutral area' (Ricoeur 2003: 341). Meaning begins with the text itself, but its 'dynamic' character unfolds and expands across many discourses (377).

Deleuze' s conception of the arts as a joyously 'disruptive' force provides another springboard for my analyses. A productive and producing machine, the arts' complex, proliferating system invades and is invaded by politics, history, philosophy and culture. Rather than represent the expected view, artists can formulate a resistance to unhelpful ideas, furthering the generation of positive cultural and political potentialities (Deleuze 2007: 328). In brief then, this study is concerned with poetry and the production of joy in the traditional, familiar sense and the production of *jouissance* in potentially 'disruptive' poems. It contributes to several areas of investigation. Most prominent among these are literary criticism, studies of affect, cultural studies and feminist theory.

Introduction

This study is focused on three poets, William Butler Yeats, Gwen Harwood and Beate Josephi, and the different ways in which their poems produce joy. It celebrates joy, and sometimes it questions the hidden power structures behind the production process. Most of all, it focuses on the poems themselves and asks how they work to produce joy, and for whom. The language of poetry conveys and produces feelings, which, as Sara Ahmed contends, have long been a "'sticking point'" for scholars from a whole range of disciplines (2004: 4). This study contributes to research that puts emotion, in this case joy, on the agenda. The Introduction establishes the grounds on which the rest of this study is based. First, I trace a short history of joy. I then explain my choice of poets for this study of joy, briefly acknowledge existing scholarship on these poets, and suggest ways in which my study can contribute to research. References to extant scholarship are further woven into the body of the thesis. Finally, I outline the theories that underpin the thesis, explain the critical approach that I have adopted, and introduce the chapter themes.

Joy and *production* are conceptually loaded terms, and the ways in which joy might or might not be produced have challenged writers, theologians, philosophers and, more recently, psychiatrists and sociologists. Yet, from Aristotle to the present, as David Malouf asserts in a recent essay, forms of affect such as joy and happiness have always carried rich histories with them (2011: 19). This section will deal briefly with joy's history and outline the relevance of the shifting meanings of joy for this study. First, the scholarly neglect of 'affect' studies dates back to a time when mental processes were 'worth more' than emotional states (Ahmed 2010: 12). In Ancient Greece, a philosopher such as Socrates might have been said to lead a 'happy' life rather than a joyous one, because joy or *eudaimonia* supposedly disrupted mental serenity and virtuous behaviour (Malouf 23). The 'good' Daimon bore humans towards divinity, and its shadow led people astray; thus *eudaimonia* had a fiendish, capricious quality that could quickly

turn to sorrow (McMahon, Darrin 2006: 4). Mastery of the emotions became part of an enduring discourse, and my study touches frequently on the nexus between joy, anxiety and mastery.

The noun 'joy' originates from the Latin *guardium,* a word used by the Roman stoics to describe a tranquil, inner state of mind: *laetitia*, by contrast, as Adam Potkay indicates, denoted excessive – even irrational – joy that threatened to burst from the body (2007: 5). Both contented joy and exuberant, quasi-erotic joy are of interest to this study. 'Joy' entered Middle English, according to the Oxford Dictionary online, from Provençal *langue d'Oc* (*joia*) and from Old French (*joie*). Details of joy's long 'story' are given in Potkay's *The Story of Joy* (2007).[1] Potkay notes that in French *joie* retains an erotic connotation, perhaps because for the troubadours 'joy' denoted sexual favours (x). Indeed, in seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century English, the plural 'joys' denoted 'sexual pleasures', although this is no longer so (5). In twelfth-century poetry, 'joy' was often tinged with woe, because the desired woman to whom the poem was addressed was unavailable. 'Joy' connoted the longing to become 'lost' in the other, from whence arose the 'debilitating desire' of the *Liebestod* (Potkay 2007: 62). As the chapter "Joy and Desire" shows, all three poets take up this theme. St Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) privileged Christian joy among the passions, because its presence signified that evil was avoided and 'a good' obtained.

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1. The following works further illuminate, at greater length than I am able to give here, the ways in which joy has been represented. Andrew Dalby (2006) elaborates joy in the Dionysian cults and in the songs of Sappho. Walter Otto (1965) discusses the imbrication of joy with madness and death in *The Iliad*. In the fifth century CE, Nonnus of Panopolis in the *Dionysiaca* Book 8 (1940, trans. W.H.D. Rouse) describes women's joy, eroticism and fury, and the winding dance that gives expression to these intense feelings. With mimesis in mind, however, Stephen Halliwell (1986) describes the gap that is opened between language and a direct experience of joy. Writing about Aristotle and Epicurus, Peter Quennell (1990) distinguishes different kinds of joy: *hedone; eudaemonia; ataraxia,* and *epicharma.* Immanuel Kant (1996, trans. Allen Wood) discusses joy as a product of human agency, and Adam Potkay (2006) in his work on Spenser and Donne exposes the interaction between joy and power in the Protestant church. Books 11 and 13 of *The Prelude* by William Wordsworth foreground the new concept of joy that was being formed after the French Revolution, and Stephen Gill (1967) elaborates Wordsworth's 'Never Failing Principle of Joy'. Graham Hough in his analysis of William Blake and W.B.Yeats reaches the conclusion that these poets offer 'no serene assurance' (1961: 256). By contrast, Kate Rigby discusses 'Romantic' joy, Rilke, Heidegger, Derrida, Bonnefoy and Chrétien in the context of a 'resacralization' of the earth (2004: 12). In a similar vein, David Tacey (2003) elucidates a new consciousness of the joy of the great in the small (63); optimism brings with it an added sense of social responsibility (78, 147, 156). For Luc Ferry (2005), however, joy has new and evolving meanings for today's consumer-driven society. And John McClure evaluates recent 'postsecular' literature and uncovers the joys of 'neomonastic' communities and the 'emphatically positive images of open dwelling' (2007: 196).

Yet Daniel Gross highlights the history of inequality, and thus the political 'structure', behind joy. Referring to John Donne's *Religious Sonnets* (1609), Gross contends that religious language promoted the adoption of 'feminine passivity' as a necessity for entering a relationship with God-the-bridegroom (2006: 94). Passivity as an ethos, he argues, became a 'second nature', and 'second nature' was woman. Harwood, in particular, grapples with this identification in her poetry, and Yeats's poetry and his prose work *A Vision* are informed by it.

For Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677), joy was the 'elemental' affect upon which all others were built: motivated by joy, human beings could strive for self-improvement (Potkay 2007: 12). The significance of motivation or will, and its annexation to joy, will be taken up shortly. By the eighteenth century, joy had become 'associated with evaluations and beliefs about the good that may become consciously held and articulated' (8). In other words, joy could now claim a psychological and cultural 'history' embedded in language. Joy could be taken in virtue, art, community, personal glory, another's failure, or indeed in a power higher than the self. As a 'gift from above', joy supposedly appeared unexpectedly to the receiver, much as food might arrive before a hungry infant, as if from nowhere (12). The appropriate human response was gratitude. The idea of poems as acts of thanks or praise, and the relationship between giver and receiver, is taken up frequently in this study.

While 'joy' still connotes suddenness and surprise, according to Malouf, humans believe they have a right to a 'happy life', that is, to an enduring feeling of happiness (11). Malouf contends that the meaning of 'happiness' evolved in this direction when Thomas Jefferson reworked the Virginian Constitution to write his Declaration of Independence. While the Constitution promoted the right to ownership – 'happiness' previously connoted 'fortune' or material wealth – Jefferson brought to the fore the human right to pursue happiness in and for itself (10). For the Romantics, however, joy remained elusive: only earlier civilizations knew joy (McMahon 293). Coleridge revived the idea of joy as an aesthetic experience, and other poets strove to make this possibility the subject of their own work.

Like Wordsworth in the *Prelude*, Yeats represented joy as a feeling of 'being-in-nature', a joy felt acutely at a time when vast tracts of farmland were being taken over by industry as towns expanded (Potkay 2007: 121). Twentieth century philosophers had already put aside the Christian promise of redemption, but Yeats adopted the idea from Blake and Shelley (194), and developed a new, joyously redemptive story from myth, ideas about the liberation of the body, and the discourse of forgiveness. Onto this narrative Yeats grafted the idea of 'tragic' joy, which accommodated the notion that destruction as well as creation might be joyous: the two succeeded each other in endless cycles. This possibility is taken up in the penultimate chapter. Potkay traces Yeats's 'tragic' joy back to Aristotle's *Poetics* and its moral message about how life should be lived.

Yet my study of Yeats's poetry also reveals the hierarchies at work behind the production of joy. Indeed, from Plato's time onwards, through the middle ages and the *Renaissance*, one's happiness (if not joy) was dependent on the justice of a fair and benevolent aristocracy. Romantic poets, such as Wordsworth and Keats located joy in quiet, remote places, but these locations were in reality inhabited by peasant labourers and their crops or herds. A life that seemed joyous under the gaze of the upper and leisured classes was not, of course, necessarily joyous for impoverished workers. Indeed, the term 'joy' was sullied when the Nazi and Soviet empires yoked 'joy' with 'labour' in a discourse of brutal exploitation (Potkay 2007: 220). McMahon elaborates the unscrupulous misappropriation of Nietzsche's narrative of the "'blond beast of prey'" and its return to the wild (2006: 436). Well before Freud, McMahon contends, Nietzsche was urging humans to integrate the animal self, to 'sublimate' the base instincts, and to strive towards higher purposes that would lead to greater and more lasting happiness (437). Freud took up this idea, grounded in Darwin's theory of evolution, but suggested that, from the first struggle between parent and child, humans experienced tragedy rather than joy (441).

In their introduction to *Loss*, David Eng and David Kazanjian describe the twentieth century as marked by catastrophic losses: transformative 'practices' that confront loss and its 'remains' are productive for history and

politics (2003: 5). My study reveals the productive possibilities of loss in poetry, which brings together imagination, feeling and art to make possible the transformation of pain into acceptance, if not joy. Today, 'joy' is a commodity that sells product, and its history seems largely forgotten. Yet 'joy' continues to be surrounded by a penumbra of political connotations. Through new technologies that deliver rapid – even virtual – travel and computer gaming, suddenness and change have become the source of euphoria, and a new meaning for 'living happily' has emerged (Malouf 25). It seems then that the meanings of happiness and joy continue to shift and change, a process that is addressed in this study.

Yeats, Harwood, Josephi

The triangulation of three, very different, poets for the first time adds complexity to a project that is already complex. Each poet represents joy differently and their poems embed different strategies that produce joy. The 'layering' of these differences, however, allows the elaboration of the process that is at the core of the project. Why these three poets? Beate Josephi is a minor poet, bilingual academic and frequent traveller who writes and teaches in Western Australia and Germany. When I first read her work in the collection *Four New Poets* (1993), I heard echoes that appealed to my own 'nomadic' sensibilities, explained shortly in the section on critical approach. Josephi wrote most of the poems at an intense, politically uncertain time: the 'new', united Germany was being euphorically celebrated as the Germans, in particular the Germans of the former GDR, struggled to reconceptualize 'homeland'. Josephi could have chosen to write celebratory poems, or poems of loss, but rather than take the nostalgic route, Josephi wrote poems that might be described as 'productive': such works question the power of 'fleeting' images to create permanency, and promote reflection on loss from the perspective of how the 'remains' of loss might be productive for the future (Eng and Kajanzian 2002: 5 - 6).

There are some fine poems by Josephi in *Four New Poets*. The collection, and Josephi's work within it, was generally well received by the critics. Here was a bargain book, four poets for the price of one.

Unfortunately, the same economic rationale was applied to the space accorded to the reviews of individual work, and Josephi's poems received scant attention, a few paragraphs at most. Graham Rowland rightly praised Josephi's 'range of German-Australian experiences' and her 'even more impressive range of perspectives' (1994: 84). My analyses will tease out the relationship between 'experiences' and 'perspectives' that affect the ways in which poems by Josephi produce joy. Lyn McCredden described the 'fairly unified persona' behind Josephi's poems as a 'romantic wanderer, caught between cultures', a 'perpetually disenchanted figure' longing for 'somewhere better' (1993: 2). Language, McCredden speculated, might be the source of this 'uneasy state', the reason that the speaker could never fully let go and rejoice. My readings explore the tension that Josephi creates between a murky political present (or presence) and the elusive, redemptive possibilities offered by narratives, from Greek myth via the Brothers Grimm to stories of the 'American dream'. 'Berlin' operates as a real and paradigmatic space, where some dreams of joy come true and others falter. David Gilbey contends that Josephi's poems have a 'lightness' which at times seems 'romantic': 'one is left feeling the poet is more of a tourist than an explorer' (1994: 93). I argue that in Josephi's poems the (ethical) tourist occupies a privileged place, as a 'nomad' rather than a colonizer. Josephi's postcolonial travellers constantly interrogate the world and its cultural and political representations: indeed, Josephi herself is now better known for her contributions to research in the fields of global media, freedom of the press and journalism. The speaker of "Vineleaves" enquires if what we "hear" is true. What 'baggage' does the traveller carry? How is she affected by, and how does she affect, her surroundings? Is it possible to know a place and its people, and, if so, how would one's knowledge be constituted? Jan Owen's thoughtful readings commend Josephi's 'seriousness' and the 'honesty' of her 'quest' for meaning: humour, she contends, might throw into relief the important questions Josephi raises. Josephi's joys are often small rather than ecstatic, and her work is included here because it illuminates shifts in the way in which joy is represented and produced in recent poetry. Thus Josephi appears alongside the major Anglo-Irish poet,

William Butler Yeats (1865 - 1939) – no stranger to political and social (re)presentation – and the well known Australian poet, Gwen Harwood (1920 – 1995).

Harwood led an uncomplicated childhood, which Alison Hoddinott describes as casting a 'Wordsworthian' glow over the pattern of events in her life (1991: 1). Yet Harwood's 'easily accessible' life experience contrasted dramatically with the 'uncommon' range of her reading (172). The poet married an academic, Bill Harwood, and their move to Tasmania entailed the loss of the place she loved: Brisbane. The couple raised their family in Ferntree and then Oyster Cove, twenty-six kilometres from the state capital. Many Harwood poems celebrate the beauty of the local landscape: yet poems of loss mourn the Indigenous deaths for which Oyster Cove is infamous. Harwood continued to read widely, and she maintained lively relationships with artists, writers and musicians. Jennifer Strauss lists Harwood's European influences as Donne, Tennyson, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Hölderlin, Heine, and musicians such as Schubert and Beethoven (1996: 7). There were local influences too: among these were poets Dorothy Hewett, Vivian Smith and A.D. Hope, artists such as Edwin Tanner and Vera Cottew, and musicians Rex Hobcroft and Jan Sedivka. Often Harwood appropriated the structures, metaphors and rhythms of the poets, artists and musicians she enjoyed. Some poems challenge and transgress the social, political and educational limitations of small town Australia, and Harwood takes every opportunity to laugh at the pompousness of the society in which she sees herself as an insider and an outsider: a fortunate wife, mother, artist and observer. With a magpie eye, she accumulates and arranges 'happy' scraps – of information, things and memories – which bring delight into ordinary life. Harwood's letters to editors, artists and friends, including her great friend Thomas (Tony) Riddell, are lively, witty, opinionated and often joyous. Indeed, Elizabeth Lawson opens her critical study by stating Harwood's desire that her poems be read as "'objects of delight'" rather than as "'objects of study'" (1991: 1).

Harwood critics such as Norman Talbot (1987), Susan Schwartz (1996) and Rose Lucas (2005), read her poems through the lens of psychology, and

Harwood's 'sub-personalities' are the subject of Cassandra Atherton's engaging *Flashing Eyes and Floating Hair* (2006). My study uses psychoanalysis, alongside other approaches, to explore the privileging of joy over melancholy in Harwood's poems. Alison Hoddinott, a friend and critic of Harwood and a former student of Bill Harwood, bases her study on a close knowledge of Gwen's preoccupations. Harwood preferred Blake to Wordsworth, she contends: her poetry, especially poems about youth, brings the 'darker impulses' of human and non-human nature to the fore, so that mortality is privileged over immortality (Hoddinott 1991: 7). Art provides a beguiling, permanent presence which combats the mortal process that inevitably entails love and loss.

Hoddinott cites Blake's perception of humankind, "'made for Joy and Woe'", alongside the Keatsian opposition of beauty and melancholy, to support her claim that love and grief drive Harwood's poetry (1991: 9-10). Harwood's admiration for German music, philosophy and language guided her philosophy that thought takes a different 'shape' when the language changes, an idea familiar to Josephi. Harwood was intrigued by Wittgenstein's logical positivism and Heidegger's phenomenology because they focused on the capacity of language to grasp the world with intuitive clarity, and to represent it in language "'untranslatable'" (Hoddinott 113). For Jennifer Strauss, the range of Harwood's own poetic language crosses many boundaries as it establishes and problematizes different elements in an effort to harmonize the 'romantic/modernist ideal of the integrated self' (1996: 55). In her attachment to certain themes, Harwood 'follows in the tradition of such latter-day Romantics as Yeats' (32), and like Yeats she is interested in the 'big questions' rather than easy answers (35). Reading Harwood against Yeats in this study reveals the differences and similarities between their constructions of joy.

Strauss further describes 'the Biblical affinities' of the language Harwood uses, particularly when the subject is coming to terms with what it means to be "'known'" (4). 'Illumination' strikes when one senses recognition, and even a moment of terror can be transformed by poetry into 'an occasion of something like joy' (53). In line with Strauss, my readings focus on the way

Harwood constructs her poems as joyous 'occasions'. There are echoes in Harwood of Yeats's glimpses of eternity, divinity and the silence at the end of language, as well as his affirmation of the potency of human emotions: the creative experience that changes pain into song originates in the heart (Strauss 41). Yet feelings and the 'ultimate experiences' of pain, love and death are hard to capture in language, which must grapple with different ways of knowing (Hoddinott: 196). Through detailed analyses, I explore the production of joy within Harwood's complex poetic orchestrations, where the ways in which other poets represent joy and suffering are often the source of irony or malicious glee. My analyses of Harwood's later poems show how she promotes the attainment of simple joys over 'the romantic quest for the unattainable' that Hoddinott describes (152).

The production of joy from the feminine perspective, in poems connected with intimacy and personal interaction, is a rich subject for critical scrutiny. Do poems engage with the power struggle between the sexes, and/or exceed hierarchical and phallocentric limitations to generate joy? (Boyne, Roy 1990: 141). Does the language of the poems under study reveal joy as captive of an inescapable metaphysics dominated by the male presence? Yeats's 'presence' and the way it affects the production of joy comes into focus here. His influential personal and political profile is thoroughly documented elsewhere, and in later chapters I refer to the biographies of Brenda Maddox (1999) and Roy Foster (1997; 2003). The following section only briefly outlines Yeats's eclectic artistic, social and political interests.

Yeats was a poet who lived 'several lifetimes in one', according to Richard Ellmann. Ellmann traces the poet's development from the 'nervous romantic' with a fascination for the occult into the consummate businessman, statesman and craftsman with a presence that was 'inseparable from that of modern verse and, to some extent, of modern man' (1961: 1). Yeats resolutely 'fought through his weaknesses' to become a 'hero' of literature, who refused 'any orthodoxy, even an artistic one' (6). Refusal began with the rejection of his father's religion and of the moralistic stance favoured by Romantic poets such as Goethe, and Ellmann quotes an

early letter from Yeats to Dowden (31.12.1869) in which Yeats states his intent: to '"obey no voice except that of emotion, but I would have a man know all emotions (and) to have all these roused to their utmost strength'" (1961: 15). Yeats's passionate voice is the principal reason for his inclusion in this study of affect, but it is impossible to overlook Yeats's politics. Nicholas Miller (2002) proposes that the poet's 'recognition of a powerful authority exerting its might' was influenced by Immanuel Kant's philosophy and by Edmund Burke's concept of politics and the positive sublime (3), where the sublime moment is 'derived from terror' (16). Miller contends nevertheless that the poet's overwhelming desire was for peace and order, which Yeats dreamed of finding in the Golden Dawn, the aristocratic circle of Coole Park and the Byzantine era, when artistic practice furthered the reconciliation of knowledge, wisdom and love (5). The 'strength' of Yeats's poems, according to Miller, derives from 'the tension between the negative and positive sublime, between terror and joy' (4). My analyses draw out Yeats's 'strong', or affecting, constructions of 'tragic joy' and his constant reworking of tragic narratives. That Yeats translated the Upanishads, which influenced his later poetry, is important to my study of joy.

Although Yeats might seem the 'odd poet out', his inclusion is important. Yeats's oeuvre is chosen by Charles Altieri (1991) to exemplify a body of work that creates intense 'affective states' that expand subjectivity and open readers up to other lives, experiences and imaginative possibilities. Citing Theodor Adorno's notion of intensity, Altieri describes how Yeats enhances affect: even poems about painful experiences produce a feeling of vitality, and readers are drawn into a complex, extended past and its multiple agencies (187 - 188). Mere description cannot 'translate' this movement of expansion, but a poet such as Yeats not only grasps the idea of intense experience, but also constructs poems that provide a 'concrete articulation' for the affective process itself (Altieri 191). What Altieri calls 'increased intensity' allows for an imaginative response to history as it is, 'as if it were a challenge rather than a sentence': the song that calls for the listeners' participation seizes control (193). I investigate this idea when I analyse the production of joy in Yeats's 'intense' political poems. Harwood's poems

achieve a similar, joyous intensity, but they are more likely to be driven by love.

Seamus Heaney, in concert with Altieri, claims that Yeats's turbulent verses work to 'dramatize' human vulnerability, awe and bewilderment. Yet the aural, rhythmic and rhetorical shifts of his 'dramatic' poems create a paradoxical sense of optimism, order and energy: despite their mortal themes, Yeats's poems tend to be 'exultant' rather than melancholic (Heaney 5). The poet's determination to establish the 'value' of a particular way of living in and viewing the world (14) is balanced by the 'defiant vigour' of the poetry (17). My close readings explore the technical brilliance of Yeats's careful constructions of joy, and at some points interrogate the poet's totalizing vision of the world. Joy is in the eye of the beholder, and a study of Yeats's 'intensities' needs to take into account a theoretical 'enterprise' that honours the rights, claims, independence and interdependence of all beings (Altieri 193). A feminist reading, for example, might deal with the challenges of theorizing 'intensities of feeling' and 'emotional attachments' (Liljeström, Marianne & Susanna Paasonen 2010: 1). Such a reading, states Anu Koivunen, focuses on experiences, ethics and the reproduction of knowledge, and situates joy within a body of scholarly research that strives to 'renegotiate' the possibilities of feminist thinking (in Liljeström & Paasonen eds. 2010: 1).

My approach, elucidated below, focuses more often on Yeats's words than his world, but it promotes a fluidity of movement across various theorizing positions and allows for an interrogation of Yeats's 'cultural politics', as Sara Ahmed might put it. As Ahmed contends, emotions are relational, and thus the sense of self and others is shaped by 'contact' (2004: 8). In this study, the poems by three different poets provide 'points of contact': sometimes the poems sit easily together, and sometimes they rub against each other. The movement between the works of three very different poets permits a certain flow of 'contacts' and furthers the potential for a proliferation of joy.

Critical approach

My central tenet is that the heartfelt language of poetry makes possible multiple openings to joy. Phenomenology is an important critical touchstone, for it begins with the manifestation of emotion in a meaningful world. In Martin Heidegger's words, poetry calls things and people into being: it 'bids them come' and binds them together in a relationship (2001: 197). At the same time as it calls for an 'unfolding' of the world, however, poetry lets things be as they are. Citing the German Romantic poet Hölderlin, Heidegger contends that dwelling 'poetically' must entail heartfelt caring (226 – 227), an idea central to the chapter "Joy and Nature". More problematic, however, is Heidegger's idea of God as 'the measure' of man (220), and of history as 'the transporting of a people into its appointed task' (74). Heidegger is referring to history in terms of the great aesthetic 'thrusts' or 'leaps' that have propelled western culture forward, for example in Ancient Greece and during the Middle Ages. In the light of real events, however, Heidegger's language 'remembers' that joy for one group often means suffering for many others.

The adoption of a 'singular' view in a study of emotion is undesirable (David & Kazanjian 2003: 1). The phenomenological framework needs to expand to include different approaches and the detailed analyses of very different poems. Ricoeur notes 'in passing' that phenomenology deals with many of the difficulties posed by existential, structuralist and psychoanalytical philosophies (2008: 376 -381). Yet in the Appendix to *The Rule of Metaphor*, he goes further to suggest the possibility of 'grafting' one theoretical approach onto another. My 'graftings' may be described metaphorically as 'nomadic' to suggest the experimental shifting between philosophical perspectives that occurs in this study. A 'nomadic' approach seeks to escape the 'despotic' elements of fixed systems, to rejoice in intensity, to liberate meaning and to provide a site where fascist, bourgeois and revolutionary forces confront each other (Deleuze 2007: 256). The way each element functions in this 'nomadic' approach is set out below.

First, feelings deserve to be the subject of critical investigation (Colebrook 2008: 83). Claire Colebrook agrees with Sianne Ngai, who states

that it is important, particularly in an 'increasingly anti-utopian and functionally differentiated society', to recuperate affects for their '*critical* productivity' (2005: 3). This is one of the imperatives taken up in this thesis. I argue, in line with Ngai, that it is possible to use joy to 'read across' different literary and historical periods in a 'fluid' way (Ngai 7). My study takes into account the warning that Lauren Berlant (2008) and Lynne Pearce (2010) put forward against reading 'for' hope and optimism. It responds, however, to Eng and Kajanjian's conceptualization of the productive power of loss and its 'remains' (2003: ix). After Judith Butler, I argue that melancholy and loss can turn out to be 'oddly fecund' and 'paradoxically productive' (in Eng & Kazanjian eds. 468). Indeed, certain poems produce joy from mourning.

This study does not attempt to 'kill joy', as Ahmed puts it, in order to present joy as a 'problem': it does, however, seek out who or what joy 'gets associated with' (2010: 14). Pearce is right, of course, when she insists that readers are most likely to seek that which is valued by their own histories, for not only words carry their histories with them. My history affects my interest, which guides my selection of poets, analytical methods and critical theories. My 'nomadic' approach derives from Gilles Deleuze, as he is read by feminist critics such as Claire Colebrook and Rosi Braidotti. In particular, this kind of approach affirms critical writing practices that are propelled by a 'joyful nomadic force' (Braidotti 1994: 9). My own affinity with 'nomadism' began early. The youngest child, but the first born in suburban Sydney to parents who had to leave their beloved country when war erupted, I chose to study languages, cultures, politics and literatures that were not 'mine' by birth. I gave up my place in a prestigious institution for a different university that offered accelerated immersion courses, which enabled me to justify to myself the adoption of 'Europeanness' as an alternative to British colonialism. The books I continued to devour revealed, however, that my distant, democratic Utopia did not exist: instead, philosophers were clearly grappling with repetition and struggling to find new ways to approach old problems.

Nostalgia, as Braidotti writes, often drives people who live in multicultural environments and/or speak several languages to cling to frozen ideas (and ideals) of 'home'. Berlant describes similar 'promises' – and the attachment that people feel towards them – as 'cruel hope', because the recuperation of the lost object is forever impossible (2008: 33). By contrast, 'nomadic' openness to change, theorized by Deleuze and adapted by feminist critics, refuses any 'sovereign' vision: forever on the move, 'nomads' survey life with 'critical distance' and maintain a healthy scepticism about the formation of identities (Braidotti 1994: 12-13). Braidotti, who took Deleuze's courses alongside many other foreigners, finds that 'nomadic' theory lends itself to the 'transnational' economy in which we live (8; 10; 16). It opens up 'new possibilities for life and thought', which generate new 'figures of speech' and new aesthetic dimensions that turn thinking towards freedom, liveliness and beauty.

For Ahmed, emotions work 'to align bodily space with social space' (2004: 69). If fear, as she suggests, contracts the space, then joy opens it up. Openness to multiple possibilities in this study allows for the coexistence of different theories of joy and the ways it is produced and represented. The formal components are the thesis structure, academic language and detailed analyses. Certain elements of Derrida's theory of deconstruction, for example, enable the poems to be opened up in a useful way. It is essential to read and reread the chosen poems, to engage with texts read by the poets under study, to use language appropriate to critical enquiry, and to respect the integrity of both text and author (2002: 24 - 27). One can never 'get into the writer's head' ('*on n'est jamais … dans sa tête'* 33). Clearly, the formal elements of the thesis limit the kind of free proliferation that Deleuze and Guattari had in mind when they conceived of production and language as 'flows' formed by a 'criss-crossing of desires' (2004: 267). But friction can be highly productive. This study takes account of the different cultures, ideologies, times and places of writing as well as the three poets' experiences and ideas. It suggests – in line with Deleuze – that there are always 'lines of escape' by which language 'flows' exceed the

limitations imposed upon them (2004: 268). Poems, for example, can be understood as multiple conduits through which joy continues to escape.

In a joint interview with Guattari, Deleuze claims that few individuals rebel against social agencies' 'all-purpose' (Oedipal) schemas (2004: 273). In society, therefore, the number of repressive social agencies continues to proliferate. Understandably, joy might be conceptualized differently in poems that affirm or subvert political 'order'. Both positions are taken into consideration in this thesis. The three poets concerned are, in the case of Josephi, or were (Yeats and Harwood), visible and active in their communities. Their life experiences are reflected in their letters and prose, and revealed to some extent in their poems, whose language brings together the poet's experience, skill and imagination. The poetic space allows the interrelation between the poets' apprehensions of joy, their social world and their changing audiences, who bring their own ideas and experiences into play. Where prose writings elucidate a particular poem, they are sometimes drawn upon, but the language of the poems remains the primary focus.

This study also takes heed of Ricoeur's argument against Derrida's tenet that semantic analysis must remain 'metaphysically neutral' (2003: 341). Ricoeur contests the claim by Ludwig Wittgenstein that language games are 'radically heterogeneous' in nature (349), with each particular 'game' governed by its own rules and pertinent to only one kind of human activity or transaction. It is important to acknowledge that the 'dynamic' character of meaning combines in the work at hand with the 'semantic aim seeking to fulfil its intention' (54). Indeed, meaning is made at several levels: the 'objective' meaning of the text, for example, is distinct from the intention of the author. An overlap inevitably occurs between the world of the text and the reader who 'appropriates' the text in order to make meaning from it: the discourse of interpretation and the text also overlap (378-379). At all levels, interpretation begins with an 'injunction' originating from the text itself (377).

Poems solicit engagement and reflection, writes Umberto Eco, and poetry readers are asked to confront 'the ambiguities of language and of

real life' (2006: 4). Whether caught up in or carried beyond the immediate concerns as they are represented in the poem, readers are offered multiple opportunities to reflect on joy and how it is produced, inscribed and felt. Rather than enclose the poets and poems within one limiting frame of theoretical and methodological enquiry, I examine the production of joy with a view to the multiple possibilities each poem offers. My conceptualization of poems as dynamic, evolving entities aims to educe the idea of successive layers of meaning that contribute to a richer understanding of poetry and the production of joy.

My juxtaposition of *joy* and *production* resonates with Kristeva's 'economic' model, based on Sigmund Freud's discovery of the economic 'motive' behind the pursuit of pleasure (see Anna Freud ed. 2005: 224). When children accompany play with language, Freud found, they begin to exert the mastery that they admire in adults. Adults continue to play artistic 'games' which, while not sparing the spectators pain, also 'have a yield of pleasure as their final outcome' (227). Freud describes 'erotic joy' as a paradoxical phenomenon – 'unpleasurable tension' is accompanied by a 'feeling of pleasure' (346) – and he links the production of erotic joy with the production of language, an idea crucial to the study of poetry and *jouissance*. Gilles Deleuze elucidates the idea of the arts as a productive and producing machine with multiple roots in politics, history, philosophy and culture: artists, rather than represent the expected view, can formulate a resistance to unhelpful ideas and further the generation of new cultural and political potentialities (2007: 328).

After Deleuze, this study argues that 'disruptive' poetry can produce joy, through content, metaphor and structure, in a way that challenges previously accepted views. Roland Barthes (1973) suggests that the act of writing itself produces joy when writers, drawing from the vast realm of words at their disposal, set out to seduce their potential readers (17). This idea is hard to substantiate without clinical access to a sample population of readers. However, Barthes's idea, that affirmative and subversive works can be productive of joy (87), is useful for the purposes of this study, which suggests that the dynamic, evolving and optimistic poetry of *jouissance*

allows an understanding of truths and fictions as neither simple nor self-evident but complex and continually expanding. To affirm this core idea of expansion, my critical approach crosses different temporal, philosophical and cultural thresholds to bring together language, affect, and sensitivity to social and cultural contexts. The poems themselves remain at the centre.

Thesis plan

As outlined above, my aim in this thesis is to examine the production of joy in poems, which, as dynamic entities, continue to open and unfold. This perspective encompasses the world of text along with the three poets' physical, social and mystical experiences of joy as reflected in the language of their poetry. Thus I have arranged the thesis in a thematic way that mirrors the unfolding process. Chapter One engages with the idea that two different kinds of joy, namely contented pleasure and *jouissance*, are produced in text. It asks how the poets use existing texts to produce joy in their own poetry and examines what joy is 'associated with', as Ahmed puts it (2010: 14). André LaCoque and Paul Ricoeur, for example, claim that joyous poetry escapes censorship and assures humankind of renewal, a theme which is revisited in the final chapter. Joy, as Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva contend, is a revolutionary force that challenges accepted boundaries. Each of these possibilities provides an entry point into the elaboration of the chosen poems. It is argued that key poems show how joy is produced to affirm or subvert the organizations of power that attempt to repress human agency.

Chapter Two examines the production of joy in poems about interactions with the natural world. It engages with critiques of humankind's self-projection onto nature and the dilemmas arising when nature is represented in poetry, particularly when joy is viewed as an expression of divine power. Ethical considerations arise when poems further an endorsement of the idea that nature's purpose is to produce joy for humankind. It is suggested that key poems by Yeats affirm this traditional concept, while other poems under

study here interrogate the relationship between human and non-human nature. Certain poems about the representation of nature as a cultural construct reveal the poet's concern for the importation of European culture and the loss of Australia's native species. Joyful poems affirm shared interactions between human beings and nature, while others question the power balance in 'new' Australia.

The production of joy within poems of feminine desiring is the focus of Chapter Three. Here, a range of theories provides a multifaceted lens through which the poetry of Harwood and Josephi can be examined. Lacan, in a chapter on Freud's castration complex, reflects on the production of desire in the gaps between the presence and absence of the desired other (1977: 281-291). Kristeva contends that artistic expression allows joy to be recorded as a triumph over the melancholy of loss (1989: 24). Michel Foucault recognizes that the desires of marginalized groups must be heard; Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray challenge the dominance of the male presence in literature, and the women's movement establishes deep links between 'the global and the personal, the political and the cultural' (Eagleton, Terry 2004: 45). Deleuze tears down Freud's familial superstructure based on lack and castration and proposes 'a positive conception of desire: a desire that produces, not a desire that is lacking' (2004: 223). Taking up Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, Terry Threadgold contends that histories can be challenged and changed by re-writing and renegotiating 'the multiple positions which have interpolated the body' (1997: 101). Present in all transactions, continually erupting and proliferating, desire can be incorporated using new writing practices, such as *bricolage,* which allow experimental expressions of desire. Such celebrations of production and invention privilege multiple desires over the death drive at the heart of Freudian theory. The poetry of Harwood and Josephi is thus read against changing, complex, and potentially joyous, constructions of feminine desiring.

Chapter Four acknowledges Foucault's seminal studies of the asylum and state power structures. The Freudian tendency to deploy binary

thinking makes it difficult to conceptualize madness as an alternative way of being that contributes to the writing of fantasy. Poetry, I argue, provides a vehicle for the expression of 'delirious' joy, with the ruptures of rhythm and syntax producing the *frisson* or shock that approximates pleasure. Certain poems question the power structures that alienate 'mad' people, and explore the nexus between madness, heroism and joyful creativity. What Deleuze might call an 'act of resistance' propels the crazed hero beyond melancholy to the point of exultation. The archetypal hero for Foucault is Nietzsche, and in "Nietzsche's Last Trainride" Josephi uses direct quotations to reveal the 'mad' philosopher's joyous triumph over suffering. Writing in delirious voices allows Harwood to mock not only unimaginative individuals but also the confessional genre of poetry. Harwood's male and female characters experience madness differently, as productive of joy or melancholy. For Yeats's ecstatic dancers, warring heroes and crazed old men, madness provides a joyous foretaste of the future.

All three poets inscribe the tension between human beings' desire to dwell in a familiar place and their longing for escape. Thus the fifth chapter explores the production of joy in poems about travel. Exploration and conquest bring joy to the winners and terror to the disenfranchized (Foucault: 1973; Said: 1993; LaCoque: 1998). Each poet reveals the challenges of belonging, colonization and re-territorialization. In "Ithaca", Josephi chooses to appropriate an existing poem, thereby engaging in a dialogue with established literary discourses about travel. Joy and terror drive Yeats's poems dealing with confrontations at the edge of familiar experience. For Harwood, to leave home and family means facing the indifference of the universe. Since all life is bound by death, escape is illusory and Harwood's poems celebrate the beauty of the here and now.

Poetry provides a space in which human drama can be confronted and transformed to joy. The penultimate chapter, while retaining the focus on language, investigates rebirth in poems by Yeats and Harwood. It takes up Lacan's contention that the language of poetry allows the reinstatement of the lost object or departed other. As Kristeva (1989) puts it, the body of the

poem is a site upon which the recovery and assemblage of the missing pieces become possible. Harwood situates the powerful female at the centre of this ongoing process. Subverting the Christian dogma that women suffer in childbirth for their original sin, Harwood's female speakers joyously receive and offer the gift of reproduction. Transcribers of memories, they affirm their roles as the writers, carers and healers who ensure the continuity of their clan. While Yeats's later poems put forward detachment as the appropriate response to the human drama in which he has played an active part, the joys of youth and passion are not forgotten but reinscribed. Both Yeats and Harwood use multiple voices to reinvigorate the word, to rewrite tragic discourses and to produce joy. Finally, the main arguments elaborated in each chapter are resumed in the Conclusion, which suggests areas for further investigation.

The Production of Joy

Joy and Text

This chapter considers how joy is produced in and through certain poems by exploring and expanding upon the central ideas of the introduction. As a language of feeling, poems 'contact' other texts, other people and other histories. That is, existing texts leave their "'impressions'" on the body of the new text (Ahmed 2004: 13). Joy is frequently associated with exultation and rapture, and these states with religious or quasi-religious experiences that call for praise. Poetry can engage with these experiences: re-present them, question them, suggest different possibilities, and further new ways of producing joy.

Every text, Barthes argues, has a certain *brio*: without it there would be no text (1973: 25). Grammar books, scientific tomes and critical commentaries are fundamentally unlike the imaginative works which 'fire' the human imagination and prompt the body to follow its own ideas (30). Some texts express the will to *jouissance* and others produce contentment (*plaisir*). When *jouissance* is produced, 'fiery' or passionate language allows ideology and imagination to flow together through the text. Readers might even conceivably 'desire' the author (46). *Jouissance* is most likely produced when 'uncomfortable' texts break with repetition to interrogate culture, history, psychology, taste, values and even identity: the representation of a self that remains constant usually produces pleasure, while an expression of the loss of self produces *jouissance* (25 - 26). Yet quasi-erotic joy can also be produced from repetition that falls within familiar cultural parameters. In the world that Freud and Lacan called the *universitas litterarum*, all kinds of writing restore the (spoken) word to life; the final death of the Father, for example, would expunge the pleasures afforded by certain texts (75).

It cannot be assumed, however, that reader and writer share a common understanding. The relationship between poet as creator and poet as

politician, for example, can intersect in a problematic way with pure aesthetic enjoyment (Eagleton 1986: 179). Thus an apparently 'joyful' poem may, on close reading, be found to mask an idea or an ideology that is abhorrent. Ahmed argues in her recent book *The Promise of Happiness* that 'attachments to the very idea of the good life' can prove to be 'sites of ambivalence' (2010: 6). Close readings need to be attentive to this 'ambivalence', and cultural as well as psychoanalytical approaches are needed when analyzing emotions and texts. While keeping the poems in close focus, this chapter takes account of the ways in which the three poets produce joy by bringing certain texts to the fore, and along with them certain ways of thinking and being.

Later, in the chapter "Joy and Desire", I discuss the production of joy in certain poems in terms of conflict: the statement of the patriarchal order may be interrogated and subverted (Harwood) and conscious attention can be drawn towards the text as a powerful body in its own right (Harwood, Josephi). James Palermo describes reading the body of text in this way as 'orgasmic' (2000: 22). Importantly, he draws the same distinction as Barthes does between works that are 'orgasmic' (productive of *jouissance)* and those that are merely pleasurable. Pleasure is often the product of familiarity: conventional mores and structures are preserved in the text and we are left with the comforting feeling that the story (and the world) will remain as it is. By contrast, works in which *jouissance* is produced are more likely to be confronting and unsettling. Opening and change are foregrounded over closure and the repetition of familiar stories, and the reader is forced to conceive of language and subjectivity in a new way. Palermo correctly identifies Lacan and Kristeva, along with Barthes, as key critical thinkers who make it possible to conceptualize *jouissance* in terms of revolution: the subject strives to break free from the societal boundaries that can no longer hold her in check, and from the moment and place of rupture *jouissance* is liberated.

The (re)production of text is nevertheless deeply embedded in the (re)production of culture. Freud contends that throughout history disruptive texts were edited, erased, or replaced by texts that claimed the opposite

(LaCoque, LaCoque & Ricoeur, 1998: 235). Many books of the Bible, for example, reproduce the language of the law and the constraints it imposes. Subversive texts have no doubt been edited, or deleted from, the Biblical canon. In LaCoque's view, "The Song of Songs" has escaped the censors; it defies the word of the law to delight and entice its readers with a rich store of metaphors (235). Indeed, writers have often recycled elements of its content and structure in their attempts to reproduce joy. Poetry has often been written to praise and celebrate God, or many gods, to interpret what exists since His or their departure, and to provide solace in the world as it is by suggesting the possibility of great and unconditional love. For Judaeo-Christian believers, the Word of God brings the world into being. Poets can choose to repeat certain narratives, metaphors and structures, drawing attention to the originary act: continual renewal can be represented in the very form of poetry. By providing a space for reflection on the nature of separation, and hope that the original whole will be restored, poetry can offer humans reassurance that they will continue to propagate themselves in the metaphysical as well as the physical sense (Gadamer, Hans-Georg 1992: 88). Lauren Berlant would perhaps call this hope 'cruel': texts, like all objects of desire, offer promises to which people optimistically attach; in so doing they may miss out on more promising possibilities (2008: 33). A text, I argue, may (re)present joy as contented pleasure, a state or a way of being that has been endorsed over time and is thus unlikely to be questioned. A text that produces *jouissance*, on the other hand, is more likely to promote interrogation, difference and upheaval. It is always open to multiple possibilities.

Given the time of writing, one might assume that Yeats's poems affirm the patriarchal order and are pleasurable rather than productive of *jouissance*. Although undeniably true in some cases, there are poems in which Yeats reframes existing narratives in such a way that *jouissance* escapes from the ruptures.

Yeats: *jouissance* and rewriting

Yeats's prose writing affirms that the most memorable stories provoke a

sense of tension and suspense; they induce a *frisson* bordering on fear and excitement. For this reason, Yeats and his mentor Lady Augusta Gregory collected the turbulent folk and fairy stories of Ireland. Yeats not only acknowledged the work of other collectors but also had them published, believing that the Celts held close to the ancient roots of magical thinking (Larrissy ed. 2001: xvii). As a poet, however, he was less concerned with repetition than with the qualities of the old text(s) and the capacity of the new work to affect readers personally and to bring about change. A powerful text might confront and unsettle, but it would enter into the collective memory in its own right.

It is possible to read Yeats 'to change minds', as Palermo puts it, that is, to treat his poems as metaphorical bodies and as channels of the reader's own experience into *jouissance* (2000: 24). Yeats seems to suggest this approach himself in his more provocative poems. In "A Coat" (MW 59)[2] he uses metonymy to describe his own poetry. He begins:

> I made my song a coat
> Covered with embroideries
> Out of old mythologies
> From heel to throat.

Although ambiguous, the first line suggests Yeats's attachment to the existing body of texts which make up his cultural background. Here, a rupture of both metre and narrative foreground the close nexus between craftsmanship, text and body. The use of the past tense in the opening lines and the reference to the body in line four serve to build the mounting tension that leads towards the poem's surprising climax: "Song, let them take it / For there's more enterprise / In walking naked." Here, "them" refers to "fools" (line 5) and "walking naked" suggests a defiant freeing of the self from any "mythologies" that have become burdensome. "From heel to throat" expresses an important direction: the synecdoches suggest the dance rhythms and songs of the Irish lyrical tradition, a tradition the poet now considers leaving behind. Rather than personal defeat and loss, however, the jaunty rhythm and buoyant tone point to a triumphant, new beginning. The near rhyme "take it / naked" confirms the speaker's joyous

[2] *W.B. Yeats: The Major Works*, ed. Edward Larrissy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Used throughout.

detachment as he sets out to find an original, passionate voice that laughs at opposition and proves difficult to misappropriate.

When poets challenge power structures in this way, they test the limits of figurative language and the limits of subjectivity as well (Palermo 2000: 25). In "To a Friend whose Work has come to Nothing", also published in the collection "Responsibilities", Yeats suggests: "Be secret and take defeat / From any brazen throat" (MW 52, lines 2-3). He continues later: "And like a laughing string / Whereon mad fingers play / Amid a place of stone, / Be secret and exult" (lines 11-14). "Be secret" is repeated, but on the second occasion "take defeat" is reversed in "exult": the poet seems to urge his friend (Lady Gregory perhaps) to quietly reinvent herself. In future, she might keep her research private; meanwhile she can summon the defiant *jouissance* that stymies critics and imitators. Both "A Coat" and "To a Friend" promote the creative promise of a new beginning.

In one of his last poems, "The Apparitions" (MW 178), Yeats shows how joy might even be produced from terror:

> I have found nothing half as good
> As my long-planned half solitude,
> Where I can sit up half the night
> With some friend that has the wit
> Not to allow his looks to tell
> When I am unintelligible.
> *Fifteen apparitions have I seen;*
> *The worst a coat upon a coat-hanger.*
>
> When a man grows old his joy
> Grows more deep day after day,
> His empty heart is full at length
> But he has need of all his strength
> Because of the increasing night
> That opens her mystery and fright.
> *Fifteen apparitions have I seen;*
> *The worst a coat upon a coat-hanger.*
> (Stanzas 2 and 3)

Fifteen is associated in Yeats's 'gyres' system with the chance to escape daily life altogether. When released from illusion and the *Angst* generated by the questioning mind, the human heart becomes stronger as words become "unintelligible" (line 14). In this case, the gap between the extremes of language and annihilation generates poetry that celebrates

freedom and continuity, allowing suffering and finitude to be transcended. For Yeats, moments of acute observation and engagement, whether these are real, dreamed, imagined or read, provide a rich space in which desire and death become part of the same experience. Such 'initiatory' moments are the stuff of pure joy for the writer able to detach from the actual suffering of the world and to become immersed in the creative act.

An eclectic reader, Yeats had access to unusual texts through the Golden Dawn, whose rituals and incantations were supposedly based on the wisdom and magic of Solomon, ruler of Israel in the tenth century B.C.E. Yeats, who rose rapidly through the ranks of the Golden Dawn adherents, became familiar with texts detailing transformative sexual practices.[3] There was a belief among members that certain narratives had either been overlooked during the compilation of the Christian canon or had been re-interpreted in a manner that defied the original authorial intent. In the preferred texts, fortuitous meetings between the sexes reconciled individual volition with fate, and these magical unions were blessed with a particularly powerful happiness, perhaps everlasting joy (Crowley, Aleister 1997: xxi).

Yeats would certainly have become familiar with "The Song of Songs", whose language of rapture sets it apart from the other books of the Hebrew Bible. Of unknown origin, attributed in the Bible to Solomon himself, the poem cycle follows the dialogue of lovers, who converse together in an intensely passionate language. Sheba, "dark, but lovely" (5:1), unites power and beauty; she bestows her love as a strong sexual equal. The content is intensely passionate, yet the structure, rhythm and figurative language of "The Song of Songs" echo sacred Biblical psalms: the place where the lovers lie, for example, is described in metaphors also applied to Eden and the Holy of Holies.

"The Song of Songs" is an inexhaustibly rich text that lends itself to multiple readings: allegorical; erotic; scientific, and theological (Ricoeur, L. & R. 1998: 265). Its literary structure alone raises the work 'beyond any exclusive social-cultural content' (268). Ricoeur contends that metaphors of

[3] Brenda Webster provides an intriguing analysis of Yeats's figuration of body parts in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul", "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium" (1973: 206 – 235).

the royal nuptial in "The Song of Songs" inscribe the importance of genetic lineage and the "marriage" of memories and shared stories. Love and movement come into play in a game of hide and seek, with the body as landscape and source of admiration. While Ricoeur supports subversive readings of "The Song of Songs", he correctly emphasizes the unknown poet's use of exaggeration, irony and parody to create a mood of 'free and joyous celebration' (275). Yeats conveys this rapturous mood in "Solomon and the Witch" (c. 1921, MW 83-84):

And thus declared that Arab lady;
'Last night, where under the wild moon
On grassy mattress I had laid me,
Within my arms great Solomon,
I cried out in a strange tongue
Not his, not mine.'
Who understood
Whatever has been said, sighed, sung,
Howled, miau-d, barked, brayed, belled, yelled,
cried, crowed,
Thereon replied: 'A cockerel
Crew from a blossoming apple bough 10
Three hundred years before the Fall,
And never crew again till now,
And would not now but that he thought,
Chance being at one with Choice at last,
All that the brigand apple brought
And this foul world were dead at last.
He that crowed out eternity
Thought to have crowed it in again.
For though love has a spider's eye
To find out some appropriate pain – 20
Aye, though all passion's in the glance –
For every nerve, and tests a lover
With cruelties of Choice and Chance;
And when at last that murder's over
Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,
For each an imagined image brings
And finds a real image there;
Yet the world ends when these two things,
Though several, are a single light,
When oil and wick are burned as one; 30
Therefore a blessed moon last night
Gave Sheba to her Solomon.'

'Yet the world stays.'
'If that be so,

Your cockerel found us in the wrong
Although he thought it worth a crow.
Maybe an image is too strong
Or maybe is not strong enough.'

'The night has fallen; not a sound
In the forbidden sacred grove
Unless a petal hit the ground, 40
Nor any human sight within it
But the crushed grass where we have lain;
And the moon is wilder every minute.
O! Solomon! Let us try again.'

Here, the extraordinary union of Solomon and Sheba is seen to take the couple to the edge of experience, where "Choice" and "Chance" almost meet. Later in *A Vision* Yeats describes such moments as brief openings to chaos before the system is set in motion again: when the gyres pause, the course of the world is at stake and whatever occurs will be remembered and celebrated forever.

Only certain superhuman pairings allow the real and the imagined to meet and to transform history. In their exegeses of "The Song of Songs", LaCoque and Ricoeur underline the 'mobility' of the identification of possible partners, who might include Yahweh, the Church and Israel (1998: 278). Yeats evokes the symbolic nature of the union of Solomon and his "Witch" in the noun "image" (lines 25-27). Although intercourse here represents the climax or nadir of the meeting between the opposite sexes, more than sexual gratification is at stake when "oil and wick are burned in one" (line 30). Yeats uses the lamp metaphor, as in "*Rhib at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn*", to suggest the igniting of a mutual passion. Transcendent and immanent, the embrace of the other brings about a way of knowing, seeing and furthering radical change. Such revelations are to be passed on from generation to generation and from text to text, a responsibility assumed by the poet. Yeats's lexical selections in "Solomon and the Witch" allow the privileging of myths that might have changed the inscription of history. Biblical narratives, in particular the story of the Fall, foreground the woman's wrongdoing and shame. "The Song of Songs" was probably excluded from the Biblical canon in its original form on moral grounds (LaCoque 237). Far from evincing guilt, Yeats's Sheba voices the transformative power of her

sexual union with Solomon in her final, excited call: "'O! Solomon! let us try again.'"

To establish engagement with this version of the familiar narrative, Yeats inserts the reader into the middle of the action. The coordinating conjunction and the presences of the narrator and the speaker lend a sense of immediacy to the opening line: "And thus declared that Arab lady". Racial and geographic origins are disclosed, and the significance of this will be discussed later. The existing "Songs of Songs" is attributed to Solomon (LaCoque 236), but Sheba's speech in Yeats's poem seems to take a privileged position. Her ecstatic cries, presumably the result of possession, cannot be heard or understood by ordinary mortals: "Who understood / Whatever has been said, sighed, sung, / Howled, miau'd, barked, brayed, belled, yelled, cried, crowed, / Thereon replied ..." (lines 6-9). Solomon is the only listener capable of understanding the language of otherness (Jeffares, Norman 185).

The mixture of verbs in line 8 underlines strangeness by calling upon the bestiary of "The Song of Songs", and in Yeats's poem, Sheba's "'strange tongue'" (line 5) seems to encompass and surpass all the wild cries ever produced. "The Song of Songs" produces joyous excess through the process LaCoque describes as a parody of the 'sacrosanct oath formulas' of canonical texts (253). And Yeats, by invoking the cries of wild animals in "Solomon and the Witch", makes it clear that he is also writing within a tradition that departs from the law. This departure becomes evident when the last past participle in the sequence, "crowed", is taken up in the new voice to relate another narrative, one that closes the gap between Celtic, Solomonic and Apostolic myths (lines 9-12). Christian mythology associates the apple with Eve's sin and humankind's eternal loss, "the Fall" mentioned in line 11. Further, cockcrow signals Saint Peter's triple denial of Christ (Matthew 26: 74-75; Mark 14: 30). Yeats overturns these established myths and, with his cockerel on the "blossoming" bough, promotes a more positive alternative.[4] In Celtic legend, the cockerel is a familiar messenger who stirs humankind to

[4] Bloom describes "Solomon and the Witch" as 'too slight to sustain the difficult dialectic of choice and chance'. He links the recurrence of the 'blossoming apple bough' motif to Maud Gonne and the Cuchulain poems (1970: 313; 156).

revolutionary action (Tresidder, Jack 49). At cockcrow, a new world begins; thus the cockerel often represents rebirth. Yeats's rich mythology includes multiple opportunities to recreate the earth and its narratives, and for a moment in "Solomon and the Witch", it seems possible that the course of history itself might be changed. After his development of the parallel between crowing, the noises of the bestiary and the scream of bewitched Sheba, Yeats links all vocal eruptions to that fateful moment: "Chance being at one with Choice at last, / All that the brigand apple brought / And this foul world were dead at last" (lines 14-16).

Yeats draws on "The Song of Songs" to achieve a powerful re-vision couched in passionate language. He does so again later in the "Supernatural Songs" of 1935. The self-conscious reflexivity at the heart of "Solomon and the Witch" invites a re-evaluation of the significance of "The Song of Songs" which precedes it: Ricoeur reveals that had the passionate language of original text not escaped the censors, 'mystical experience' would have remained 'mute' (L & R 1998: 284). LaCoque, on the other hand, underlines the subversive, feminist voice of "The Song of Songs", for the lexical choices and the mood sustained throughout suggest the "Thousand and One Nights" rather than a historical or theological saga (237). Both ways of reading "The Song of Songs" may be applied to Yeats's poem. Additionally, "Solomon and the Witch" can be read as an example of Yeats's capacity to accomplish the imbrication of his personal mythology with established narratives: the poem is 'written about Yeats and Mrs Yeats' (Jeffares 185). Brenda Maddox affirms that Yeats wrote the poem for his new wife George, who entertained and instructed him with her so-called 'automatic' writing. Maddox adds that Golden Dawn initiates such as Yeats, who already suffered sexual difficulties and was intensely shy, were required to adopt the ascetic lifestyle of the Gnostics (74). Because Yeats was attracted to other women, however, George had to find a means to retain his interest and conceive a child with him. She was successful: Yeats's impotence vanished when George's writing began (71). Indeed, Yeats was so enthralled with his wife that he compared her seductive narratorial talent to Sheherazade's in his poem "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid" (Maddox 73).

This is hardly surprising, since George's 'channelings' are intensely erotic. Recording the couple's sexual activities in the code "'sun-in-moon'", George's notes foreground regular sex and the satisfaction of a woman's considerable appetite (Maddox 73-74). In Yeats's poem, Sheba is sent to Solomon under a "blessed moon" (31) and the sexual encounter in the Garden takes place unashamedly beneath "a single light, / When oil and wick are burned in one" (lines 29-30). Yeats had in the past thought that his sexual potency was waning: already in "The Living Beauty" he had explicitly paralleled his sexual and poetic powers in the coarse "oil and wick" metaphor (Maddox 50). Now his promising marriage was putting persistent concerns to rest.

Yeats's new experience affirmed that sudden change and close encounters with the other could be both unsettling and profoundly productive of joy. In "Solomon and the Witch", rather than promote a definitive version of events and close the door to further possibilities, Yeats allows multiple interpretations to come to the fore. "Who understood" (line 6) is offset on the page so that the eye is again drawn to the other key actor in the narrative(s), the one who knows how to interpret Sheba's language. By bringing attention to hermeneutics in his poem, Yeats reveals his own role as an interpreter of texts. The original context of "The Song of Songs" was probably free of the assumptions that have evolved through the process of cultural change; any 'overly exclusive' formulation of meaning would prove futile (Ricoeur, L. & R. 1998: 293). Every time the context changes, a new interpretation of recorded events is usually imposed or layered upon the old, but in Yeats's poem authorial identity is constructed in such a way that it 'slides behind' the identities of the actors Solomon and Sheba, whose words are reported directly: "And thus spake …". In the prophetic voice, Yeats issues a powerful challenge to the familiar Biblical narrative of "the Fall", bringing the Christian discourse of original sin into question and rewriting the story as a creative opportunity, to be celebrated in the language of *jouissance*.

The Golden Dawn's Renaissance equivalents, hermeticists like Pico and Alemanno, believed that Solomon and Moses were magicians capable of using language to activate the power of talismans, garments or objects

("images") so as to galvanize and conduct heavenly forces to earth (Baigent, Michael & Richard Leigh 1998: 128). In Yeats's "Solomon and the Witch", the metaphysical process proves unsuccessful. Despite the magical incantations, permanent spiritual, political and historical change does not take place this time: "Maybe an image is too strong / Or maybe is not strong enough?" The question suggests that there is more to learn and that the experimental process, the dialogue and the creative quest must continue. Maddox states that Yeats called his new wife a witch and that "Solomon and the Witch" 'says the same thing in earnest' (77). Led by George, who had attained a high rank in the Golden Dawn but had chosen to conceal her activities from critical eyes, Yeats continued to experiment with dream analysis and visual images in his search for powerful metaphors.

From the first line of "Solomon and the Witch", Yeats makes it clear that the primary actor in his story is female. Sheba's feminine, lunar energy and seductive cry amplify the power of the sun/Son and her final scream demonstrates her passionate persistence. Ricoeur indicates in his discussion of "The Song of Songs" that the woman may be 'awakened' into language by the man, but the reciprocity of speech between the lovers is initiated by the woman (L. & R. 1998: 297). In Yeats's version, the female claims her initiatory power in the language of *jouissance*, "let us try again", while the roles of Solomon (and the poet) are to follow her lead and to recount the story. Shared power is recorded not only here and in the "Song of Songs" but in Irish tales of the dreamtime, where the emotional, physical and spiritual intimacy between the sexes has the potential to reverse hierarchies and contribute to new ways of writing narratives. In "Solomon and the Witch", it is Sheba who perceives that permanent change has been voided: "'Yet the world stays.'" (line 33) Solomon concedes that the cockerel that brought him his "Witch" may have "found us in the wrong" (line 35). The 'sin' in this instance is not moral but rather a shared misreading of the signs or "images". New beginnings are always possible. Yeats's alternative to Biblical accounts of the Fall and Eve's 'shameful' act suggests that important changes will occur when the time is right. And change is to be embraced rather than feared.

Yeats's interest inclined towards language and metaphysics and George's towards physical pleasure and motherhood, but both partners avidly pursued occult studies (Maddox 75). In "Responsibilities" and "Michael Robartes", the poems' content seems to coalesce closely with occult experimentation, for Yeats was more impressed by George's vivid dreams than her sexual requirements. In *A Vision* he later claimed that the voices she heard under trance offered him the metaphors he needed to write poetry (MW 431). Maddox quotes Yeats's epigraph to "Responsibilities" ("'In dreams begins responsibility'") and cites the ways in which George later worked day and night with the poet to search for an 'over-arching reality' in esoteric sources ranging from Blake, Boehme, Freud and Nietzsche to the cards of the Tarot (87). The poem "Towards Break of Day" (MW 89), published like "Solomon and the Witch" in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921), records the moment when the 'antinomies' of moon and sun are in balance. The excited husband speculates: "... did we halve a dream / Under the first cold gleam of day?" (lines 3-4) Yeats has 'visited' Ben Bulben waterfall, the image so strong that he feels "the cold blown spray" in his nose. His wife meanwhile has dreamed of "the marvellous stag of Arthur", supposedly the King's shape-shifting, shamanic animal guide. The couple has shared an experience of mind's intercourse with mind, more powerful than sex because it enables the creative faculties to understand great truths and to prophesy the future. Indeed, the couple's shared dream aligns with "The Song of Songs", where the deer is used in a simile to describe the male partner: "The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag" (Sheba, "Song of Songs" 2: 8-9) and "Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether" (2: 17). LaCoque grants that the deer metaphor here probably describes a radiant King Solomon. More importantly, however, love is privileged over kingship and Eros is foregrounded in all its forms (237). The female takes the lead in the "The Song of Songs" (243), and there is no mention there of the assumed authority figure, the father of the bride; the woman invites her fiancé into her mother's house in a double reversal of

traditional roles (248). In a similar way, Yeats ascribes the initiatory role to Sheba in "Solomon and the Witch".

Yeats's use of the name "Witch" in the title redresses the systematic alienation and persecution of strong women throughout history, a theme discussed further in the chapter "Joy and Madness". By giving the rapturous female her voice, Yeats honours particular ways of knowing and experiencing change. Written around the same time, "The Second Coming" (MW 91) describes the consequence of losing the vital abilities to 'hear' messages from certain sources and to prepare for inevitable change: "Turning and turning in the widening gyre / The falcon cannot hear the falconer" (lines 1-2). In after-dinner psychic sittings the poet, 'schooled in the religious eroticism of William Blake', would attempt to clarify his own understanding of the Unity of Being: 'harmony between bodily desire and spiritual quest' (Maddox 133). Yeats believed in the theory that the kind of sexual union endorsed by Eastern religions furthered the understanding of cosmic oneness as a process of rupture followed by rapture. Over time, his research not only probed the wide range of sources mentioned earlier but was driven by his friends' travels and studies in India and discussions with the Indian poet Tagore and teacher Shri Purohit Swami. The title Swami implies self-mastery in all matters physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual; further meanings of the term are "weaving" and "continuity". In a letter to Olivia Shakespear (9.3. 1933) Yeats applauds 'the Swami' (presumably Purohit) and his wide understanding, along with Balzac and his *Comédie Humaine*. The basis of Yeats's admiration lies in his personal desire to embrace the 'Eastern simplicity', which might have been inscribed by Joyce had his 'Catholic sense of sin' not stood in the way (MW 470). From Yeats's perspective, Biblical dogma reinforced the boundaries between self and other at several levels; it demanded reinscription.

In Yeats's poetry, joy is often produced during intense, revelatory experiences, during which the embrace of otherness is celebrated. The 'other' is angelic or wild, that is, belonging to nature and untamed by book knowledge. Membership of the Golden Dawn allowed Yeats to explore different hierarchies and alternative practices, the 'low magic' of everyday

rituals as well as the 'high magic' described in the Theurgia of Solomon (Crowley ed. 1997: 25). While no doubt preoccupied with the effectiveness of the chosen metaphor, Yeats may have believed that certain representations or visual texts held the secret to attaining supernatural states. "A Bronze Head" (MW 174-175) refers to a cast of Maud Gonne in the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin. The artwork as visual text provides the opportunity for Yeats to reflect on his lover from the past: "I saw the wildness in her and I thought / A vision of terror that it must live through / Had shattered her soul" (lines 16-18). Elsewhere, Maud's animal (wild) nature is observed through the eyes of the eternal "tomb-haunter" as a "super-human", a "supernatural". Maud the shape-shifter might "hold the extreme of life and death" (line 14) in her breath. All this seems very silly, as Harwood suggests, echoing Auden's poem about Yeats in "On Uncertainty" (CP 483). [5] Of interest, however, is the parallel between the title of "A Bronze Head" and a magical spell believed by Yeats and members of the Golden Dawn to summon the Daemon (Crowley ed. 1997: xxvi).

With the practice of magic in mind, the 'demonization' of Maud takes on an entirely different significance: if the right invocation were used, the young, wild and joyous Maud might magically spring to life. If the spell failed, she would at least be immortalized in the bronze artwork and in the poems written about her. The suggestion is repeated in "Beautiful Lofty Things" where Maud is described as a statue, "Pallas Athene in that straight back and arrogant head" (line 11, MW 158). Similarly, the next poem in the collection, "Hound Voice", recalls the supposed Solomonic practice of invoking demons through a particular kind of howling (Crowley ed. 1997: xxii). Parallels between animals, witches and women who seduce or refuse the hero are set in place, but for Yeats the female's powerful scream signals not only coupling and the continuation of the species, but productive rupture ("Solomon and the Witch"). Her 'wild' voice is called up eagerly by the occultist who adopted Egyptian tablets and erotic works such as "The Arabian Nights" as his Bible (Crowley ed.: xxiv). Regardless of Yeats's

[5] *Gwen Harwood: Collected Poems*, ed. Alison Hoddinott and Gregory Kratzmann (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2003). Used throughout.

unusual beliefs and practices, however, his poems reveal an important understanding that the voice of Eros needs to be heard, understood and recorded as the agent of profound, creative transformation.

The word as a weapon of *jouissance*

Certain literary forms have served for centuries to praise and honour the gods, but few people can approach the holy (Gadamer 1992: 94). Many of Harwood's poems celebrate a close relationship with the Other. However, in "Mid-Channel" (published in *Bone Scan* 1988, CP 414), she dares to issue a challenge head-on, in the word game:

"Mid-Channel"

The days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. – Amos, IV, 2.

Cod inert as an old boot,
tangling dance of the little shark,
perch nibble, flathead jerk –
blindfold I'd know them on my line.

Fugitive gleam on scale and fin,
lustrous eye, opalescent belly
dry and die in the undesired
element. A day will come,

matter-of-fact as knife on plate,
with death's hook in my jaw, and language 10
unspeakable, the line full out.
I'll tire you with my choking weight

old monster anchored in the void.
My God, you'll wonder what you caught.
Land me in hell itself at last
I'll stab and swell your wounds with poison.

Not here, now now. Water's my kingdom
tonight, my line makes starspecks tremble.
The dinghy's decked with golden eyes
and still the cod boil round my bait. 20

Here, Harwood's speaker voices the *jouissance* she feels with vicious glee and uses the "weight" of language as a weapon. Triumphant satisfaction lies at the heart of this rather dark poem, in which Harwood subverts and

parodies accepted (masculine) assumptions, setting her human subject at the locus of power and debunking transcendent myths of the Other's omnipotence. There is, however, a constant battle to establish a stable meaning and self. As Lacan discovered, by examining what is absent or unsaid, meaning emerges in what the speaker 'hooks', in the language that is left behind and in its structure (1977: 303). This theory provides a useful departure point for a reading of "Mid-Channel", wherein the name of the enemy is left unsaid and yet remains of prime significance. The fishing line, surely a metaphor for the poetic line, offers a means of control for the speaker: a distance is established between her boat and the torch-lit circle in which she 'fishes', that which is known and therefore under control, and the shadowy centre of power far beyond the circle of light (the unknown).

The significance of maintaining control, of throwing out the "line" of language and reeling it in again, familiar from Freud's discussion of the 'Little Hans' case, is revealed as Harwood shows how language might be used to defy the ultimate presence and absence (death). The speaker, ruler of a "kingdom" here and now but removed in time and space from the Signified, states the intent to fight for life by using the language of the enemy against him. That the opponent might be a woman will be taken up later. David Ellis, in his Freudian analysis of a boating episode in William Wordsworth's "The Prelude", maintains that vigour and aggression, the perceived 'confident mastery' on the ocean, is more important than sexual identity, which is of secondary significance (1985: 42). This is also the case in the Harwood poem, but the struggle to establish identity is nonetheless important.

Harwood uses metonymy to substitute signifiers along a chain that leads inevitably to the end, "casting" the structure of the poem like a fishing line from boat to ocean and from the present time and place to eternity. The work is not a hymn of praise, an obvious vehicle to express joy, but it is full of *jouissance*. Immanence is seen to triumph over transcendence and presence over absence, and human death is vanquished, at least for the moment. The theme concerns the First Commandment: we are to love God with all our heart and strength. Yet one might argue, as do LaCoque and

Ricoeur, that an enormous 'disproportion' opens between human love and God's love and that 'this disproportion first announces itself through language' (Ricoeur, L. & R. 1998: 125).[6] God is able to command humankind to love Him. Humans do not have the right to do the same: 'Freud was not alone, nor was he the first to rebel against the very idea of a commanded love' (119). Further, the commandments to love without question and to act lovingly towards others imply passivity and responsibility, yet other parts of the Bible foreground warfare over acceptance. In "Mid-Channel", Harwood's speaker questions God's right to command and issues a defiant challenge: "Land me in hell itself at last" (line 14).

In the space defined as near and current in "Mid-Channel", each fish is seen to die in its own particular manner on the line held by the fisherwoman. Subverting the 'disproportion' between God and human discussed by LaCoque and Ricoeur (1998), the speaker situates human death diachronically along the "line" of time at an indeterminate point. The 'enemy' is "anchored in the void", an all-consuming sea-monster similar to the beast described in Canaanite mythology as the nothingness of the Abyss (Armstrong, Karen 1999: 74). LaCoque indicates that many Biblical texts describe the known world as threatened by chaos on all sides; the monster known as the Leviathan is a symbol of this chaos (15). A creature that lives in the sea but can move upon the land like the serpent, the Leviathan menaces Adam with sterility and lifelessness (14). Harwood uses the same name in a later poem, "Midwinter" (CP 466), where the God of death whom Job called "Leviathan" inevitably wins the game:

> I will be slain, but with my face toward him.
> Is that why we like games? Who'd go to matches
> if the full forwards lay down? Wrestle with angels!
> Now at three-score and ten, I seem to live
> most of the time in existential terror.
> (Lines 36 - 40)

In the face of death, the production of joy seems impossible. Harwood, however, enters complicitly into the game in "Mid-Channel", parodying and

[6] In her analysis of "Mid-Channel", Alison Hoddinott prefers to emphasize nature's confronting law of 'butchery': comfort seems 'small and unspectacular against the prevailing darkness' (1991: 214 – 215).

subverting the narrative so that the monster rather than the angler is decentred. Her speaker, in safety, plans how poisonous speech can be used to infect the monster's open wounds and render him powerless. As the creator, the speaker turns suffering and powerlessness into joyous exultation, seizing control of the creature's 'territory' with the rod/pen. In a reversal of the traditional hymn of praise, she/he rewrites previously accepted truths, refuses death, overcomes lack and turns weakness into strength, thereby becoming what Derrida describes as the privileged presence of one's own story (1967: 362).

In order to reconstruct the narrative, Harwood foregrounds loopholes in the Biblical story of creation, which her protagonist can exploit and turn to advantage. In the beginning, the God of Genesis formed the animals out of the ground and the birds from the air and brought them to Adam so that he could name them (Genesis 2: 19). The act of naming has been represented traditionally as a gift to Adam and to all men after him, giving men the privileged position as speakers. The power to use language to determine the Law was transmitted later to another of God's elected men, Moses (Deuteronomy 4-5, Exodus 20). Yet, as LaCoque argues, the voices of both sexes are to be heard in Biblical pleas and lamentations addressed to God's tribunal (205). Indeed, while praise takes place 'through death, in death' (198), lamentation puts the lively appellant in the foreground and moves the foe(s) into the background, so that God might be revealed as impotent or as struggling with Himself (190 – 191). Ricoeur agrees that lamentations are 'disquieting, paradoxical, and almost scandalous' (L. & R. 1998: 219). Such is the case in "Mid-Channel". Conspiring with and subverting the age-old pattern, Harwood's speaker seizes power and claims dominion over at least one species. Curiously, God did not appear to bring the fish out of the ocean to be named; now the master of the "channel" and the consumer who offers irresistible bait to the ingenuous fish is able to enter into and subvert the narrative of the so-called goodness of creation.

Harwood's paradigmatic choices echo the Biblical narrative where Jesus distributed to His followers bread and a few fish, which miraculously sufficed to 'feed' the many (Matthew 14: 17-19; Matthew 15: 34-36; Mark 6: 38-41;

Luke 9: 13-17; John 6: 9-11). The fish has often been associated with the message or words of Christianity as well as the Eucharist. Indeed, it is commonly believed that Christ is present in the Eucharistic fish symbols on the Roman catacombs. The believer is meant to accept Christ and assist Him, as a 'fisher of men', to feed the people that He will redeem and save through word and deed. Harwood questions this received knowledge here and elsewhere. In the first of the "Three Poems for Margaret Diesendorf" (CP 316), for example, she cites and then overturns the divine plan that allows the beloved to be taken: "Many I loved are gone. / Death has them in his net. / The God of Israel let / the fowler's snare enclose them" (lines 15-18). In the poem under discussion, "Mid-Channel", Harwood goes further, to interrogate the assumed power relationship between the hunter and the hunted, consumer and consumed, and the Word/word. She subverts the misogynistic discourse that is evident in the Bible, as well as in more recent, metaphysical poems in which (alluring) women are seen to fall prey to their own charms.

Harwood's enjoyment of fishing in the d'Entrecasteaux Channel near her home is obviously not the primary subject of "Mid-Channel". Hoddinott (1991) discusses the influence of certain German philosophers in Harwood's poetry and it is hard to read "Mid-Channel" without recalling Nietzsche's / Zarathustra's comments on poetry and poets: 'I cast my net into their sea and hoped to catch fine fish; but I always drew out an old god's head' (2003: 151). Since "Mid-Channel" is written in the first person, it is tempting to assume that the identities and activities of poet and speaker overlap, but there is no firm evidence to suggest that the speaker is female. Rather, the poem constitutes a response to existing texts, and to find joy in the grim subject matter requires a *tour de force* on Harwood's behalf. Beneath the title comes an epigraph from the Book of Amos, in which fishing is compared with complete annihilation: "*he shall take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks*" (Amos 1V: 2). An immediate paradigmatic link can be made between fishing, death and the eradication of "posterity". As mentioned previously, to reinforce a sense of separation from this nihilistic discourse, Harwood constructs two contrasting spaces, the illuminated space

around the fishing boat and "the void". Darkness and "seeing" are opposed and directly related to these real and metaphoric spaces as the protagonist searches for a new vision of the future.

The angler's joy derives from a mastery of the word. The speaker begins by calling up the fish she/he intends to catch in an Adamic act of naming. "Cod" is at the top of the list and it is placed immediately after the Biblical epigraph, suggesting the metonymical relationship between god and fish which is taken up later. Naming gives control over the object. Cod will pose no problems to the fisher-poet: he is "inert as an old boot" (line 1). The "is", however, is missing. Indeed, there is a notable absence of verbs in the left-branching syntax of the first few lines, giving these lines the shape and power of a prayer or an incantation. The list of fish 'floats', to be anchored by a verb much later. Verbs are only implied in the string of qualified nouns, "tangling dance"; "perch nibble", and "flathead jerk" (here "dance", "nibble" and "jerk" are nouns). These nouns serve to emphasize Cod's inertia and the poet's control in the naming-writing process. The fact that she recognizes each fish by the way it dies anticipates the principal clause, deferred until the end of the list of fish: "blindfold I'd know" (line 4). The nominalization and the syntactic inversion together serve to foreground the *haeccitas* of the fish and the way they die, but also to place the protagonist in the central position as all-knowing master of the wor(l)d.

More listing, a string of qualified synecdoches for "fish", begins the second stanza. The list ends with the factual verbs "dry and die", and the statement which follows ruptures the syntagmatic and the semantic flow by casting forward to the future: "A day will come" (line 8). This rupture draws attention to the comparison that is being made between what is happening synchronically on this night in this boat and what will happen in another time and place. The third stanza makes it clear that this future "day" will be one of reckoning, when the protagonist will finally be "caught" just like the fish. Rather than wait passively, the speaker will die on her/his own terms, fighting with "choking weight" (line 12) to crush and stifle the enemy until he is speechless, unable to call away more lives. Emotive language is the chosen weapon. The excess of fury delivered with visceral impact through

the descriptor "choking" contrasts strongly with the emotional inertia of the monster. The fates of fish and human are paralleled when the speaker identifies with and personalizes the suffering of all animals: "with death's hook in my jaw" (line 10). The angler is not merely a castrated object, however, to use Lacan's primal analogy: power over language allows her/him to transcend the victim role. Before the "jaw" stops working, the speaker can utter magical "language / unspeakable" and turn into a huge toadfish which poisons its captor's wounds, a warning issued in direct speech: "My God, you'll wonder what you've caught" (line 14). Clearly, "My God" may be read here both as a personal address and an ironical exclamation, but the hellish "monster" of "Mid-Channel" bears little resemblance to the 'gentle' Jesus Harwood describes in "Lamplit Presences" (1980: 247). He is the indifferent enemy whom the speaker has in her/his sights as she constructs His future. The angler recognizes each fish by its "dance" on the line: the "old monster anchored in the void. / My God ..." does not. Here, "old boot" and "old monster" are metaphorically "anchored" together in a vacuum where feeling and understanding have no place.

At the heart of Harwood's conceit is the driving force of language to substitute a new, victorious narrative for the old. This is far from the new covenant that Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto put forward, however, which would allow human and non-human animals to be free from predation and violence and to live in peace and humility together (1994: 122). Instead, Harwood reconstructs and deflates the old cliché, in which creatures are supposedly known and "loved" by their predator (see "*In Articulo Mortis*" CP 84 and "Sea Eagle" CP 423). Language enables the speaker of "Mid-Channel" to challenge God's right to name things into being and then to remove them carelessly: its "weight" is sufficient to shatter the void, choke the "old monster" and rob him of his words. Here, "weight" is used metaphorically to suggest both 'counterbalance' and 'force'. Harwood overturns not only the metanarrative of the wounded Fisher King but also that of the Biblical Christ as loving and self-sacrificing saviour. Even Wittgenstein's theory that "We're caught ... / in the net of language" cited by Harwood in "On Poetry" (CP 444) is overturned: the "net" is now the tool

that the fisherwoman uses to lure the monstrous god. There are resonances of Donne's conceit, "The Bait" (in Redpath ed., 76), where the woman lures the "enamour'd" fish towards her: "Each fish, which every channel hath / Will amorously to thee swim, / Gladder to catch thee than thou him" (lines 9-12). Donne's final stanza describes the woman's natural charms, yet suggests that she may become the victim in the male's adroit language game: "Thou thyself art thine own bait" (line 26). Harwood's speaker attracts the fish too, but claims no intention of becoming anyone's bait.

Under the new rules of the death game, the speaker of "Mid-Channel" affirms her/his power joyously. Death (absence) having now been pushed to the edge, "not here, not now", the speaker's presence can be constructed in opposition to the enemy's: He is represented now as the victim, unable to act and speak, while the fisher-poet is mobile, vocal and in control. The speaker has become the feaster rather than the feast and the master of the ocean channel. By overcoming death, the angler receives universal recognition: a thousand "eyes" in the sea and sky surrounding the boat mirror the love that is sought. It is possible to 'hear' the raging cry of a feminine Zarathustra as the fisherwoman claims her queendom in infinite space. The speaker seizes the void described by Lacan as contiguous with the discourse of the Other, where desire is bound up with the desire for recognition (1977: 172). And the present night of triumph is to be perpetuated in the universal memory as the speaker's fishing line "makes starspecks tremble" (line 18).

To the victor the spoils: the angler has caught the naming-God in the net of language and is now free to enjoy the results of an enormous effort. As in other Harwood poems and in Donne's "The Bait", the animals are seen to joyfully collude with the human's plan to consume their bodies and their space. "Water's my kingdom" (line 17), the speaker declares, and fish "boil" eagerly around the bait as though they are ready and willing to be eaten (line 20). In Harwood's narrative, the fish have an imaginary voice: they speak with their eyes. In line 6, "lustrous eye" is used synecdochically to replace the fish, which in line 7 "dry and die" out of water. In line 19, however, the fishes' eyes are not described as dull and dead but as lively

and "golden". Although the echo of resurrection might seem odd, "dry" is also used in the Bible to denote the potential for healing and rebirth (LaCoque 148), a possibility Harwood herself explores in "Can These Bones Live?" (CP 91) In "Mid-Channel", human and fish form a potentially powerful union of sight/inner sight (eyes) and sound (mouth, language). In the last stanza, "starspecks" (line 18) is linked along the paradigmatic axis to "golden eyes" (19) to create a macrocosmic perspective, in which humankind's struggle is central and animal suffering serves merely to suggest a much greater anthropomorphic concern. That theme is the "symbolic death" to which the Book of Amos and the Harwood critic Susan Schwartz (1996) allude, in which the human is blotted out of memory. The protagonist's purpose then is to locate herself/himself at the centre of the desiring space, to fight annihilation by being remembered with language as the permanent 'line' between now and beyond. As she does elsewhere, Harwood makes it clear in "Mid-Channel" that joy can be produced from pain, if the individual seizes power over the pattern or process in which humankind is seen to suffer.

Parallels are set in place from the poem's title to suggest that people come half way on the power ladder between animals and God: they suffer by His hand as animals do at the hands of humans. With the force of poetry, however, Harwood inverts the isomorphic model, using language and personal experience as the points of departure to interrogate and subvert received knowledge. Fishing as a metaphor for death begins the poem, and "my bait" ends it: a cohesive chain of signifiers has been set in place like a lure. One day, the angler may be captured, but meanwhile the fish in her/his channel have consumed the bait and the angler's family will dine on them. The implied ingestion completes an ongoing cycle in which feaster and feast become one, a theme discussed further in the chapter "Joy and Desire". The one's life is intimately connected to the other's death when hunger is satisfied, "matter-of-fact as knife on plate" (line 9). There are suggestions of Eucharistic imagery as well as the concept of dying one's own death, which Martin Heidegger borrows from Rainer-Maria Rilke: our *haeccitas* is expressed in the way that we face suffering and dying. The

great German poet describes how humankind prefers to hide from events too difficult to face, such as death; they conceal from themselves 'the most serious gravity of their existence' (33). Yet when certain individuals (here, poets) take up suffering courageously 'as a burden and an apprenticeship', they bring 'alleviation' to those who follow them (33).

Although "Mid-Channel" privileges the anti-hero over the hero, joy is produced in all the little acts of subversion, which take place during the struggle. The result is the central 'catch', the written word memorializing the triumphant event. Gadamer's comment on a Celan poem about fishing, "In the Rivers North of the Future", is equally applicable to Harwood's poem: the 'balanced tension' of weighting the net and performing a skilled activity parallels a hopeful projection into the unpredictable waters of language: what is caught is the poem itself (1992: 77). In this regard, one also thinks of Harwood's superbly constructed poem "Iris" and its theme of building and balancing, not only a boat but a family, relationships and writing. As in Yeats's work, suffering is drawn as part of a process that finds a joyful resolution through the language game.

While real death is often represented as "matter-of-fact" in the poetry of Harwood, parody is used to lend a lightness that balances sombre themes. Even as she faced her own death, Harwood wrote poems showing how joy might be produced in and from text. The 1994 poem, "A Sermon" (CP 508-510), demonstrates most clearly the parallels the poet had made between language, God and the amusing game of human existence, parallels implied in the poem's ironic title and the ensuing epigraph: "'*The way to make sense of a text is to give it a context*' - *Veronica Brady*'. Within the body of the poem Harwood reveals her preoccupation with representation, literacy and reading for meaning "in a true contextual structure" (line 45). If God is language, He knows the value of originality, and can "delight us / with music we have never heard before" (line 57). People ("you") are capable too of representing the generative force in a new way.

In "A Sermon" Harwood's speaker preaches: "God bless you all. I mean, may language bless you" (line 31). Despite the reference to Genesis

and the origin of the world in language, Harwood puts forward the Romantic idea that humankind "knows" the world less through words than through direct contact. The audience is urged into action, to "go walking" outdoors in the church of nature:

> There's no statue in the stone. If you want statues
> transform the stone; interpret your own life;
> engage in idle talk, or walk in silence.
>
> Sybilline vacancies do one no harm.
> Good poems mean what they say, good silences
> mean, if you listen, what the good poems say.
> (Lines 34-39)

Rather than reproduce old narratives out of context, individuals should listen and use their gifts wisely to fit the new world. If any work is to be written, Harwood suggests, it should be an original attempt rather than one that adds to "papaverous" proliferation.[7]

Harwood continues to describe two classes of individual; some "adorn" the world (line 51) and the others add little of value. Yet interactions with the world around one cannot be taken too seriously. Our most important role is to convey joy to a new audience. Continuing to address the audience as "you", the sermonizing speaker suggests that as they walk, people should "play with infinity, / or show the murmurers Aaron's blossoming rod" (lines 52-53). The verbs "play" and "show" here suggest that life, the subject of incessant questioning, is as simple and enjoyable as a child's game. The choice of the conjunction "or" suggests a parallel between logic and art. Despite the "murmurers", presumably those people who doubt the imaginary and believe only in the material world, traditional metaphors continue to exert their inspirational and dynamic force. Vibrant metaphors capture or "show" truths that might otherwise exceed the limitations of the language game. In this regard, Harwood's idea comes close to Yeats's notion of the "strong" image ("Solomon and the Witch"). Most importantly, in "A Sermon" Harwood emphasizes the performative nature of metaphor, which effects in a short space the rich interaction between world and word and makes this

[7] In her essay "Narrative Happiness and the Meaning of Life", Colebrook addresses the differences between literature that affirms a passive, contemplative life and 'joyful' literatue that points beyond continuity towards infinite potential (2008: 82 – 102).

resource available to an appreciative audience. Participation in the language game is a great joy of the creative life.

Indeed, "A Sermon" begins with a typical Harwood parody of the beginnings of the universe, "Abacus to zinc-plate, abstrips to zetalisp" (line 3). In her alphabetically ordered cosmos, God "won't interfere" (line 6) to protect humankind: "In fact he's language, throned among the cherubim, / enclosing his own elementary syntax" (lines 8-9). It is difficult to know how seriously to take Harwood in "A Sermon"; perhaps she is simply relishing the naming game, citing and then debunking dozens of popular theories, from structuralism and particle theory to "metapsychology, demonic influence" (line 25). Nevertheless, the choice of "Aaron's blossoming rod" to represent the absolute beginning (Aa) seems less random than other A-Z selections. The particular significance of the "blossoming rod" metaphor is explained by LaCoque (236). In the Bible, the role of nature is secondary to that of the religious message, that is, the natural entity serves to carry the performative force of the Word (Jeremiah 1: 11, Amos 8: 1-2); in "The Song of Songs", by contrast, nature and human bodies are simply beautiful in themselves and the universe needs no permission to be erotic (236). Thus, by using the "blossoming rod" metaphor, Harwood captures the tension between two different ways of thinking about creation. From the Biblical perspective, the creation or "blossoming" might be seen as the first reported event, soon to be overshadowed by the Fall and thus tainted with guilt. Yet the beginning and continuity constitute a dialectical progression; the world and the word are constantly made anew and the 'stream of beginnings' continues to flow (Ricoeur, L. & R. 1998: 48).

By selecting "blossoming" rather than an alternative adjective to suggest *viriditus*, Harwood also aligns the "rod" symbol and the feminine discourse described in "My Tongue is My Own", "Songs of Eve" and Yeats's "Solomon and the Witch". Aaron's rod, Jeremiah's almond branch and Yeats's apple-bough connote the magic of rebirth as well as the power of the word to re-activate great narrative moments, in this case myths of regeneration. By adding the descriptor "blossoming", Harwood suggests the process of unfolding and the necessary role of the fertile female in the

generation process. Thereby she shows how a powerful and economical image works to, as Gaston Bachelard states, bring everything together: 'It is at the turning point where the world is alternatively spectacle or gaze' (1969: 200). Harwood captures this idea in the exhortation: "Show them …". No doubt she took great delight, however, in the earthier, synecdochic connotations of "Aaron's blossoming rod", which are in line with those of "The Song of Songs".

Despite her self-disclosure as the love object, "your creature", it is tempting to see Harwood as the active agent in "Carnal Knowledge 1" (CP 263):

> Content to be your love, your fool,
> your creature tender and obscene
> I'll bite sleep's innocence away
> and wake the flesh my fingers cup
> to build a world from what's to hand,
> new energies of light and space
>
> wings for blue distance, fins to sweep
> the obscure caverns of your heart,
> a tongue to lift your sweetness close
> leaf-speech against the window-glass
> a memory of chaos weeping
> mute forces hammering for shape
> (Stanzas 2 and 3)

Here Harwood seems to draw as before on the findings of the Freudian school: in the world of words, all signifieds are signifiers lying in the imaginary plane and all are the products of language. By creating a text, the poet is able to borrow from existing words to create and claim her own joyous universe.[8] In "Meditation on Wyatt 11" (CP 271), Harwood establishes that text serves as paradigm, signifier and structuring agent to amplify the nexus between Eros and language. Sir Thomas Wyatt is remembered for his reinstatement of the metrical accentual-syllabic tradition, his inscription of Petrarchan paradoxes about love and his unrequited passion for Ann Boleyn. Harwood incorporates theme and metre in her "Meditation" by appropriating lines thirteen and eighteen of Wyatt's

[8] Indeed, Strauss reads this sensual, celebratory poem as a 'reversal' of earlier poems such as "*Triste Triste*" (1996: 92 – 93).

"Forget not Yet the Tried Intent". "Forget not yet, forget not this" (line 13), which begins Wyatt's fourth stanza, is used by Harwood to begin her poem. Wyatt's eighteenth line, the second line of his last stanza, is placed by Harwood at the beginning of her second and final stanza: "The which so long hath thee so loved". Clearly Harwood made the selection for two reasons: the line is perfectly metrical and the subject is inscribed unusually as "the which" rather than "the man". In the previous poem "Meditation on Wyatt 1" Harwood states her source in the epigraph:"*Whoso list to hunt*". "The which" in Wyatt's conceit suggests the speaker's lowly status in relation to the object of his affection, whom he follows like a faithful hound. Significantly, Harwood does not choose the line that begins Wyatt's stanza: "Forget not then thine own approved" (17). The identity of the actors ("We") in Harwood's poem is never established: Harwood and Wyatt, Harwood and the muse, Harwood and an unrequited love, perhaps Peter Bennie or Thomas Riddell. If the latter is the case, Harwood's "Meditation" like Wyatt's is about impossible love. Harwood's poem suggests, however, that although her attempts at seduction were never "approved" by the other (she did not need approval) she is no victim in the game of love. The imagined intercourse is celebrated forever in the language of passion: "our skin aflame with eastern airs, / changed beyond reason, but not rhyme" (lines 6-7). Thus the subject, "The which so long hath thee so loved", triumphantly claims her *jouissance*: "counting the pulsebeats foot to foot / our splendid metres limb to limb" (lines 9-10). Just as she reshapes Wyatt's text, Harwood orchestrates the world of love by writing joyful release into the pulsing rhythm.

Feminine power is suggested literally and metaphorically in the previously mentioned Harwood poem "Songs of Eve": "Bone of my bone, I know without / remembering, I speak your tongue" (Part II, lines 11-12, CP 428). An echo of Yeats's "Solomon and the Witch" is heard as the female lover plays the creative role: she instigates the "lunatic" moment by "crowing up" new life ("Songs of Eve" Part IV, line 8). Her equal and active role is affirmed later: "It is I, it is you, / in a crown of gold feathers / soaring and singing" (Part IV, lines 19-21). A series of grim parodies follows, as Eve

sees philosophers, saints, King David and Solomon off to their deaths. With the god figures removed, Eve is able to make her voice heard and joyously claim her crown. Thus Harwood's Eve sings the praise of "mistress, whore and wife", whose "body like a hollow reed" (Part IX, 3) has been used by men to shape music and language through the centuries. A similar trope occurs in Yeats's "Crazy Jane" poems, discussed in the chapter "Joy and Madness". Harwood's speaker is not content to remain de-centred. In the final lines of the "Songs of Eve", Harwood's protagonist draws parallels between the human body, nature, music and words, finally leaving the inheritance of her "soul" to her daughters:

> My soul dares to reveal itself
> now God himself is dead.
> Old earth will give her yielding seed
> to see my daughters fed
> (Part IX, lines 13-16).

Here, "My soul" and "Old earth" form a metonymical relationship, displacing then replacing God in an act of substitution. There are echoes of Irigaray's challenge to Nietzsche, that the forgotten woman is reclaiming her powerful voice and rediscovering her own 'becoming' beyond the life traditionally defined by subordination to the 'sufferings' of the hero (1991: 5). We hear resonances too of another Harwood poem, "My Tongue is My Own" (CP 90). At issue are the inscription and then the reversal, so vital in Harwood's poetry, of the archetypal linear narratives which typically end in the glorified death of the (male) hero. Renewal must instead come to the fore.

In Harwood's poetry, joy is produced when the human subject remains firmly at the centre of her natural and imagined world. Thus the process of de-doxification underpinning postmodernist poetry is far from complete in her oeuvre, wherein Harwood appears to endorse the "gift" of humanism described by Catherine Stimpson: "'the belief in a conscious self that generates texts, meanings, and a substantial identity'" (cited in Hutcheon 2002: 36). The poet's personal position is perhaps revealed in "On History" (CP 474 - 475):

> The one word *history* means writing
> and what the written word records. 40

...
... and all the blood
that history spilt may do us good.
If history spilt it, who can blame us?
Take the third-person point of view,
simply observe what others do,
accept that institutions frame us,
remove all values, be resigned 50
to the huge folly of mankind.

Half Marx to that. We learn by knowing
the scope of human love and pain.
We go where we should go by *going*
(Lines 39-40; 45-55).

The last line of this quotation may be compared to the ending of Josephi's "Ithaca", discussed later in the chapter "Joy and Travel": "when it is time to go, I'll go". Where Josephi foregrounds passivity, observation and listening, Harwood suggests a more dynamic encounter. Rather than resign itself to its "folly", apprehended at second hand, humankind can learn by an active experiencing of the world.

Harwood makes a similar case in "'Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell'" written for the Tasmanian Peace Trust in 1993 (CP 493-501). The title and the opening lines address the writer's role in war: "Men bear arms, and fight, and the poets are there to sing it" (line 2). Drawing from a wide range of texts, Harwood makes her position clear as she acknowledges the world's need for calm and mercy. The joy to which she alludes comes from freedom: the individual searches for truth and freely chooses a side; the poet celebrates the right choices. Advocating for truth and free speech in the closing lines of "Freely they stood", Harwood writes:

So let us look at the living world with a kind of Socratic pleasure:
discover again and again the need for a calm and merciful vision
of what has been, and what is now, and what might be in the
future;
and fight, if we must fight, for truth "and stand among the
foremost
fighters, and endure our share of the blaze of battle."

The endorsement of peace is expressed as resistance to fighting, but where "truth" requires defence, "we" should "share" war's burden. It is not clear

whether "we" refers to poets, the Tasmanian Peace Trust or the general public. The definition of peace in terms of (justified) war is a paradox familiar to contemporary media consumers.[9] Nevertheless, the content of Harwood's conclusion points to an endorsement of the Socratic life, marked by the questioning of accepted ideas and the courageous statement of one's convictions to the end: "a kind of Socratic pleasure" and "a calm and merciful vision" are clear parallels that endorse peace. The septameters, unusual for Harwood, allow for the centering of key concepts: "world"; "need"; "now"; "truth", and "share". Further, the exhortation "So let us look" emphasizes the responsibility of those who write for public consumption and create the visual texts that are looked upon. The whole of the last stanza of "Freely they stood" opposes human frailty and art's durability. Peace and wisdom are conceptually linked in a way that suggests the possibility of endorsing peace rather than warfare in the visual media, including written texts. In this regard, as Gadamer contends, what is written elucidates what it means to be human and venerates the heroic through Mnemosyne (1992: 89). There is a suggestion in Harwood's poem that, while postmodernism has allowed a plethora of books to be written and divergent values to be given equal moral weight, science unfortunately is still given the greatest credence in society: "it wasn't the Poets' Union that gave us nuclear weapons" (line 176). Harwood is making a serious point, yet as a pastiche of Milton and a number of other writers, the epic "Freely they stood" can be read as ironical in tone. As John Stephens and Ruth Waterhouse suggest, "fallen angels" will always act according to universal modes of behaviour (1990: 229), and Harwood wryly suggests here that the appropriate reaction to human posturing about peace might well be to laugh.

Harwood is able to laugh at herself and her craft as well, and it is impossible to conclude this section without touching on her celebration of poets and poetry writing, "On Poetry" (CP 440-441), written for Melbourne's 1987 Spoleto Festival. The poem reproduces an imagined dialogue between Harwood and a visiting angel, who has become bored with modern hymns:

[9] As Ahmed points out, fear makes us turn away from the feared object and towards 'home': "that 'turning towards' involves the repetition or reiteration of signs of 'fellowship'" (2004: 74).

"the words in execrable taste, / all elegant reasoning replaced / by doubt and hope" (lines 10-12). Harwood takes up the form and tone of Biblical language to curse the cultural "Philistines" and "Ph.Ds" who surround her, and to urge the angel to see that poetry is given its "rightful" place as "the first / among the arts" (lines 24-25). In the new universal economy based on poetry production, there will be much rejoicing among poets as bookstores "rise" like liquor outlets and verse collections are sold like beer in six-packs. Despite the lightness of tone and the obvious parody, underpinned by her ironic use of the Pushkin stanza, Harwood concludes with praise to poets and to the "mystery" (line 116) which poetry reveals and conceals:

> Everyone's called, but few are chosen
> to wrestle from our common speech,
> the brightness of the word, to reach
> the life that lies beyond our frozen
> habits of thought, to show with love
> much that can not be spoken of.
> (Lines 121-126)

The editors' notes on the poem (CP 601) indicate that Harwood is referring in the final lines to *Tractatus* VII by Wittgenstein, who believed poetry fell outside the sphere of common language use. The full rhymes "speech" and "reach" underline Harwood's conviction that poets are the chosen elite among communicators, struggling as they do with "the net of language" (line 118) to create works that "show with love" (125). There is no evidence of the self-questioning apparent in Yeats's "The Circus Animals' Desertion", no authorial self-analysis and no new modes of poetic expression, perhaps because the piece was written for a specific purpose and audience.

For Harwood, the right choice of metaphor, rhythm and structure can turn songs of suffering into blessings. The poem "Little Buttercup's Picture Book" (CP 445), for example, reveals the enduring effects of childhood enculturation. Delight continues to be drawn from the "honeycomb / of unforgotten rhythms" (lines 18-19). Metaphorical parallels show that the ground under discussion is a way of being and writing founded on texts that draw joy from the "witless" universe: "what themes, what metaphors return,

/ timeless, mysterious and insightful / of our long quest for happiness; / of ugliness and pain that bless" (lines 134-137). Rather than expose language as a structure that affirms oppression and limitation, Harwood foregrounds the reassurance "timeless" metaphors provide to the privileged class of readers: the poet has been invited on this occasion to address "friends" (line 3) and invited guests of the Children's Book Council of Tasmania. Pleasure is reproduced in representations of permanence and stability, and Harwood's continued appropriation of established forms and content from textual sources is taken up further in the chapter "Joy and Rebirth". Harwood is not stating that readers should accept whatever they read. In "Little Buttercup", she conveys the potential of core narratives to exert moral force: "I must do / things the right way ..." (lines 81-82). It is necessary therefore to interrogate the "truth" of moral propositions as they are presented:

> … Eve bit the apple
> and left her progeny to grapple
> with every consequence of it.
> Praise be to Lucifer she bit!
> (Lines 117-120)

As Yeats does in the aforementioned "Solomon and the Witch", Harwood draws attention to the interpretation of texts, in particular Biblical texts: "each has his own definition" (line 124).

There is a difference between the position of Harwood and the point of view of Josephi, who values books in terms of their "uncertainties" in "Tuscan Dream", discussed later in this chapter. In the two occasional poems by Harwood mentioned here, "On Poetry" and "Little Buttercup's Picture Book", the poet is clearly appealing to a particular audience (educated, culturally aware) and it may be for this reason that her view is expressed unequivocally: joy is produced in a way that pleases the (paying? invited?) audience. The shocks guaranteed to titillate ("Praise be to Lucifer she bit!") are quickly smoothed over, and is not hard to imagine Harwood mixing with the crowd after the event, answering questions and perhaps signing copies of her latest poetry collection. In short, occasional poems arise from the requirement or desire to serve particular business and social functions, and there is an expectation that the audience will have a

particular mindset towards the literary work. There is in any case a pleasing familiarity about Harwood's well-known poems: the detective game and the pursuit of a familiar source is enjoyable, a pleasure acknowledged by the poet herself in "Little Buttercup". It is possible too that Harwood, like Wordsworth in "Ode to Duty", is suggesting that the (re)production of joy forms a vital part of her work as a poet.

Harwood's playfulness contrasts with the earnestness of many poems by Yeats and Josephi. Nevertheless, in the work of all three chosen poets there is ample evidence that unbridled joy is the privileged domain of women. There are suggestions that it is time that originary narratives foregrounding the masculine presence and the *logos* were subverted to further the production of joy through the creation of new works and new, heartfelt narratives. Repetition is at the heart of Josephi's "Cutting Up Heidegger" (FNP 239)[10], which provides a window into the work of the philosopher who speculated: "What Are Poets For?" In Heidegger's view, poets save the earth by drawing nature into the world of language in such a way as to hallow nature and to allow it to continue to reveal itself (Rigby, Kate 2004: 7). In "Cutting Up Heidegger", Josephi underlines the problematic nature of using familiar texts as 'standing reserve', as the German philosopher might say. It may be enjoyable to de- and re-construct meaning to suit the individual or group, but the activity risks becoming meaningless if one overlooks the central importance of context.[11]

Text recycling is brought to the fore as the theme of "Cutting Up Heidegger". Here, Josephi explores the difficulties inherent in re-assembling large amounts of a particular work, in this case *Sein und Zeit*, to create a new text and new meaning. Language presents the first layer of textual complexity, but important texts in particular carry the imprint of the time at which they were written. Josephi's friend Liz Story is presented seated at the piano with scissors and a bucket of printed fragments in hand. To create an authentic 'improvisation', the original text should be emptied of its "metaphysics", but the task may prove futile:

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[11] Beate Josephi. "Pilgrim Routes", *Four New Poets*, ed. Judith Rodriguez (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1993), 183-264. Used throughout.

You improvise on the keys, try
either end of the scale, get
into different rhythms or see words
gather meaning where meaning 10
should gather words.

Dasein, as you know, is bound to death
and you play your own version of *duende*
late at night with your ice-cream bucket
full of sentences, scissors in hand
when the sun no longer bleaches your senses
driving along Balboa Boulevard

cutting up sections from *Sein und Zeit*
trying for a seamless new texture
of fragmentary pieces as deeply rooted 20
as the pines of the Black Forest, a new
metaphysics, not a new age.

You are not the only one playing this game.
Sentences tear where they were not meant to,
along earlier perforations, revealing
innocence is impossible.

Remember, in German promises are also
a slip of the tongue and the words
in your bucket may slip you up too
neither disclosing the nature of being 30
nor remaining mere metaphor.

Places are used synecdochically to represent the people who inhabit them, the sun-bleached Balboa Boulevard for Liz Story and the pine-dark Black Forest for Martin Heidegger. The strong binary contrasts (light/dark, new world/old world) serve to underline the temporal framing: "Sentences tear ... / ... along earlier perforations" (lines 24 - 25). Further, the textual fragments that Story tries to assemble are too "deeply rooted" (line 20) in place and history to be recycled; they "may slip you up" (line 29). Thus the syntactic parallel and the negation, "a new metaphysics / not a new age" (lines 21-22), point to Josephi's revelation: reconstruction can neither account for nor escape Being and Time. Josephi's final stanza draws on Heidegger's own insistence that language only reveals its potential for making meaning on close examination of form and context.

The subject (Liz Story) apparently speculates on achieving something

new, an expression of the postmodern joy of "improvisation" or *pastiche*, but "Cutting Up Heidegger" raises valid ethical considerations. Key twentieth century thinkers like Lacan and Derrida have debated whether to carve up a written work destroys its iterability: is it possible to say that the written word has a "proper" place or context if it might be quoted in future contexts that the author had not begun to be able to imagine? (Sharpe, Matthew in Reynolds, Jack & Jonathon Roffe 2004: 69). By introducing a third voice, Josephi both includes herself in and distances herself from Story's dialogue with Heidegger, and highlights what Ian Gregson describes as the possibility of making "*carnivalistic mésalliances*" (1996: 10). While postmodernism in general allows free associations across all values, thoughts, phenomena and things, even those that were once self-enclosed, postmodern poetry tends to highlight ironic difference rather than simply enact infinite regression into textuality (Hutcheon, 2002: 91). Ironic representation can, as Hutcheon goes on to state, underline in a way that is far from ponderous the potentially positive oppositional and contestatory nature of parody. Josephi provides an example in the important poem "Ithaca", elaborated in the chapter "Joy and Travel".

In "Cutting up Heidegger", the line "innocence is impossible" (line 26) puts paid, however, to naive notions of enjoying the text (and nature 'behind' it) for what they are. Any new metaphysics would have to take into account or ignore not only the incomprehensibility (*Unbegreiflichkeit*) of nature that Heidegger foregrounded, but also the complex socio-cultural matrix in which he wrote. Indeed, nature (if not place) as real and inhabitable is left so far behind among the considerations central to "Cutting Up Heidegger" that echoes of 'innocent' Wordsworthian joys are forgotten.

In other poems, Josephi uses distancing strategies to ensure the production of joy in text: "ecstatic" dwelling can take place within the body of writing itself. This new consciousness of the way joy can be produced in and through texts may align with the prevailing view of contemporary society. Living with the accelerating tempo of change, people are primarily interested in their key social relationships rather than spiritual icons, and the construction of meaning and beliefs is more rapid and fluid than in the past

(Ferry, Luc 2007). To satisfy this change, new narratives which celebrate or question the prevailing attitudes of consumerism are required. As a force which constitutes affirming-willing, as Deleuze and Guattari might say, poetry can serve as a productive and producing 'desiring-machine' with roots in politics, history, philosophy, art and all forms of culture, a theme further elaborated in the chapter "Joy and Desire". Poems are evolving worlds, writes Claire Colebrook: they defy accepted, hierarchical concepts of what is or what should be; poetry taps into an exponentially expanding root system, the 'flow of life' itself (2002: 101). Poets can choose to celebrate radical differences rather than limitations. Indeed, as Deleuze suggests, the arts in general might exert a disruptive function: rather than represent, the artist might formulate a resistance to unhelpful ideas, furthering the generation of new cultural and political potentialities (2007: 328). And such 'disruptive' poetry might produce *jouissance*. Challenging previously accepted views in content as well as structure, it allows a closer approach to the other through a new understanding of truth as neither simple nor self-evident, but dynamic, evolving and optimistic. In Josephi's poetry, writing offers the chance to open a conversation with the past in order to allow new and promising stories to take root.

The first problem with reinscription, previously mentioned, is the attachment of language to metaphysics. The second is that all kinds of representation can distort one's vision, so that real people, real events and real suffering are forgotten.[12] Josephi is careful to show that this is not the case in her poems about refugees, notably in the cycle "Germany 1989". A balance must be reached between the representation of real cruelties and the revelation of happier potentialities. When originary myths and psychoanalytical theory are subverted, for example, we are released from the need to propagate transcendent, even violent, histories: these experiences can be opened from existing texts and thought into a virtual flowering, where all endings and beginnings are possible. Such an expansion, albeit impersonal, is Utopian and 'at one with ethics and joy'

[12] In this regard, Ahmed (after de Beauvoir) describes the hidden values behind 'happiness': 'wishful' politics can quickly become a politics that 'demands that others live according to a wish' (2010: 2).

(Colebrook 1992: 157).[13]

Josephi's "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" (FNP, 248-249), also discussed in the chapter "Joy and Desire", can be read from this promising perspective:

> On closing my eyes I acknowledge
> the largest letters, spelling my name.
> *Beati illi*, blessed are those who
> like me are assigned to the smallest hour
> as light offends their eye and I prefer 20
>
> the unspoken secret sounds of the dark.
> My night-blue complexion and curls match
> the canopy posts, cushion and bed frame
> and my strong arms & rounded back direct
> their finesse to avoid tedious exertion.
>
> Yes, I am praiseworthy. Why else would
> my inscription, beautifully creafted,
> begin with the words, blessed are those
> who relieve misery & do not inflict pain.
> Idly shall they continue ... 30

The reality of the speaker's frame and the inanimate objects in it are suggested in the fragments from an illuminated manuscript or perhaps a medieval sculpture in wood. Together, the objects suggest a world redefined through the inventiveness of the author, who situates the subject/object at the still centre of the (in)action. As discussed later in the chapter "Joy and Desire", any action which takes place in "Heraldic Animal" is on the plane of perception and signification and connects with Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*. The (real) heraldic beast is only active in the sense that, in a parodical manoeuvre, the "dead branch" is removed from its mouth and it is given a living voice. Rather than perpetuate its existence as the objectification of a great family's past, the animal achieves freedom through what Colebrook calls a 'literary epiphany' (1992: 156), a transformative experience disclosing what is seen and felt as if it were viewed by nobody in a virtual dimension. In this instance, hybrid cultural identity creates a 'substitute utopia', and an optimistic challenge is issued against conventional

[13] Colebrook goes on to elaborate the Deleuzean idea of the 'nomadic' freedom that displaces judgment and containment: 'nomads' make intuitive connections and sense the infinite differences that nuance the whole. For Deleuze's argument, see "Nomadic Thought" (2004: 252 – 261).

truths and imperious assertions (Eagleton 2003: 51).

Josephi adapts rather than adopts old ways of saying and being, and repetition in "Heraldic Animal" is used to affirm joyous liberation. The St Francis canticle is used as a textual frame, perhaps to establish a temporal connection and to (re)construct the heraldic beast's historical context. It is made clear, however, that the current text (the poem) reflects on another text (the canticle), which in turn reflects on the Biblical Sermon on the Mount. Further, a metonymical link may be made between the heraldic animal and the inclusive communities led by Saint Francis and depicted with him in manuscripts, carvings and stained glass, for 'today, the text loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination' (Barthes 1977: 26). This 'burden' is perhaps inevitable, but Josephi keeps the mood light and playful in "Heraldic Animal". The poem contributes to evidence of the beast's "Heraldic" existence, but the strong element of visual cohesion throughout leaves the impression that the animal is a representation of a representation. There is no real suggestion that the animal is becoming human (or vice versa) and moral or ethical judgments are deflected. Instead, the animal happily contemplates the details and singularities of its world. Time becomes irrelevant as life is played out in a present, which opens to the future and co-exists with a past full of possibilities, which is rewritten as we read.

The distancing involved in the animal's stylization is seen in terms of inaction: "idly shall they continue". Idleness is not to be understood here pejoratively, but rather in terms of an act of resistance that produces an enduring, expanding state of joy. While the author acknowledges the familiar masculine presence of the peaceable saint who welcomed animals, the poetic creation is not to be limited by existing written and visual texts. Nor is the "Animal" merely a reductive representation of a more complex text. Textual production here means opening out new ways to create selfhood, self-expression and satisfaction. The poet's stance may be paradoxically complicitous with patriarchal institutions such as the church and the feudal system in "Heraldic Animal", but it is consciously so. Josephi enters that world and interacts with certain parts of it to show that text

cannot be constrained by context. Thus she provides an example of the kind of poetry that Brian McHale describes, where desire 'empties out' into text (2000: 571).

The joy produced in a Josephi poem does not have the dramatic quality which Harwood and Yeats often foreground in evocations of the sublime. A comparison may, however, be made between the way in which joy as a mood or state is evoked in "Heraldic Animal" and in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey":

> … that blessed mood
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,
> Is lightened – that serene and blessed mood
> In which the affections gently lead us on,
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body and become a living soul,
> While, with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.
> (Lines 38 – 50)

In Wordsworth's famous poem, visual memory is revived from a store of real experiences in nature: paradoxically, the eye "made quiet" is best able to make sense of the world, which is otherwise "unintelligible" to humankind. Josephi's poem suggests that engagement with visual texts rather than nature itself multiplies the possibilities for enjoyment; humans have the products of centuries to enjoy at their leisure from unlimited points of view. The pleasurable sensation evoked is one step removed from the original act of creation perhaps, but it is nevertheless immensely satisfying.

It is not essential to know that "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" was written just after the fall of the Berlin Wall, when thousands of East Germans were fleeing to the West. As Eagleton points out, each reader brings her own history to bear as she reads a poem. Yet the pleasure produced by a poem is enhanced when one's ideological stance is gratified; it becomes possible to 'harness pleasure to political ends, and formulate those ends in terms of

pleasure' (1986: 179). In this case, the title "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" establishes a relationship denounced under communism and affirmed by capitalism. In 1990 many Germans perhaps discovered, or rediscovered, a (politically incorrect) passion for timeless luxury and beauty. Josephi makes no apologies for suggesting a nexus between joy and the production of art, leisure and wealth.

Indeed, the same nexus is suggested in "Tuscan Dream" (FNP 191-192). Time slides between now (the summer sojourn in a Tuscan villa which may or may not be imagined) and then, the early Renaissance when the town was built. Josephi's idle artists retreat to their inner world to lie in bed, to read and to observe the landscape:

> For weeks they did nothing. They lay in hot rooms
> on whose ceiling at night, the streetlamps
> contrived strange patterns. Lilies, moon, star-cores.
>
> They read books whose expansive style embraced whole worlds
> and particularly their uncertainties. Read without dreaming.
> Outside the landscape brooded. People scratched hay together,
> bundled it into squares. Olives ripened, and grapes.
> (Lines 1 – 7)

Here, "streetlamps" and "strange patterns" (lines 2 and 3) introduce a visual field defined by light and shadows, which flicker and blur the realities of time and place. The string of lexical choices that follows describes a rhythm of life unchanged since the early Renaissance, recognisable from existing texts. Beyond the bright rooms where "They" read books lies the shadow world of the peasants. Spare syntax and the verbs "brooded" and "scratched" (line 6) define the social realities of a feudal life which still exists, and establish a contrast between rural realities and the lovers' rich, interior realm. Lexical choices suggest that reading and daydreaming reveal to the lovers a universe constituted by its lack of limitation: "expansive style"; "particularly their uncertainties", where "their" refers to "whole worlds". The way in which the artists / observers construct their world(s) comes to the fore. As in other poems by Josephi, "The windows" (line 8) become an active entity, framing their point of view. Set apart from the 'real' action of the world outside, the artists' interior space is centred on the bed near the windows,

which allow for idle contemplation. By contrast, "Outside" is defined by the hard, physical labour required for survival and the social bond ("together") that prefigures political disruptions and reconciliations.

The artists belong to the fortunate class whose gaze embraces the landscape from a distance and reshapes it to suit their own purposes: 'The joy in shaping and reshaping – a primeval joy!' writes Nietzsche (1968: 272). Although Josephi uses the third person, the speaker's point of view registers a reflection of a reflection, that of the leisured observers in their "upper rooms" (lines 8 and 27) who pursue their desires at will. The contrasting spatial signifiers "Outside" and "hot rooms" affirm the distance between the field workers and the privileged class indoors:

> Motionless they lay in the upper rooms. The windows showed them
> cloud at night; towards morning they saw fog over the river-bed.
> At noon, the overclear landscape. No dreams, only details. 10
> A landscape hiding its valleys and showing up distance
> only with a paling of colour.
>
> One morning they painted. Slowly they drew up pink walls and
> battlements, banners waved from the tower. And in front of
> the pale red walls they put tents. Beautifully striped tents
>
> with golden piping, braids and tassels where roofs and sides met.
> A mighty field of red and white stripes.
>
> But there was dust around the tents, a martial glistening
> of spears and lances. The dust of noon had caught up with them.
> Soon the shutters would have to be closed, the pot of basil 20
> shifted into the shade.
>
> In the half darkness of room and wine they designed the inner
> courtyard. He drew in a fountain carried by strong animal backs,
> arranged tiles in intricate patterns. She brought fig and
> pomegranate trees which grew with the falling of water until
> their fruit gave in to ripeness and thudded on the hot stone.
> A revelation of the beauty of inner wounds.
>
> They went to their bed in the upper rooms. Lilies, moons,
> star-cores: their Courtyard of Lions, their cloister, their passion.
> (Lines 8 - 29)

As Eagleton suggests, it is virtually impossible for any reality to intrude upon the postmodern space unless it be a representation: 'If art no longer

reflects, it is not because it seeks to change the world rather than mimic it, but because there is in truth nothing there to be reflected, no reality which is not itself already image, spectacle, simulacrum' (1986: 133). The artists of "Tuscan Dream" do not seek to change the world. The mood created by Josephi is one of detached, contemplative pleasure; *jouissance* only escapes through intimacies glimpsed at the edges of the poem.

In their enclosed Utopia, the artists are untouched by political upheaval and free to enjoy visual (re)constructions with little to disturb them: the military tents they paint are merely décor, beautifully striped, "with golden piping, braids and tassels" (line 16). They can ignore (close the shutters against) any intrusions from real events: "martial glistening" (line 18); "dust of noon" (19). Their distorted sense of time is affirmed by metaphors borrowed from ancient texts such as "The Song of Songs" and recycled through the ages. The original Arabian courtyard, for example, is painted as the site of courtship before the lovers ascend to their bed in the "upper" rooms: "their cloister, their passion" (line 29). Parallels are drawn between sexual exploration and written and visual texts, culminating in the nominal group "A revelation of the beauty of inner wounds" (line 27). The highly figurative language further draws attention to the construction of art and sensuality through text, specifically sacred text, with creative (re)production seen as a celebratory process that "closes the shutters" against the real-life struggle taking place around and outside the inner sanctum.

As the title suggests, "Tuscan Dream" represents a non-reality. The textual self-reflexivity of the poem might thus be seen to confront in its own way 'the doxa, the unacknowledged politics, behind the dominant representations of the self' (Hutcheon 2002: 37). Within the creative process, for example, representations carry gender (he paints tiles in intricately crafted patterns, she paints fig and pomegranate trees bursting with fruit), perhaps in deference to the given socio-historical context. Neither human body is privileged; the shifter "their" in the concluding line indicates that both artists play a role in creating their version of an ideal world that surpasses the limits of time and violent history.

Does "Tuscan Dream" confirm or disrupt established perceptions? Does

it produce contentment or *jouissance?* Gadamer's discussion of artistic enjoyment as described differently by Schleiermacher and Hegel provides a useful lens (2004: 159). Schleiermacher contended that taking works out of context and trying to reconstruct the original circumstances of production would prove futile. For Hegel, the works themselves were like apples pulled from the tree. In making meaning of them, any attempt at providing a historical perspective would be external to the project, which requires thoughtful and imaginative mediation in the contemporary context (*Erinnerung und Vorstellung*) rather than reconstruction (Gadamer 2004: 161). By constructing a Hegelian 'thinking relationship' with the past, Josephi is able to use old paradigms in new ways that are productive of joy.

In "Tuscan Dream" as in "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" Josephi creates physical and metaphysical spaces for her artists, whose process of production and representation constitutes a peaceful, sensual and pleasurable way of being in the world. Joy is still produced in language that echoes familiar metaphysical texts, but we hear inflections rather than an insistent ringing. Harwood and Josephi's inscriptions of the suffering-ecstasy binary and the role of language in the production of joy are quite different. Josephi eschews traditional structure, rhyme and rhythm, and thereby dispenses with the limitations imposed by accepting the forms (and the so-called truths) passed down in iconic texts. Both female poets, however, represent real suffering and both give voice to the rapturous woman whose word overturns the law and all its limitations. More will be made of this in the chapter "Joy and Desire". Josephi emphasizes more directly perhaps the role of the repetition/writing process to exceed personal experience and judgment of what is seen to be morally good or perverse. When Harwood acknowledges human tribulation as a prelude to joy, we often hear the voice of the lamenting prophet, who adapts familiar structures to challenge the other and trap him in his own language "net".

Josephi's conceptualization of the production of impersonal joy aligns in some respects with Yeats's later work. Yeats tends to concretize while Josephi works in the abstract, but in both cases the art and the text itself

are seen to produce joy rather than the original act, of which writing is the secondhand reflection. As Colebrook suggests, the 'literary epiphany' that produces elation and celebrates difference opens up the experience of an event as if it were released from the shadow of the painful past; joy is experienced in a pure, virtual or essential dimension (2002: 156). The joyous poems of Yeats and Harwood overturn the narrative of the Fall and celebrate innocence. Josephi's concern is often the representation of actual entities and events, which poses an ethical dilemma. Ways in which people, places and history are (re)constructed by their observers are emphasized, although Josephi makes little attempt to convince readers to adopt any particular system of beliefs and structures assumed to be productive of joy. In this regard, Harwood's position is revealed as ambiguous, dependent upon purpose, audience and ironic distance. The theme of (real) human and non-human nature as a text, which might be overwritten to serve a particular purpose, is developed in greater detail in the next chapter. "Joy and Nature" explores the representation of physical and metaphysical worlds, immanence and transcendence, and the implications such forms of representation have for the production of joy.

The Production of Joy

Joy and Nature

Being joyful often entails being 'moved' or 'affected' by something in such a way that thoughts of joy summon thoughts of the joyous 'object' (Ahmed 2010: 35). This chapter deals with poems about nature, and the metaphorical associations made between humans and the environment. As an object, nature is traditionally attributed as 'good' and worthy of joy. And 'good' objects accumulate 'positive affective value' in society and in culture, where they provide a 'shared horizon of experience' (35). The introductory section of this chapter briefly outlines the history of nature as a 'horizon' shared by a long line of poets. Later, the focus shifts to the ways in which Yeats and Harwood represent nature in terms of the relationship between humans and the environment. Josephi, I argue, problematizes the assumptions humans make about nature and their right to appropriate it for their own purposes. My analyses are indebted to Kate Soper's careful investigation of metaphysical traditions and western discourses that register humankind's 'self-projections' onto nature (1995: 10). The ways in which the three poets place a cultural value on nature as a 'joyful' object are explored, and the implications of their representations of nature are questioned, with regard to both human and non-human entities and the production of joy.

'Joy' and 'nature' have often shared their histories. The following 'history' of nature is abbreviated: as Soper warns, nature is so complex and problematic a word that it almost defies definition (1995: 1). 'Nature', rooted in the Latin *nasci* (to be born) has been applied as a concept to human nature's innate frailties (Gross 95). Yet '*nasci*' connotes nature's own generative power, the very process of 'making'. In the Genesis narrative, the earliest humans lived harmoniously within their natural environment, and the Biblical concept of nature as a place of peace, harmony and innocence is shared with Hellenistic poets. Theocritus (c. 316 – 260) wrote 'pastorals', that is, idylls or vignettes about nature, and the herdsmen who supposedly

enjoyed and celebrated the pleasures of being and working on the land. For the court of Alexandria, the poems of Theocritus provided entertainment because they contrasted sophisticated city life with the poet's boyhood in rural Sicily (Gifford 1999: 15). For Theocritus, on the other hand, the pastorals perhaps provided the opportunity to critique the Alexandrian way of life. From the beginning, Greg Garrard argues, humans were interested in human nature rather than the environment (2004: 35). As towns expanded, writers and thinkers continued to desire a more peaceful location, untouched by noise and industry. Virgil, writing two centuries after Theocritus, set his *Eclogue IV* in Arcadia, an idealized version of a mountainous region on the Pelepponesus peninsula.

Deeply entrenched in western culture, 'pastoral' as a trope allowed for the 'pathetic fallacy' – the attribution of human states to the environment – along with a representation of nature that masked the hard realities of country life (Garrard 35). The idealized past surfaced again in Jacopo Sannazaro's "Arcadia" (1502), and the English translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (1567) reminded the ambitious Elizabethans of a Golden Age prior to urbanization and colonization. In his late-sixteenth-century "Arcadia", Sir Philip Sidney drew attention to the moral and social purposes of the pastoral, and embedded the oppositions that are now familiar to readers of poems about nature: worker/master, outward/inward, strongest/weakest (Gifford 1999: 25). In the *Holy Sonnets* (1609), John Donne reintroduced the 'topos of the bridal soul' – familiar from Hosea and Origen's commentary on the *Song of Songs* – and the passionate language with which the Bride welcomed her Saviour's ravishment (Gross 2006: 93). The person 'reborn into the godly commonwealth', Gross adds, is the product of humiliation, anxiety and 'feminine passivity'. This idea is addressed in the work of all three poets. God's will was central to Alexander Pope's essay on the pastoral (1704), which emphasized humans' 'God given' right to enjoy nature. Pope's landscape resembled the Biblical Eden, and nature's bounty became identified with the willingness of the benefactor to provide, an idea pertinent to the analysis of Yeats's poems.

Clearly, poems that praised the lord/Lord offered the opportunity to

mask the real exploitation of humans and the environment: 'nature' was a site of projection in the Freudian sense, where the desired object was a selectively remembered past (Gifford 1999: 40). Real nature was 'overwritten' by humans. In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the rural environment offered a healing space that allowed humans to discover their own natures and desires. Christian discourse flourished again during the Romantic period, and to enter a relationship with God meant adopting 'feminine' characteristics such as passivity (Gross 95). Romantics John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, however, endorsed the idea of poet as 'healer'. In his book on joy and neurosis, psychoanalyst Volney Gay claims that many of Shelley's lines are 'rhetorically and psychologically valid', and that Keats's 'respect' for the presence of loss, and for the poet's capacity to 'welcome' melancholy into poetry, make joy possible (2001: 33). A century before Freud, Volney contends, Romantic poets recognized the productive power of the lost object, and sought to represent joy as arising out of one's relationship to nature, a source of solace even as it promised finitude (33). Indeed, in Wordsworth's poetry, being in nature allowed humans to recognize and sustain the tension that exists between the recognition of death and the longing for immortality (34). In the work of Romantics such as Charlotte Smith, the landscape affirmed the woman's sense of isolation 'without the mutual support groups' available to the male Romantics (Gifford 1999: 97). Each of these themes is taken up in this chapter.

Heinrich Heine perhaps most cogently expressed Romantic longing in "Die Lorelei": "*Ich weiss nicht, was soll es bedeuten, / Dass ich so traurig bin*" ("I don't know what it's supposed to mean, that I am so sad"). The peaceful Rhine at dusk became a site of mourning for the mythical object of desire, the Lorelei, who had once lured sailors to their deaths on the rocks. Myth, death, the other and woman formed powerful attributions to 'nature'. For ecocritic Greg Garrard, Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) was the first writer to deal comprehensively with the dilemmas associated with representing nature in poetry. A 'prototype' for later ecocritical works, Schiller's essay "*Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung*" ("On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry") divided writers into two groups, those who were

biocentric and those who pursued nature as a projection (Garrard 2004: 44). The essay profoundly influenced the Romantics and moderns and prefigured the postmodern era (see Rigby 2004: 99). It is not suggested here that the three poets under study read Schiller, merely that his essay provides an important point of departure from which to begin the discussion of nature, joy and poetry.

Schiller's discussion, as poet and (eco)critic, of Cartesian and Kantian philosophy brings important dualities to light: classicism and romanticism, the real and the imagined, the physical and metaphysical worlds, immanence and transcendence, and objective and subjective modes of thought. Contrasting late-eighteenth-century life with the living-in-nature of the ancient world, Schiller argues that it is important to acknowledge that each living entity has its own being or existence that depends on other links in the system: *Dasein*.[14] Although natural entities have no free will, they continue to exist around us. Nature is not a concept (69), yet the 'sentimental' poet reflects upon nature as though it were an idea upon which poet and reader alike might take a personal stance (23). The unity of nature's diverse being becomes lost as poets grapple with their own judgment and ideas of the eternal. Multiple points of view inclining more towards realism or more towards the imaginary open up, and the gap between the real and the imagined becomes the source of mixed feelings and sensations. Schiller theorizes that the more accepting realist seeks and achieves happiness and pleasure, while the idealist struggles with moral principles as he strives continually for ennoblement. Only the highly accomplished poet, Schiller claims, can combine feeling with a thorough understanding of nature, and underpin these with a solid theoretical base and an unbiased sense of observation (72). The task for poets then is to balance experience and sensibility with '*unserer bloßen Vernunft'* (our mere intellect, mental understanding) in order that nature might be grasped in its eternal, whole and absolute necessity (81).

Perhaps in deference to Goethe, informed and critical friend, natural scientist, poet, playwright and novelist, Schiller avoids the suggestion that

[14] For Heidegger's elaboration of *Dasein* in "Being and Time", see Krell ed. 1993: 81-87.

humankind has mastery over nature. His seminal essay, however, illuminates the questions that philosophy, criticism and ecopoetics have variously sought to answer, among these: How and why does nature bring us joy and in what forms might this joy best be expressed? The romanticization of nature might be conveyed, for example, through an elegiac lament over humankind's alienation from it and a commensurate yearning for a prelapsarian way of life. Simple delight might be evoked in an idyll, through the representation of an imagined time when humankind supposedly lived at one with nature and divine beings and shared a universal experience of unmitigated joy. Either representation of nature, sometimes described as sublime or as beautiful, provides a limited understanding of what nature needs and a heightened view of what nature offers as a resource that responds to humankind's different desires and projections.

As Soper (1995) explains in the chapter "Loving Nature", politics, class and geographic location are among the conditions that affect human beings' feelings about and representations of nature. Jefferson Holdridge observes that it was only immediately prior to the French Revolution that the beautiful and the sublime in nature came to be viewed generally in dialectical terms (2000: 2). He argues convincingly that Yeats, among others, wrote about nature from the point of view of personal experience as he tried to make sense of and reconcile the turbulent events around him. Successive revolutions and the loss of traditional hierarchical systems led to Yeats's understanding of history as cycles of rupture and reparation: Unity of Culture seemed an impossible dream in an era of little consensus, although it was still occasionally possible to glimpse a Unity of Being (Holdridge 2000: 3). Perhaps this is why Yeats sought and inscribed these elusive moments.

Yeats's sacred places are well known, the rocks and fens of western Ireland and the imagined deserts of North Africa and the Middle East. In his prose, however, Yeats puts forward the poems themselves as sites in which revelations and the reparation of the dualism between human and non-human nature might occur. In works recording the experience of 'tragic joy', pleasure and terror combine to elicit a *frisson* of recognition; the poem-

as-epiphany allows the finite and infinite, the sensual and the metaphysical, to be understood and felt simultaneously. Yeats's poetic language has the 'energy', to use Schiller's term (34), to drive the content and draw the reader into the quasi-religious experience of ecstasy. Thus possibilities for joy are glimpsed in moments during and between the disruptions and dramas of human life; the fragments of time are inscribed in expansive poems that foreground Yeats's belief in the possible unity of humankind, God and nature (*A Vision*, MW 430).

Despite wars and rapid changes in philosophy, cultural conditions and preferences, there has been a continuous and shared appreciation of nature, which has remained a 'fundamental site of aesthetic judgement' (Soper 1995: 244). Humans derive pleasure and enjoyment from nature, not only in terms of what it offers as a habitat, but as an object that appeals to the senses. There are suggestions in the aforementioned Schiller essay that the poet brings nature's apparent lack of thought and will into the human domain: nature might be seen as an 'achievement of human techne' (Rigby 2004: 101). Hölderlin (1770-1843), the German poet who influenced Heidegger – and who was by profoundly influenced by Schiller – goes further to establish the connection between human techne in the form of poetry and the resacralization of the earth as a locus of ecstatic dwelling. Poets bear the double responsibility of commemorating nature and letting it be.

Freud and his adherents introduced new conceptualizations of nature, taken up by poets such as Harwood. Joy could no longer be understood in its 'naive' sense as humankind's God/god-given right to live peacefully and harmoniously in nature. In Freudian discourse, joy appeared as an invention of civilization that restrained the instincts and protected itself from 'the overwhelming forces of nature' (Ricoeur 1996: 321). A new economy of truth and illusion had been set in place, and religion was presented in its functional capacity: to offer the means of renunciation and satisfaction that makes life bearable for humankind (321). The once-accepted belief in the earth as a sacred locus, joyously shared by humankind and nature, had been further eroded. Nevertheless, poets such as Harwood endorse two

persistent tenets of Christian thought: nature was placed under human dominion at the time of the creation, and nature is a system of signs that reveals the existence of God. Thus nature's joyous 'language' expresses a generative force that compensates for the *malaise* arising from humankind's incurable death instinct. Indeed, interaction with nature reconciles humans to the cruelty of fate and guards against *Angst*.

In Josephi's self-reflective poetry, human interactions with nature are more tentative. The unproblematic relationship between humans and nature, celebrated in the pastoral and in Christian narratives, is overturned to become the source of irony in poems where nature escapes human intervention, or speaks up for itself as a cultural object. In other poems, human acts of destruction come under question. Nature / 'nature' cannot be separated from the process of cultural 'making', since it is through this process that humans make meaning of their world. Humans are caught in the futile act of interpretation, as they anthropomorphize natural entities and attribute to them benefic or malefic intent. Nature provides no answers, it cannot 'talk back', except to confront humans with a visual representation of inevitable death. Thus suburban speakers anxiously contemplate the 'wild' from the safety of their houses. Opportunities for joyous interactions take place rarely, in a (metaphoric) reflection, in a moment of defiance or mediated by a cultural product. Yeats and Harwood, by contrast, often inscribe the metaphysical reverencing of nature common to Romantic poetry, which promotes an intimate relationship with nature as a source of natural delight.

The questions of ownership and how nature should be enjoyed are treated differently by each of the three poets in question. For Yeats, sparsely inhabited western Ireland offered 'wise' men the space and time to escape human drama, to meditate on life and death and to enjoy the sacred dance with nature. In Yeats's poems set in 'wild' nature, the mad, the simple-minded and the old are able to accept the inevitability of death as part of the natural process to which the human body is subjected. In "The Three Hermits", for example, the eldest is blessed with the joyous knowledge that he lives in harmony with nature: "On a windy stone, the

third, / Giddy with his hundredth year, / Sang unnoticed like a bird" (*Responsibilities* CP 54-55, lines 5-7). Yeats's old hermit is closer to the "Door of Death" than his companions, but his song voices his readiness to freely embrace the end of his natural life. Representations of humans' 'wild' nature are further elaborated in the chapter "Joy and Madness".

Nature, culture and inheritance

The 'country life' genre originated at the end of the sixteenth century and it retained an enduring popularity. The representation of the landscape proved successful over time because it tended to endorse 'the status quo of a stable society, from Sydney's *Arcadia* (1590), to Pope's *Windsor Forest* (1713), to Lickbarrow's *Poetical Effusions* (1814), to the contributors to *Georgian Poetry* (1912-1922), and to McKay Brown's *Fishermen with Ploughs* (1971)' (Terry Gifford, in Scott Bryson ed. 2004: 77). This endorsement is evident in Yeats's poetry, where human satisfaction, inheritance and the appropriation of nature are closely imbricated with superior lineage, achievement and mastery. It is well known that Yeats was supported by a generous benefactor, Lady Gregory, whose Coole Park estate provided him with many opportunities to enjoy nature. While honouring Lady Gregory, the Coole Park poems also staked a claim to the wealth and status of the landed gentry, who appropriated nature to serve their desire to rule. Indeed, it is hard to separate the identities of Lady Gregory and her estate. For Yeats, Gregory provided rare living evidence of the Unity of Being and Culture that he sought. She represented to the poet, as Holdridge perceptively states, 'the authority of the sublime and the partiality of the beautiful' (2000: 178). Coole Park, carefully tended by the estate's staff, merely served to frame and affirm Gregory's superiority.

The complex interaction between humans, nature, culture and history is acutely observed in Yeats's 1928 collection, *The Tower*. In "Blood and the Moon" (MW 124), Yeats declares his home Thoor Ballylee a "powerful emblem" (line 9), his "symbol" (15) and his "ancestral stair" (line 16). Clearly the Coole tower served several functions for Yeats. Lady Gregory secured Thoor Ballylee for Yeats at the modest price of thirty-five pounds

(Maddox 1999: 39). Although it required extensive restoration, the tower provided not only a dwelling place for Yeats and his wife, but also the perfect universal symbol within the Christian mystic tradition. That the tower represented a symbolic space in which the masculine and feminine antinomies could be accommodated was of course not an invention on Yeats's part. As Theodore Ziolkowski indicates in his discussion of the origins of tower symbolism, a tradition of Old Testament exegesis, ecclesiastical art and popular cults had continued to perpetuate the use of the symbol from late antiquity to the nineteenth century (1998: 30). In the "Song of Songs" (7.4), the bride's neck was compared to an ivory tower, and although the sacred tower became associated with the Christian church, the metaphorical connection between towers and women remained. In the Lauretian litany, Mary was represented as both the 'mystic rose' which bore the Davidic line and an ivory tower: "Rosa mystica, ora pro nobis, / Turris Davidica, ora" (in Ziolkowski 1998: 31). Both nature and culture in this instance reflected the endurance of tradition, bloodlines and the values of the nobility. Evidence of all these themes emerges in Yeats's poems and the tower symbol is richly productive of joy.

In "Blood and the Moon", the upper and lower parts of the tower are contrasted: the top is open to the light of sun and moon, with broken masonry and dusty windows, against which butterflies and moths clamour: in contrast, the lower tower's stout walls are seen to express permanence and to protect the poet and his family from the world outside. The poems which follow, "Coole Park, 1929" (to Lady Gregory's estate) and "Coole and Balleylee, 1931" (MW 126 - 128) set up a nexus between the poet and his generous mentor, while exploring the binary of nature and civilization. In "Coole Park, 1929", nature is represented as an indefatigable resource, which will eventually invade the house and obscure its stones under nettles and saplings. Still, Lady Gregory will remain in memory, literally or figuratively memorialized as "that laurelled head". In "Coole and Ballylee, 1931", nature assumes the shape and mood of the founding family and its inheritors: "A spot whereon the founders lived and died / Seemed once more dear than life; ancestral trees, / Or gardens rich in memory glorified" (lines

33 – 34). The edifice and its landscape are part of the ancestral inheritance, the product of superior stock. In the concluding stanza, Yeats enjoins his name to the names of a dying generation: "We were the last romantics – chose for theme / Traditional sanctity and loveliness" (lines 41-2). The juxtaposition here of three traditions, religious, cultural and literary, confirms an important identification with the grand estate: "Great rooms where travelled men and children found / Content or joy" (lines 29-30). Cultural property defies nature's impermanence and by representing memories of heritage, Coole gives lasting joy, at least to one particular class.

Certain poems in *The Tower* are written as though they were Yeats's last testament, and the safety of the poet and his wife was indeed threatened by an army of marauders who had already committed murder. Such is the scene in Part IV of "Meditations in a Time of Civil War" (MW 104):

> Life scarce can cast a fragrance on the wind,
> Scarce spread a glory to the morning beams,
> But the torn petals strew the garden plot;
> And there's but common greenness after that.
> And what if my descendants lose the flower …
> (Lines 5 - 9).

The "flower" is suggested in the earlier synecdoches "fragrance" and "torn petals", so that "Life" and "flower" become interchangeable as vehicle and tenor, and the ground is established as a discussion of the speaker's fate and the future of his line. Through a dense set of associations, the flowering rose comes to symbolise both nature and culture, the speaker's survival and the heritage ("vigorous mind") that he is able to pass on after his death. Inheritance and rupture are implied by the descriptor "torn" and confirmed by the lexical set denoting a burial site, "plot" and "common greenness". In the last stanza, the speaker affirms the universal master as process: "The Primum Mobile that fashioned us". "And I" (line 19) suggests a parallel: the speaker wishes to influence the next generation and endow it with a superior inheritance, the cultural heritage that will endure beyond death. Harwood takes up the anthropomorphic theme in "*Arcady*", where the "red rose" in her surgeon's garden distinguishes itself by its vivid colour

from the "common briar". The Yeats poem concludes with a testimony to the tower, why it was restored and what it stands for: " ... whatever flourish and decline / These stones remain their monument and mine" (lines 23-24). In this relatively short poem, the rose-entwined tower is seen to represent and unite the feminine and masculine binaries, nature and human creation (culture), heart and mind, vitality and death, in such a way that finitude is subverted and permanence feted. There is no great concern shown in Yeats's poem, however, for either the actual environment or the real flower. Constructed as cultural objects, they represent the fate of humankind, specifically that of the poet's creative endeavour, family and friends. Given the political turbulence of the time, this is perhaps understandable, yet in "Blood and the Moon" Yeats makes it clear that humans can only be temporary caretakers of the environment.[15]

Yeats's elision of culture and nature comes to the fore in "The Wild Swans at Coole" (1919, MW 60). There is no direct suggestion here that nature's main purpose is to be appropriated by humankind, but the poet's representation of 'wild' birds allows a comparison to be made between his longing for the preservation of the status quo and his almost voyeuristic interest in the future as chaotic and beyond human control.[16] The swans are viewed first in the context of the carefully managed surrounds of Coole Park, a testimony to the poet's patron, Lady Gregory, whose servants tended the Coole estate. Yeats's role within the Gregory retinue was to assist Lady Gregory in her social research and to enhance, share and enjoy the cultural milieu. Maddox describes Gregory as a complex, sensual woman who enjoyed 'passionate' relationships with younger men, and she suggests that the aristocrat may once have had more than a professional interest in Yeats (1999: 36). Yeats no doubt encouraged her interest. Traditionally, the 'poet-guest' has been obliged to use the conventions of Christian and classical myth in his work to ingratiate himself with the hosts, who might otherwise lose interest and evict him (Soper 1995: 188; 190). As Soper

[15] As Yeats predicted, nature did indeed overtake the estate. After George's death in 1932, the tower fell into disrepair. In 1963, however, it was incorporated into the existing Trust. The rebuilt tower may be visited today.

[16] Yeats's privileged position confers on him the power to observe. For a discussion of the 'commanding view', see Spurr (1993: 15 -16).

indicates, the rootedness of nature poems in the power structures which affirm rural stability, and the tenants' constant fear of loss and eviction, have been recorded since the beginning of western culture. It is likely that Yeats wrote "The Wild Swans at Coole" (MW 60) to affirm and celebrate his relationship with Lady Gregory.

The Coole swans are beautiful: they "Delight men's eyes" (line 29). Yeats is calling upon traditional aesthetics and their relationship with harmony (Holdridge 2000: 2). Yet the birds' tendency to pair allows the poet to anthropomorphize, to endow the swans with the human feelings that suit his central theme:

> Unwearied still, lover by lover,
> They paddle in the cold
> Companionable streams or climb the air;
> Their hearts have not grown old;
> Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
> Attend upon them still.
> (Lines 19-24)

Here, evocations of endurance ("Unwearied still"; "have not grown old"; "Attend upon them still") allow a contrast to be made between with the poet's settled faithfulness and potential turbulence: should Lady Gregory leave Coole Park for any reason, Yeats's felicitous existence would come to an end. The younger Gregorys approved neither of Yeats's use of the master bedroom nor his command of the servants (Maddox 1999: 36). Maud Gonne and her daughter Iseult had finally proven elusive to Yeats and he was not to marry Georgie Hyde-Lees and settle her into Thoor Ballylee until shortly before the 1919 uprising. Lady Gregory was the enduring feminine presence in his life. It is not surprising that Yeats's main concern is not the swans but the human inhabitants of Coole Park, which through Gregory's patronage brought him the stability, status and satisfaction he enjoyed. His concern is for his own future and what will happen "... when I awake some day / To find that they have flown away?" Holdridge contends in his comparison of "The Wild Swans at Coole" and "Leda and the Swan" that Yeats is mourning his own waning sexual power in the first poem: he looks at the swans with regretful longing as he imagines how the apparent stillness of their watery environment might hide the birds' excited copulation

(92). Whatever the poet's concerns, it is made clear in "The Wild Swans at Coole" that nature serves mainly to draw the reader into the centre of Yeats's world. Nature is the object of the poet's senses: "I saw"; "I have looked upon"; "I, hearing" (lines 9, 13 and 15).

The German autumnal lyric genre popularized by Goethe and Hölderlin was already well established in Europe as a vehicle though which poets sought to balance timeless beauty and the chaotic and unpredictable forces of nature operating within and around them. "The Wild Swans at Coole" shares features of this genre. In contrast to the threat of change in the poet's life, the swans serve to perpetuate the cycles of nature, "... on the still water, / Mysterious, beautiful" (lines 25-26). As Deborah Fleming points out, Yeats acknowledged that he could never become part of nature, but he was able to create (or recreate) a mythology imbued with a firm sense of place so as to achieve transcendence through the poem (in Bryson, 2004: 43).[17] "The Wild Swans at Coole" begins with a statement of place:

> The trees are in their autumn beauty,
> The woodland paths are dry,
> Under the October twilight the water
> Mirrors a still sky;
> Upon the brimming water among the stones
> Are nine-and-fifty swans.
>
> The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
> Since I first made my count;
> I saw, before I had well finished,
> All suddenly mount
> All scatter wheeling in great broken rings
> Upon their clamorous wings.

Beauty is captured here at the precise moment of fullness immediately prior to decay and loss. Yeats's lake reflects the still sky rather than the earth's bounty; that the woods are "dry" suggests the imminent disruption that seasonal rain will cause to the "autumn beauty". For the moment, nature is the site upon which the sensual and the sacred coexist in perfect balance. Yeats's swans, however, rupture lake and sky; they "mount" (line 10) and

[17] For Jahan Ramazani, Yeats's 'grafting' of Irish myths, names and poems onto colonial paradigms adds a postcolonial element. Yeats even adopts 'hybrid' poetic forms, thus 'decolonizing' poetry in English (2001: 41).

fracture the sky's pristine surface into "great broken rings"; they "paddle" (line 20) and "climb the air" (21). Sudden rupture (or rapture) more directly suggested in "Leda and the Swan", introduces the speculation that nature responds to inevitable, universal upheaval. In the less violent "Wild Swans", the birds swim on Coole Lake in an apparently docile fashion, yet they appear to have power and will. Their drive to reproduce will see them depart to "Delight men's eyes" in an unknown breeding ground.

As Holdridge observes, Yeats's swans serve to embody the 'positive sublime' which works to counter the poet's tragic encounters with human death: the poem that follows "Wild Swans", "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory", deals with 'the death of the person nearest to perfection' (94). First, the swans bring joy because they are aesthetically pleasing. The number of birds is significant; Yeats mentions the number of years he has been observing them and specifies the time of rupture as before he had finished counting them. The reader's attention is continually drawn not to the fate of the supposed subjects, the swans, but rather to the experience of the human observer, who takes on a much greater importance in the anthropomorphized scheme of nature. He is the subject of the poem's central line ("All's changed since I, hearing at twilight") and the swans are viewed through his eyes: they enhance the still, autumnal landscape before him; their sudden movement will disrupt it; the observer was once delighted by the flight of the swans but now his "heart is sore" (line 19). Indeed, the swans may be symbolic constructions of Yeats's erotic projection. The signifier "heart" furthers a parallel between the man and the swans: "Their hearts have not grown old; / Passion or conquest, wander where they will, / Attend upon them still." (lines 22-24) Rhythmic tension mounts towards the final rhetorical question. Here, the "mysterious" beauty of the swans on the lake in front of the observer ("now") serves to defer potential loss ("some day"). The final dipthong in "away" affirms the *jouissance* of release.

Harwood's "The Silver Swan" from *The Lion's Bride* 1981 (CP 355-357) takes up the concept of projection and challenges the privileging of artificial constructs over real nature. In her poem, Harwood satirizes the mythical relationship between human and swan. Hoddinott's notes tell us that, in at

least one other poem, Harwood drew on Schubert's "Schwanengesang" (CP 589) and she was aware that an actual mechanical swan existed in an English museum (CP 597). In "The Silver Swan", the encounter with the bird takes place in a museum. Old and perhaps drunk, the European musician Kröte is first entranced by what is for him the perfect artefact, a cocktail cabinet concealed in a piano. He barely hears his name called by an observer, an ex-pupil who once adored the man and his music. She has come to the museum "'to dream / in silence – an automaton'" (lines 25-26). The reason that teacher and pupil find themselves attracted to the same exhibit soon becomes apparent:

> … Who could believe
>
> this was the gifted child who stood
> in hospital beside his bed
> consumed with total love, who would
> learn a sonata in three days –
> "I practised till my fingers bled."
> Inside its black and silver case
>
> the Swan, a famed automaton,
> waits mutely for its next performance.
> (Lines 36-44)

The re-attribution of the noun "automaton" to the mechanical swan confirms a parallel between the bird and the promising young musician, now emptied of passion. From her perspective, however, "Who could believe" pertains equally to the once brilliant and adored maestro, Kröte.

Harwood's version of Yeats's golden bird of "Byzantium" (MW 131) thus becomes a metaphor not for artistic achievement but rather for the important lack in the lives of the two adults, namely the nurturing of vital relationships and passions. The woman's child is the only person to retain an interest in what is real and lively. For the adults, the force of authentic feeling is now a dim memory and the poem is their 'swan song': "Dear Dietrich … Never. / That time has gone forever." (lines 57-58) Ultimately, the "shabby housewife" once proud of her perfect pitch has only perfected one gift, loneliness, and the same might be said of Kröte. The previous elaboration of Yeats's "The Wild Swans at Coole" underlined the imbrication

of personal identity with culture and political power. Harwood's poem affirms that for joy to triumph over melancholy the real world must be privileged over the succession of symbolic structures generated for the sake of art.[18]

Success can be measured not only by achievement but also by the relationships humans form between each other and with non-human nature. The aforementioned poem by Josephi, "Baron von Mueller Speaks Through His Gardens" (FNP 195-196), interrogates a tradition that promotes the joy of replacing real nature with cultural artefact. Josephi's poem arguably contributes to a 'corrective' movement which arose in defiance of the partiarchal pastoral genre (Gifford, in Bryson 2004: 77). In Josephi's poem, the "native" is eradicated without a thought as the landowner introduces the foreign species that represent his cultural background. The violent action has inevitable consequences, barely concealed here beneath the persuasive voice of colonial power. The tone of "Baron von Mueller" is no doubt ironic: the speech of command and control only occurs in this particular Josephi poem. By contrast, the suburban subjects of "Oracles" and "The Garden at Night" voice neither the right nor the means to appropriate nature. They watch from their glassed-in verandahs and struggle to understand what being a part of the natural environment entails.

As an exile from his homeland, Baron von Mueller commands some empathy. Once established, he directs his energy towards building a legacy for his children:

Baron von Mueller Speaks through His Gardens

Palms, Moreton Bay figs – yes, of course.
But the basic idea was Europe.
Europe in summer - leafy, Europe in autumn -
the already bare branches of the poplar
offset by the colors of the plane tree.

No natives? I am no native either.
But I did what I could. Collected,
examined bark, bushes and leaves, pinned my name
on every conceivable piece of wood, drew, designed,

[18] See Ahmed (2004) on transferring 'wounds' into the public sphere so that they can be mourned (173) and on meeting the world with 'wonder' (179 – 183).

yes, also ponds with little bridges 10
and willows on the edge.

Children will always come to feed the ducks
and, through my gardens, be educated
to my sense of - *Harmonie*.
They are not to know
that I never reached it within me.

Yes, I like black swans,
more so than white ones. I know black.
As a child I always wore black, was always in mourning

But white is the more haunting colour -
the white dunes of St Peter Ording, and that white horse 20
with its chimerical rider, the Schimmelreiter.

I will not go back. I brought Europe with me
And those palms, figs and natives - I happily
include them - those deeply planted symbols
of our achievements and conquests
for generations to come.

Here, the double significance of "natives" is hard to ignore, and the baron's language rings with masculine colonial authority and a fierce determination to change the face of the wild bushland. At home now in park-like grounds, the baron smugly speaks of the owner's right to remove and replace any natural entities that do not serve his purpose. Trevor Hogan describes a similar approach as 'part of a culture of erasure' (2003: 66). In Josephi's poem the baron, like many of the European migrants described by Hogan, is driven to appropriate nature and to import culture, regardless of environmental impact. Von Mueller reproduces not only the aesthetic order of his homeland but also his heritage and aristocratic values. Allowing only a few token Australian "natives" to remain, the baron gratifies his desire in a landscape that 'speaks' the right language: "no native either", he pins his own name on "every conceivable piece of wood" (line 9). Renaming all plants with the generic term "wood" allows a denial of the intrinsic value of the original species; culling allows the reconstruction of "deeply planted symbols / of our achievements and conquests" (lines 25-26).[19]

[19] For detail of the 'renaming' project enacted by European science and natural history, see Pratt (27 – 29).

The subject of Josephi's poem is the reinscription of 'nature' to represent new authority and ownership: the Australian bush is a challenging text that the migrant baron strives to overwrite in the buoyant expectation that all living things were made to reproduce his language. The familiar patriarchal discourse of dominance and inheritance endorses the planting of European seeds in foreign soil. The garden, like Yeats's rose and tower, signifies an enduring and superior education in aesthetic form (*Harmonie*), which will be passed on to future generations. Thus a deep sense of satisfaction and joy follow the appropriation of nature. Yet, as Soper points out, normative or culturally constructed views of nature lack authenticity: they do not 'refer us to an essential and true mode of being' (33). By implication, the right action (and the right language) must further an understanding of, and a being with, nature that is authentic, held not only held in the mind but felt in the body. Indeed, language that furthers participation in the natural world may promote joy by allowing both human and non-human nature to share the same environment and to flourish together.

Different representations of space have already been addressed by Kate Rigby, with reference to Bate's "Song of the Earth" and "Romantic Ecology" (2004: 2). These variances are evidenced in this chapter: Yeats's assumption is that readers will share his gaze along with his joys and sorrows, while Harwood and Josephi anticipate negotiation. The 'glass pane' paradigm recurs in poems by Josephi in which communication is at issue. Harwood's 'seashore' metaphor recurs in many of her poems dealing with ambivalence and change: "At the Water's Edge", "At Mornington" and "The Sea Anemones" come immediately to mind. The familiar paradigms, glass pane and seashore, suggest the liminal places where strange entities meet and separate. But where Harwood's beach denotes a natural, interactive place that is soft and teeming with life, Josephi's glass pane paradigm suggests artificiality, an inert surface on either side of which the inner and outer worlds allow separate identities to form and continue their separate lives. There is little evidence in Josephi's poems of the joyful interactions with nature promoted in the poetry of Harwood and Yeats.[20] Josephi's

[20] For a detailed discussion of the 'disillusioned' postcolonial gaze, see Spurr (1993: 18).

speakers question natural existence. Is nature simply the collection of entities we see and hear; or, does nature provide a transformative, liminal space in which we are called upon to dwell with the Other?

Josephi has researched Australian suburbia and its representation in Australian poetry (1978: 64-67) and has taught at Edith Cowan University for over a decade. A descendant of a well-documented German family, Josephi interrogates comparisons such as those put forward by Hogan: 'Suburbia is to aristocratic country estates what popular culture is to high culture' (2003: 63). Josephi's poems do not condescend to popular culture; they question the presumption that the view from the suburban window offers little of interest. Indeed, as Yoke-Sum Wong states in a recent article about suburbia, 'while there are no sweeping wilderness or cityscape vistas in the suburbs, there is much to observe' (448). Wong's article interrogates the happy 'dream' of domesticity within the context of consumerist culture, but suggests that ultimately the 'attractions' of suburban existence lie 'in the ever shifting spaces between fear and containment, desire and fulfillment' (450). Josephi constructs her suburbia similarly as a 'shifting' space which defies specificity yet retains a certain Utopian familiarity. Observant occupants, contained behind the glass 'threshold' between inner and outer worlds, experience the tension between suburbia's 'attractions' and the fear induced by brief confrontations with nature outside. The idea that nature is a source of uncomplicated joy is problematized by Josephi in poems which deal with postmodern themes: "Oracles" is discussed later in this chapter.

Faced with real nature, humankind has been unable to let it be; nature has been humanized, ignored, hidden or worshiped, and wilderness has been turned into what Heidegger calls a 'standing reserve'. Proceeding philosophically and philologically in the essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", Heidegger demonstrates how the meaning of the verb *bauen* has shifted. *Bauer* is the German word for farmer and *bauen* once meant to dwell peacefully, safely and at one with the natural elements and divinities. Now *bauen* means to build habitats, often thoughtlessly, using available technology (Heidegger 1993: 350). Heidegger's ethnocentric suggestion that races and cultures need to remain 'within their limits' (162) must be

refuted; otherwise his argument remains valid. Nature is threatened by incessant construction and people have almost forgotten how to dwell thoughtfully and happily on small plots of land. Nature is aestheticized in photography and nature programs form part of daily viewing on television and in cinemas. As Jean Baudrillard predicted, people now expect to interact with nature through its simulacra because the original (real) no longer exists. In such a situation, the poet's voice could support those groups who wish to reclaim nature and restore where possible that which has been destroyed. They might ensure that humankind's embeddedness in nature and history were challenged and questioned rather than ignored or forgotten.

In her introduction, Soper (1995) draws attention as Schiller once did to 'the idea' that human and non-human nature are radically different. The 'demarcation' creates an impasse on many fronts: linguistic; cultural; sociological; philosophical, and ecological. Thinking about nature is shaped by certain limitations, for example, that non-human nature should be conserved because people are dependent upon it or that nature does not exist other than as a cultural construct and thus as a site of sexual and political division. Regardless of the discourse adopted to reflect the particular human perspective, nature remains an object of speculation, and the real needs of plants, animals and the environment are often ignored (7-8).

People still yearn to connect with the natural world, however, as David Tacey contends in his psychological approach to human interactions with nature. Confirming Thomas Hardy's observation, Tacey speculates that humankind is again bringing nature into the realm of subjectivity because it represents 'an absence, a lack, an emptiness that creates psychological longing and desire' (183). Consequently, there is a current movement towards developing a closer relationship with nature, not as part of a romantic fantasy but as a 'holistic process involving political awareness, economic understanding and a philosophical spirituality' (182). In Tacey's opinion, this desire is humankind's reaction to a period of intense narcissism, during which nature was thought to form part of the collection of objects

outside the realm of human concern. The tension, between the human desire to enter into a closer relationship with nature and the tendency to objectify or distance nature, is central to an exegesis of Josephi's poetry. Nature confronts humans with too many questions. Yet, to recall Yeats's joyful hermit, becoming part of nature eases humankind's passage through life into death. How can joy be produced in recent poetry concerned with humankind's relationship with nature?

Oracular voices and suburbia

Josephi draws from existential sources among others in her representations of nature and human nature. Her speakers are often caught between bored *malaise* and the flickering of a curious desire that promotes a questioning of what nature might mean. Suburban dwellers live on neat, quarter-acre plots, local simulacra representing their successful struggle to appropriate what was once virgin Australian bushland. As a text, the garden strip expresses the limited capabilities of its human residents, who are dominated by various institutions of power. In the poem "Oracles" (FNP 193), however, Josephi approaches the acknowledgment of a universal need to understand nature and to interact with it. Can nature offer hope and guidance in our secular world? The poet uses the lens of language to take a sequence of 'shots' that inscribe different views of nature, humans and the suburban environment. One view reproduces the 'image' (*Bild*) of suburbia evoked in Josephi's doctoral thesis (1979), where isolated humans living trivial and joyless existences wait helplessly for death. Other 'shots' allow a wider exploration of the relationship between human and non-human nature and Josephi's poem may be read as critical of the postmodernist resistance to metaphysics. In line with Rigby's perception of Romantic poetry, "Oracles" (FNP 193) explores the implications of human existence within a 'dynamic, unfolding, and signifying universe' (5). Its content also draws from discourses Soper identifies as Marxist, socialist or feminist (4). Both positions promote openness to hermeneutic possibilities.

In "Oracles" there are echoes of Kafka's novella *die Verwandlung* (*The Metamorphosis*), in which the anti-hero Gregor Samsa is seen to turn into a

large beetle. The insect remains more human than his cruel relatives, who live from his earnings, refuse to understand his needs and idly await his death. The communication-alienation binary (*Aneinandervorbeisein*) at the heart of *die Verwandlung* operates in "Oracles", but the sense of separation is conveyed as the distance between human and environment. In Josephi's suburban enclave, the dweller is excluded from contact with the outside world, in Hogan's words, 'barricaded against alterity' (64). Sounds can barely be heard on the other side of the glazed sunroom and nature cannot be touched: the human behind the window makes her observations from the safety and comfort of home. As though in a private cinema, Josephi's speaker looks out through the enclosed sunroom and reflects on the distancing entailed in the representation of nature. Threatened and afraid at first, she speculates that the insects swarming against the pane may have a message of some importance to deliver. One of them seems to be "writing" to her on the glass.

Oracles

Every night the insects come
Crowding in on the window pane
Like a bad dream
Showing their yellow underbellies
Which are not soft.

Portents of a world
Which warns against familiarity
Is it a still photo
Or is the eye still moving?

II
Their writing on the glass
Does not speak of urgency.
They move when they move
Like a procession of priests
Towards the light and us
The guardians of a sacred spring.
A grasshopper on the window ledge
Feels the glass with caressing strokes.
Kafka would have seen the human in him.

III
They bounce against the window

With the regularity of rain
Supplicants of the night 20
Or are they priests
Whose oracles we cannot read?
The frangipani dying in its vase
Gives off a beguiling smell.
The grasshopper still motions at us
In the silent hope that we might understand.

The textual antecedent(s) of "Oracles" are not specifically cited by Josephi. Given the poem's content, Henry David Thoreau comes to mind for his comparison of the language of insects to the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" (see Heyden, Tom 1996: 200). Goethe, whom Josephi quotes in several poems, lauded the 'mysteries' of which nature knew but did not speak. Further, Hardy, writing much later at the turn of the twentieth century, expressed a similar view of what nature 'understood', but he arrived at his position from a different direction. Josephi cites Hardy in her doctoral thesis *Das Bild Suburbias* as the poet who best understood the existence of the stereotypical suburban dweller, the 'little man' whose feelings, speech and way of living play out in the most banal and limited manner, regardless of the significant events outside (1979: 80). In many ways, the 'little man' (*Biedermann*) occupies a similar place in human society to the insect's role in the natural world. Before beginning an analysis of the Josephi poem, a brief overview of the Hardy works it echoes is undertaken to provide a framework for discussion.

Hardy's "An August Midnight" deals with otherness in a context similar to that of Josephi's "Oracles". In the Hardy poem, the insects invading the speaker's lamplit writing space are described as an inferior species, "'God's humblest'", but "They know Earth-secrets that know not I" (lines 11-12). The message of Hardy's nature poems, as Armstrong (1999) states, is that non-human nature 'knows' to rejoice in the simple act of living while humankind does not. In her seminal study of comparative religion, *A History of God*, Armstrong suggests that Hardy saw in modern western society a need to fill the void created when its unquestioning belief in God had waned. In contrast to humankind, nature was seen as the joyous possessor of esoteric knowledge, namely that to live on earth was sufficient reason to

rejoice. Armstrong quotes Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush" as an example of the poet's evocation of uncomplicated joy. In that poem, the human observer of the dying, wintry landscape is described as "fervourless". In the twigs above his head, however, an "aged" thrush sings a "happy" tune that arises from some unknown source, "Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew / And I was unaware" (in Armstrong 1999: 457, lines 31-32).

In the aforementioned Hardy poems, humans are pessimistic while insects and birds appear (at least from the human perspective) as resilient bearers of hope and joy. Josephi's poem, "Oracles", is more tentative in tone. The title evokes religious practice in Ancient Greece, where the Oracle responded to questions with riddles, leaving the querent with a deeper mystery to solve. In the final line of "Oracles", "hope" is attributed to the insects, and yet it has previously been suggested in the poem that the insects have been anthropomorphized for the purpose of writing. The tension between hope and fear, joy and *Angst* is represented by Josephi as a play of opacity and transparency through the paradigm of the glass. The window divides insects and humans, and frames what Soper describes as the 'instability' of the humanity-nature distinction. This 'instability' characterizes Josephi's questioning of what nature and humans share and what sets them apart. When insects mass, they appear as the aggressors (Evernden, Neil 1985: 90), and the human tendency to anthropomorphize the horde works to conquer fear. In "Oracles", the speaker reacts in a typical way to defend her family ("us") by keeping doors and windows tightly shut against the invaders. Nevertheless, the insects continue to reach out by "writing" on the glass pane, the threshold at which the human observer experiences longing and dread during her tentative meeting. She is left to puzzle over meaning. Perhaps insects "speak" a 'natural' language that humans should hear and understand? Insects do not fear death; they do not expect to die when they fly into the light. Has humankind's preoccupation with death caused it to lose the carefree joy that it once shared with nature?

The three stanzas of "Oracles" express different viewpoints, each inscribed in the appropriate lexical group. First, nature is represented as the

dangerous "other" ("crowding", "bad dream", "warns", "against familiarity"). Further, the cliché "soft underbellies" is reversed ("underbellies ... not soft") to suggest an insect resilience that may not immediately be apparent. From the second stanza on, a different view emerges as the insects are seen as part of a sacred process. They are anthropomorphized ("writing", "Feels", "caressing", "human") and finally seen to share characteristics with superior messengers ("supplicants", "priests", "oracles", "silent hope that we may understand"). As the insects' importance is magnified, they appear less adversarial. Perhaps they are making meaning at the transcendent level forgotten by humans?

Like the suburban mother whom she describes in *Das Bild Suburbias*, Josephi's speaker steps or peers outside tentatively, only to retreat indoors to that world in which she is required to keep her family safe and clean. In "Oracles", the opening adverbial group "Every night" suggests a ritual; the insects appear regularly and should have become familiar to the observer. Yet the insects threaten to invade the human space, flaunting their sex, their power and their otherness in a rapacious manner by pressing their undersides against the glass: "Portents of a world / Which warns against familiarity" (6-7). At the end of the first stanza, the speaker appears to question her own position with regard to nature: "Is it a still photo / Or is the eye still moving?" Here, "the eye" could be that of the human, but equally that of an insect observing the human behind glass. The bug may not be a mere object of the human gaze, "a still photo"; it could be trying to make eye contact. After closer observation, the insects seem to be trying to communicate something more to the speaker than dominance by weight of numbers. The observer's acknowledgement, that real interaction and making meaning might be possible, marks a shift in perspective and "writing" is used as both paradigm and syntagm. Although the insects still appear to act with group intent, their nature is constructed differently. An extended simile underscoring the insects' new significance makes this clear: "Like a procession of priests / Towards the light and us / The guardians of this sacred spring" (lines 13-15). "Towards the light" is the literal direction of the insects' movement, but the phrase has Biblical connotations which

suggest the view that Hardy also subverts: humankind may be ranked lower in the natural order than it believes. In the Josephi poem, a similar human-insect polarity is made clear by the choice of the pronoun, "us". "We" might think human beings are the "guardians" of the light, and in the literal sense this is true: the observer turned on the light to which the insects were attracted. From a metaphorical perspective, however, language serves both to communicate a faith in ongoing existence and to conceal finitude, and the role of guardian may be attributed to the insects.

Nominal selections referring to the insects are chosen to evoke solemnity and religious rank. Although various devices ensure that the insects are kept distant, 'screened' lexically as they are literally from the family indoors, the double meaning of "sacred spring" (source, season) implies a secret that needs to be learned by "us", that of regeneration perhaps. The speaker asks (the reader? nature? herself?) to interpret the significance of the insects: "are they priests / Whose oracles we cannot read?" (lines 22-23) On the 'human' side of the glass described in the last stanza, the "beguiling" smell of a dying frangipani bloom lingers as a sign that is easier to comprehend. The careful choice of the adjective highlights the lure of death, the only constant in the worlds on either side of the glass pane. Behind closed windows, cut off at the stem and displayed dying in a vase, nature speaks through its odour the language of finitude, the ironic truth from which humankind always seeks to be spared.

In the last stanza of "Oracles", the lexical items made up of noun and determinant ("The frangipani" and "The grasshopper") both begin a line of verse. The parallelism suggests that the two items are either interchangeable, or, given that they are located on either side of the glass, in opposition (death versus life). In this regard, the choice of "window" as the first signifier in the final stanza is important. The window frames the visual interaction between nature and human: the insects collide with this screen because they cannot decipher it from the garden; they flock towards the light inside careless of their approaching death. There is no overt suggestion that humans respond to nature's message other than by observation: for humans, the expanse of glass windows in the typical

Australian suburban bungalow is seen to provide a glass shell that shields them from the unknown. Towards the end of "Oracles", death both attracts and repels the speaker as she is torn between complex responses that range between fascination and horror. The final clause, "in the silent hope that we may understand", returns attention to the title of the poem and attributes the last 'hopeful' act of communication to the insect: it is left up to the human consumers of text to attempt understanding, or not, the choice of the adjective "silent" suggesting that human language may obscure the simple truth of life's brevity.

In "Oracles", the two metaphorical spaces of "window" and "writing" overlap, offering the detachment needed to analyze non-human life at close quarters. Real nature is measured against familiar human texts that form a 'frame' through which to question the nature of existence. Josephi draws attention to the problematic nature of nature, which as Rigby (after Heidegger) suggests, cannot be "enframed" (121). Insect language defies the poet's translation and therefore exerts a perplexing power. Can it be true that the grasshopper 'motions' at the humans in order to set up a dialogue? Insects exist quite independently; there is no obvious common spoken, written or auditory bond between humans and insects, although one cannot entirely eliminate the possibility. Non-human nature would seem to remain itself and use its own sign systems to survive. Its smell, however, is seen to communicate meaning by penetrating beyond language to 'speak' of the death to which all beings are eventually attracted.

The name of Josephi's sequence of poems, "Pilgrim Routes", echoes the familiar call to spiritual adventure and discovery. Poems such as "Oracles" question the kind of immediate, metaphysical bond between humankind, nature and divinity foregrounded by Yeats and Harwood. Within Josephi's problematization of the humankind-nature nexus lies at least a tentative suggestion that nature needs to be understood because it represents the source from which language emerged. The idea is not new. It has been put forward by Schelling, Saussure and Lacan, and the influential German poet Novalis proposed that a mystical correspondence existed between nature and language, based on the belief that language

arose from nature, which in turn emerged from the divine *logos* (see Rigby 120). All writing has meaning, even if little is known about the text, although what constitutes a text and what is required from an entity or an event in order for it to be represented by text is debatable (Derrida 1967: 297). Every entity capable of perceiving signs forms part of an environment in which it senses, feels and uses some kind of language. Even an artefact 'signifies' in the sense that it belongs to a sign system, usually culturally determined.[21]

Maurice Merleau-Ponty takes this theory further. Citing scientific, psychological and philosophical sources, he concludes that it is no longer feasible to state that human and non-human natures do not communicate. Although it is not possible to know exactly at what level 'communication' takes place because the consciousness and the qualities of the unconscious or higher consciousness of animals are difficult to estimate, even relatively simple animals imitate and fixate on humans as companion figures. Thus humans exist 'with' nature 'in a relation of Einfühlung' (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 224). In the poem "Oracles", it might be possible that both human and non-human nature use their sensory perception to share each other's company; by sharing information, they enter into the relationship inscribed in the poem.

As a paradigm, nature's writing in "Oracles" might be compared with human speech in the aforementioned "Baron von Mueller Speaks Through His Gardens". Describing his culling of bushland species, the Baron retorts:

> No natives? I am no native either.
> But I did what I could. Collected,
> examined bark, bushes and leaves, pinned my name
> on every conceivable piece of wood, drew, designed,
> yes, also ponds with little bridges
> (Lines 6-11)

The baron "edits" nature's script, while the speaker of "Oracles" lets the natural entities be, although they appear to reach out to her.

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[21] In their elaboration of Peirce's 'biosemiotics', the biosphere as a system of signs, contemporary semioticians raise the idea that sign 'vehicles' can be living entities, sounds, odours or artefacts. Most important are the relationships between signs, detailed analyses of which can be found in essays by John Deely and Y.L. Kergosien in *Biosemiotics: The Semiotic Web 1991*. Edited by Thomas A. Sebeok and Jean Umiker-Sebeok. 1992. London: Mouton de Gruyter.

Josephi thus highlights two different ways of using language to represent nature and its significance, and it is tempting to assume that "Oracles" provides a liberal feminist view of nature. "Oracles" may also be considered *ecopoetic*, that is, it helps us see the earth in a new way so that we might learn to 'dwell more caringly' with other non-human species (Rigby 8). Further, Josephi chooses not to foreground the kind of certainty Abigail Bray describes as the 'seductive security of the already thought, which presents us with meaning too quickly' (143). Josephi's liminal poetry draws attention to what Rigby describes as the loss entailed in 'translation' which falls short when one writes about the natural world (8). By raising questions in the oracular style rather than offering easy answers, Josephi subverts traditional literary conventions.

In Josephi's interrogation of our relationship with non-human nature lies a rejection of the assumption that living with nature is a simple intuitive act on the part of humankind. Relationships with nature are not automatically productive of joy. Indeed, as Val Plumwood suggests, any endorsement of 'an indistinguishability metaphysics of unbroken wholeness' should be questioned (in Warren, Karen ed., 1996: 165). Plumwood explains that the transference of human characteristics onto nature can lead to a failure to recognize the distinctness and independence of other entities and what each of them needs (166). In foregrounding the necessity to let nature be and in refusing to merge with it, Josephi avoids romanticization and gender stereotyping. Moreover, she does not dismiss nature as 'dumb'. It may be argued that an insistence on the human-nature distinction leads to self-focus and a destructive dynamic, but Josephi's speakers in poems such as "Oracles" and "The Garden at Night" admit other voices into the discourse and eschew the egotism that characterizes the speaker in the ironic "Baron von Mueller Speaks Through His Gardens" discussed earlier. Contrary to the colonizing baron, who stamps his own identity on the natural world and quells his own fear of erasure by removing the local 'natives', Josephi's speakers generally avoid subjugating human and non-human nature and turning these into mere objects to be known and exploited. Natural entities are seen to exceed the role Francis Bacon described in terms of service to

humankind, that is, by providing sources of physical labour, beauty, delight and contemplation (1915: 37). Further, moral values do not necessarily divide human from non-human nature. By acknowledging the attractions of the interior landscape of the home, so manageable and familiar in "Oracles", Josephi draws attention to the view beyond the window, to the real world of nature. Both worlds have elements of truth and as speakers interact with the familiar literature, language and political histories which guide and form opinion, joy appears only tentatively.

Nature and refuge

Nature is seen in "Baron von Mueller" from the owner's viewpoint as a 'standing reserve', as Heidegger put it in "The Question Concerning Technology" (1993: 322). Represented as an inexhaustible resource, nature unites human survival and art. In other poems by Josephi, the efforts of human beings to communicate with nature are repeatedly frustrated; they simply do not know how to communicate, to read and respond to nature's "oracles". The desire to know and to understand is insufficient to make the necessary connections, since the entities do not apparently 'speak' the same language. Harwood, on the other hand, affirms the interrelatedness between humankind and nature, and writes of the particularities of place and of the deep joy that an experience of natural beauty can release, even at second hand.[22] Unlike Yeats's poems from *The Tower*, Harwood's work usually celebrates the earth rather than human achievements. In the space lovingly described in "Pastorals"[23], however, the mutual understanding between humankind and nature allows both to live "a happy dream" together ("Pastorals" I, *Threshold*, CP 415, line 4). Nature is not only benign but also protective of the humans that it ("she") shelters. A brief discussion will serve to elucidate Harwood's endorsement and subversion of the central principles of the pastoral genre.

In her discussion of the pastoral form, Soper highlights the long tradition in which the pleasures of rural living have been contrasted with loss and

[22] Ahmed writes on the necessity to be 'for' something 'more creative, something that responds to the world with joy and care.' She calls this something 'wonder': wonder moves us, expands our field of vision and touch, and 'opens us up' (2004: 179).
[23] Published in *Bone Scan*, 1988.

destruction. The tradition can be traced through Virgil to Hesiod, who expressed a longing for the Golden Age when humankind did not need to work the soil (189). Writers of every age since have yearned nostalgically for the 'lost' garden, in which all once lived freely in peace and harmony. Nature as an idea or ideal has been represented as a particular place and time. As a being, 'she' is often gendered as feminine, either virginal and untouchable or motherly and protective: feelings of guilt are associated with 'her' defilement (106-107). In short, the pastoral genre perpetuates a normative view of nature, which conceals certain realities and highlights features serving a particular political or cultural purpose.

In "Pastorals", Part 1, *Threshold* (CP 415-416) Harwood describes the landscape close to her home in Oyster Cove, south of Hobart. It is helpful to know that Harwood's garden adjoined native bushland by the Entrecasteaux Channel and that she wrote the "Pastorals" in gratitude for the work of friend, neighbour, surgeon and avid sailor, Desmond Cooper, who had just performed her cancer surgery. In this sense, the "Pastorals" memorialize particular human beings and the land on which they lived, and the theme of nature's protective spirit has particular poignancy.

The poem is constructed to follow the changing gaze of the speaker, from the water at Oyster Cove (stanza 1) to the view upwards through the salty air (stanza 2), along a path leading away from the marina (stanza 3) and into the bushland (stanzas 4-6). It opens with an imperative which affirms the joy to be had from interacting with nature, whether it be wild or tamed by humankind: "Know that a peaceful harbour / framed by low hills, a refuge / that might be glimpsed one moment / in a happy dream exists."[24] Here, "refuge" and "dream" are parallels and "refuge" may be read figuratively: it is taken up later in the poem. A painterly description of the cove filled with "spiky" masts follows: the "salt glitter" has the effect of compacting the landscape into "one form, one presence / whose guests we are, and welcome" (lines 16-17). Here, personification indicates nature's superior station in the interaction. As Plumwood points out, however, a transpersonal or transcendent stance devalues the particularities of the

[24] Hoddinott describes her friend's return after the operation: Harwood inscribed 'paradise regained' in the full knowledge that 'ideal worlds are only briefly perceived' (1991: 216 – 223).

landscape and the identity of those people who live from the land and have responsibility for it (in Warren ed., 167). Harwood is writing firmly in the pastoral genre, but her acknowledgement of the significant plants, animals and humans around her is to come.

Leaving the bay, the speaker hears the sounds of human and non-human nature blur and finally dissolve into a near silence, punctuated by birdcalls and the ghostly voices of dead Aborigines from the waters off Bruny.[25] Pausing to observe "this day: see its true shape" (line 28), the speaker allows human creations and their importance to diminish as a different notion of "home" is developed:

> pause for a moment here.
> These gums that fracture light
> are home to the intricate compound
> eyes of the insect kingdom,
> and birds, whose eyes can read 40
> the to-us-invisible pattern
> of the polarized sky, are singing
> what is real but still unnamed.
> Our words and thoughts are polished
> like pebbles ground in the stream
> of time, but here's an enclave,
> land held in arms of water,
> where the plover and their young
> are safe in feathery grasses
> stirred by the seawind breathing 50
> a prayer of peace and healing
> in the pure, authentic speech
> that earth alone can teach.
> (Lines 37-54)

At first, the bush is keenly observed in scientific terms reminiscent of Goethe's experiments with the light spectrum and refrangibility: "fracture light"; "intricate compound"; "polarized sky". The observer's point of view is of key importance. Here, nature is seen as if through insect eyes. The final line of stanza 5 is cleverly enjambed to the next and final stanza to underline a favourite Harwood metaphor, stone as a text which provides an enduring record of the actions of nature over time.

The register shifts at "but" and the reader is invited to observe a

[25] For the tragic history of the Oyster Bay colony, see James Boyce, "What Business Have You Here?" in *First Australians*, ed. Rachel Perkins & Marcia Langton (Miegunyah Press: Melbourne, 2010), 43-76.

different and much more personal picture: "here's an enclave". The rational gives way to the heartfelt, the Latinate noun "enclave" serving to draw attention to the shift, while the lexical choices of the last stanza ("feathery", "safe", "healing", "breathing") combine to create a mood of serenity. The softness contrasts markedly with the opening of the poem and underlines the difference between spaces occupied predominantly by humans and by non-humans. As Leonard Scigaj writes of Berry, there is a sense in Harwood of the value that she places on nature: she inscribes the need to honour its 'fugal complexity', to be illuminated 'cosmologically' and to court silence in order to listen to nature's small sounds (in Bryson, 120).

Similar ways of being are brought to light by Merleau-Ponty. In his view, humankind continues to carry out 'projection-introjection' activities (2003: 271). People survey their surroundings in the belief that establishing contact with nature will satisfy their physical need to rediscover the peace of the pre-reflective state. Language gives humans another means to seek to understand and to approach nature (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 3). The embodied connection that Merleau-Ponty (2003) describes runs through Harwood's "Pastorals". People feel the need to make personal contact with nature in order to live in, with and from it. The "enclave" that Harwood depicts can hardly be more different from the suburban precincts described by Hogan (2003) and by Josephi (1979) in "*Das Bild Suburbias*". In Harwood's "enclave", there is no evidence of a barrier between humankind and nature. Intimacy is established between the human observer and natural entities, but nature is anthropomorphized. Water (vehicle) is personified as a mother (tenor) and the ground under discussion in the poem is one of parental tenderness. Nature takes on, as it (she) was seen to do in ancient times, 'the protective forms of the earth goddess' (Tuan, Yi-Fu 1990: 147). In the poem, humans are admitted as nature's welcome "guests" (line 17). Further, human activities and nature are compared in a simile: the noun group "words and thoughts" is modified by the past participle "polished", used metaphorically, in the same way that the noun "pebbles" is modified by the verb "ground": the softening and changing of rough angles into smooth surfaces parallels the modification process of thoughts into feelings. The

complexity of human culture is contrasted against the "pure, authentic speech" of the sea wind's "breathing". Yet the wind is anthropomorphized and its "speech" described in terms of "peace and healing" (line 52) so that the barrier between humans and nature is blurred and both are seen to share Edenic contentment. Again, the affirmation that nature's language and way of being are "pure" and "authentic" indicates that the way the world is in its natural state is the true nature of being. Harwood is still writing in the pastoral genre.

Human language inevitably falls short of encompassing nature; it can only respond to nature's self-disclosure, as Rigby states in her discussion of Heidegger and Chrétien (122). Nevertheless, humankind *has* celebrated nature over the centuries with joyous praise and thanksgiving. At home in nature, Harwood's speaker is seen to be able to 'read' natural signs, albeit in human terms. Tuan describes this way of being as similar to that of the 'natives', who see a natural affinity between themselves and the world that they inhabit (1990: 141). In this light, Harwood's primal moment of joy, the "happy dream", can be understood as a metaphor for the Edenic time when the shared speech of all beings was the silent appreciation of "what is real but still unnamed" (line 44). In the fourth of the "Pastorals", *Arcady* (CP 420), "Mankind's ancestral dream" (1) refers to a time and place when "knowing" did not entail forgetting a terrible history but simply responding with praise to nature's abundance. *Ur*-innocence is contrasted in the "Pastorals" with the abstractions "polished" over time by humankind's increasing sophistication as it acquired literacy and the ability to rename, to rewrite history.

The pastoral "*Threshold*" is about resolving tensions: weighing past against present while living in the moment, integrating human and non-human nature, and accepting that joy and suffering coexist in a tenuous balance.[26] Humankind is perhaps beyond recapturing the original innocence, the *savoir* that Josephi's speaker in "Ithaca" seeks at the feet of tribal elders,

[26] Margaret Atwood, by contrast, captures the tension between so-called civilization and the otherness of the wild. In "The animals in that country", the animals killed for 'sport' (bullfighting and hunting) die as human substitutes, with "human" faces. In "this country", the Canadian wilderness, "… the animals / have the faces of / animals. / Their eyes / flash once in car headlights / and are gone. / / Their deaths are not elegant. / They have the faces of no-one." (1976: 48)

but its *devoir* may well be to treasure what is left. Remembrance and celebration are human gifts emerging from a state of woundedness, and the natural world provides the 'dynamic enabling condition of all cultural production' (Rigby 4).

In Yeats, dialogues with nature have a different focus. The human actor is often at the centre of a landscape adapted to suit his needs and status. Further, elements of wild nature are refashioned to suit the symbolic purposes of his poetry. Harwood draws attention to this Yeatsian strategy in the second stanza of "*Arcady*":

> From blue, green, bronze, grey, muted
> by cloud-shadow, the mind
> turns to a deeper colour
> flourishing by the house:
> part of ourselves, our books, 20
> our elegies that summer
> cannot be made to stay,
> part of the breath sent sobbing
> after lost presences,
> the red rose with its legends
> of beauty and desire
> speaks of the skill unearthing
> from the common briar, a form
> as bright as any dream.
> (Lines 16-29)

In the well-known "red rose" metaphor Yeats resolves the antinomies of the eternal and the temporal, the beautiful and the fading, nature and culture. More important to the discussion of Harwood's "*Arcady"* is the contrast between nature's soft (Australian) colours, peacefulness and shape (a "gradual curve", line 8) and the bright, thorny, climbing rose and the history it "unearths". The "red rose" is the subject of the stanza, and it is that to which the "mind" turns, that is, a symbolic rather than a real rose. Yet the enunciation of the subject is delayed: "part of" is repeated to suggest both attachment to the body of nature and the opposite, separation. Finally, the rose is seen as life itself, "part of the breath sent sobbing / after lost presences". Romantic connotations of passing glory and finitude are evident, but there is more at stake in the Harwood poem. The rose both enhances and stains the landscape. History records the tragic loss of life

that took place in the Oyster Cove area and personal loss is mourned too. The poet has undergone a mastectomy and one can easily imagine her sobbing over a once desired and now lost "part of" her body.

In a personal reading, the body of nature and the body of the poet are of one and the same "form"; the "skill" lies in the hands of the trained gardener/surgeon, who must retain the healthy growth and remove the diseased "part". In a wider context, "skill" refers to selection, careful breeding and pruning, "unearthing / from the common briar". A connection can be made, as in Yeats, between the work of the cultivator and the *techne* of the artist. Both artisans offer joy and hope for the future by making prudent selections and by choosing to show nature and culture in a harmonious light, thus ensuring survival and remembrance. Here, the final simile "as bright as any dream" echoes the earlier "red rose" metaphor and resolves the ambivalence at the heart of the poem. The "mind" once gave form to the "red rose" in its symbolic function; now the imagination or "dream" is the vehicle for sublime feeling, which allows the speaker to transcend the losses evoked in the personal and transpersonal domains. Through the body of similar works, as Jean-François Lyotard states, a dynamic synthesis is brought about 'because of the heterogeneity of the imagination and reason': a sublime moment of reflection allows pleasure to be grasped by the mediation of profound sadness (1994: 99).

As in Yeats's oeuvre, memories are to be preserved through the language of metaphor, in which seemingly impossible antinomies are resolved. Harwood suggests in "*Arcady*" that, when the great stories of suffering and heroism are represented in the arts, "beauty and desire" emerge as signs of joy, hope and continuity. Like stone, the "form" continues long after the dweller has left the earth and his dwelling is in ruins. A testament to history, art and significant actors, the human shaping of the natural world changes nature into the 'form' of culture, memorializing the human and non-human elements allowed to survive and determining what is remembered and how memories are recorded and shared.

It is significant that Harwood appropriates a key paradigm, familiar to us from the work of male poets: yet by her annexation, the "red rose" takes on

new meanings. When the poet incorporates into the 'present' of her work what Carol Cantrell calls 'woven' truths, images that are passed down from myths and legends and feelings that are guided by implied narratives, it reminds us that the natural world and the worlds of language and cultural experience cannot be separated: readers are asked to consider the human activity of making culture as interactive with, rather than different from, the life processes (cited in Warren ed., 207). Further, in the "Pastorals", nostalgic longing and unmitigated joy are tempered by cogent reminders of human loss, of the need to tend the environment and to honour the people who once lived on this particular land. The preciousness of life itself is celebrated.

Harwood leaves little doubt that aesthetic enjoyment and the pursuit of culture are no substitute for the joy that authentic relationships bring. In one of her strongest poems, "Iris" (*Poems 1969 – 1974* CP 253-254), Harwood constructs nature as a dispassionate force driven primarily by survival. While the primitive survival instinct in humans remains, their striving is, or perhaps should be, directed towards the hope and promise that is only realised through meaningful relationships. The two worlds meet in Harwood's poem about sailing on the family boat, "Iris":

> … nothing smiles; pity's unknown.
> A crippled gull I found helplessly dying
> used its last life to stab me to the bone.
> Some old, lost self strikes from time's shallows, crying
>
> "Beyond habit, household, children, I am I.
> Who knows my original estate, my name?
> Give me my atmosphere or let me die."
> – Give me your hand. The same pure wind, the same
>
> light-cradling sea shall comfort us, who have
> built our ark faithfully. In fugitive
> rainbows of spray she lifts, wave after wave,
> her promise: those the waters bear shall live.
> (Lines 21-32)

Clearly, the poem is underpinned by the Biblical metaphors of Genesis 6 and 9, in which humankind's right to inhabit the earth and the Christian promise of baptism into everlasting life are established. It is hard to forget, given Harwood's appropriation of the Genesis text, that God supposedly gave

humans the right to use nature as they wished.[27] Harwood's version reframes the original text: "her promise" might be attributable to either the boat or the sea; in either case, the use of the feminine pronoun promotes hope rather than fear and birth over loss of life. In one possible reading, the clichéd association between nature and motherhood is confirmed. A new element is added, however, and a different reading might foreground Harwood's claim to legitimate power as a co-creator. More will be made of this shortly.

Both the content and the structure of the final lines are uplifting. The human interaction with the natural elements is described in loving terms: "light-cradling"; "she lifts"; "shall comfort us". Language, in particular language appropriated from the Bible, is seen here to offer humankind a resource which can, in the shaping hand of the right poet, be productive of optimism: by contrast, mere observation of natural processes leads inevitably to a contemplation of death. The boat built by Harwood's husband and sons is an achievement of *techne*; the poet's contribution to artistry is to create a metaphor for language itself, which like the boat provides the structure keeping us buoyant "above that element where none sit hand / by hand" (lines 18-19). The poem interacts with the joyful event, in which the meaning of several visual texts, natural, supernatural and human, is formed and actualized into one truth, the truth of the poem. The 'thoughtful mediation' of the artist, as Gadamer puts it, does not attempt to restore what has been lost but tries rather to integrate existing relationships into the body of the work (2004: 161). In "Iris", Harwood as mediator conveys the sense of 'interpenetration of being outside oneself and being involved with something' Gadamer calls 'rapture' (167). To the 'something', however, must be added the human others who are so vital to the joy that Harwood promotes.

In her conceits with animals as subjects, Harwood inscribes the anthropomorphic view that non-human creatures rejoice in creation and only sing "to cheer us". Lacking sophisticated processing skills, they are unaware

[27] 'And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you' (Genesis 9: 2-3).

of finitude and convey their uncomplicated joy at being alive through their own kind of pre-language: "in long cave-watches / when firelight died, frog-babble stayed to cheer us" (Divertimento, Part 1, *Notturno*, CP 379, lines 23 – 24). In "Sheba", published in *Bone Scan* 1988, the poet imagines her carefree cat as the queen of the night, celebrating eternal life in her feline Song of Songs:

> "Give me all I desire
> moonlight and mice and milk,
> fancy food from your store.
> Cedar and sycamore
> flourish. Your roof is silver.
> Rejoice and live for ever."
> (CP 389, lines 31 – 36)

Nevertheless, throughout Harwood's oeuvre, animals and plants have a real existence, which continues outside the poem. The following section shows that this is not always the case.

***Nature morte*, nature and consolation**

In his poem "The Tower" (MW 95 - 101), Yeats makes it clear that artistic transcendence is achieved through the imaginative composition of the landscape, which serves as consolation for humankind's travail and suffering:

> Death and life were not
> Till man made up the whole,
> Made lock, stock and barrel
> Out of his bitter soul,
> …
> (Part III, lines 148-152)

Yeats's evident delight in the stately tower and its surroundings (his property was on Coole land) is woven into poems which endorse traditions pre-dating the Renaissance. By contrast, more recent poems about nature might be expected to interrogate these traditions and to draw on different ways of representing nature. Josephi's speaker in "Germany 1989", Part IV *Vineleaves* (FNP 225) pauses to take a photograph of the landscape.

Vineleaves

Quick, take the photo while they're in the sun.
Next week they'll be part of the soil – brown, wet.
I never know when to take a photo, when to capture
A moment of passing glory, or history … Is this
the right one?

On this first Sunday in November the world is
far away, far further than a glass of wine at three
and cream cheese adorned with little pretzels,
the glass like a cluster of grapes to hand – yes,
this year's wine will be excellent, a Jahrhundertwein, 10
of course. But we've already had so many this century.

Look, the sun's coming out even more. I should
have taken my photo now, shouldn't I? Well,
'Deep nature has her wonders still', said Goethe
perhaps here with the Brentanos in Winkel, or
in Weimar or maybe in Leipzig's Auerbach cellar.

Is what is happening true? Will not, to quote
Goethe, 'Illusion take her scales off our eyes,
The Devil's humour let them recognize'?
I hear no rumbling of tanks in the vineyards
no planes taking off nor helicopters overhead 20
and the water in the Rhine is so low not even
a ship passes by. In this world of a quiet
Sunday afternoon is what we hear true?

For the city dweller, the afternoon spent in nature promises to replace her normal preoccupations – work, politics and the economy – with 'natural' concerns such as the weather. Despite the opportunity to experience joy in nature, the speaker is left confused rather than elated and besieged with unanswered questions. It is not clear whether her reflections are stimulated by the landscape or by the photo-to-be, as for a moment nature and art seem to coincide.

The temporal signifier "November" (line 6) suggests the end of the autumn harvest period and "Sunday" connotes a time for rest and worship. As in other poems by Josephi, the temporal signifiers are combined with the effect of blurring the timeframe. In the absence of the tank and helicopter noise which are signs of the current political and economic activity of her homeland in 1989, the speaker seems to lose her bearings: "Is what is happening true?"; "In this world of a quiet / Sunday afternoon is what we

hear true?" (*Vineleaves*, lines 17 and 23 - 24). The quality of representation which works to flatten the complex dimensions of reality in "this world" is brought to the fore at the same time as the actual world retreats: "the world is / far away" (lines 6 – 7). Capturing the immanence of nature, "Quick, take the photo" (line 1), is weighed against the discourse of Romantic hyperbole, which describes nature in terms of its timeless "'wonders'". The speaker offers her own ironic commentary (line 11), while nature as a 'super-natural' entity is represented using direct quotations from the familiar poetry of Goethe. The established assumption here is that the environment is to be reverenced, but since nature cannot speak for itself, the contemporary speaker is left to evaluate multiple reflections on nature / 'nature'. Is it possible to look at the tranquil Rhine landscape and forget present and past "history"? A two-dimensional frame can only provide the photographer and her audience with carefully selected evidence: "Is this / the right one?" (lines 4 - 5)

The one stable truth in nature seems to be that the vineleaves will soon die (line 2), but at the end of the poem a question about truth itself promotes openness rather than closure: "is what we hear true?" Humankind's reluctance to accept finitude, and its propensity to use language to make exaggerated claims and to sell product (*Jahrhundertwein, the* wine of the century), have already been brought into question. In the final stanza, "no" is repeated: the speaker hears nothing. But the fact that nothing is heard on this "quiet Sunday" does not mean that absence and forgetting constitute the only way of being in this particular landscape.

In Josephi's poem "The Garden at Night" (FNP 197), the tone is again tentative, in contrast with the authority often voiced by Harwood and Yeats. A triple distancing, actual/paradigmatic (the glass pane again) and lexical (the passive mood of the verb, the garden is "to be looked at"), works to intensify the opposition, so that there is little apparent opportunity for mediation between human and non-human nature.

The Garden at Night

The garden is so quiet at night
I rarely see it then

except on sleepless nights
when all I can hear
is the snail's slow culling
of sunflower leaves and chrysanthemum.
Only then on those rare
windless nights I notice
the streetlight's continued
competition with the moon
both hard and very white
turning the garden into a *nature morte*
not one leaf's flexion altering
not one fish's fin moving in the pond.
They have frozen the garden into an *Altdorfer*
into the background for a night crucifixion
to be looked at only from behind glass.

Here, Josephi's speaker attempts to make meaning despite an apparent confusion of the aural and visual senses. The garden, personified, does not 'call' the observer outdoors. Its silence as subject or actor immediately negates its force. Personification continues nevertheless through a sequence of transformations as the landscape changes from living and real to voiceless, artificial and dead. Clichéd paradigmatic choices confirm familiar binaries, light/life and darkness/death, with the noun "culling" used for dramatic effect as both syntagm and paradigm: a snail is described as "culling" the chrysanthemums (actual), eliminating the last 'suns' left in the garden (paradigmatic).

As night falls, illumination is seen to come from two sources ("they"), neither of which is spiritual. The suburban garden setting is seen as an abstract space reminiscent of the ones described by Josephi in *Das Bild Suburbias*: bungalows are surrounded by strips of land punctuated by great power poles hung with heavy wiring, giving the whole the unfinished effect of something put together with function in mind and no feeling for aesthetic value (1979: 4). Here, in "The Garden at Night", real and artificial light are in conflict: the scene is lit by "the streetlight's continual / competition with the moon" (9-10). Both sources are given physical substance ("hard"), colour ("very white") and a transformative power that subverts the traditional role of the human artist – absent from view – by "turning the garden into an *Altdorfer*". At this point, the lexical choice of the noun "crucifixion" to describe the garden scene has the power to shock. While

clearly referring anaphorically to "*Altdorfer*", it belongs to the general lexical set that relates to religious culture. The garden itself fades in importance, "frozen ... into an *Altdorfer* / into the background".

The metaphorical "crucifixion", presumably of the sun/chrysanthemums, becomes the centre of attention, but there is no sense here that redemptive sacrifice might be productive of joy. From the perspective beside the speaker, the focal length shifts, moving forward from the background (garden) to foreground (crucifixion), to extreme close-up (observer behind glass) to close-up (glass separating observer and garden). The final signifier, "glass", is given particular importance by virtue of its position at the end of the poem and its significance as the real and metaphorical barrier between the human observer and nature. The scene plays itself out beyond the observer's control. She can hear and notice some details, but the object of her perception is like an artwork, "to be looked at only from behind glass" (line 17).

The viewpoint of Josephi's speaker is not uncommon. Over time, the meaning of 'nature' has become associated with 'scenery', 'view' and 'landscape', which evoke pictorial representation in art, theatre and photography (Tuan 133). In the abstract space of the contemporary suburban garden, the artwork might even seem more familiar and more alive to the homebound observer. Nature offers neither joy nor consolation; it seems to speak only of death. Further, light from two sources is seen to turn what is real or natural into the hyperreal: the garden morphs into text, a two-dimensional still life painting where real nature is transformed into cultural representation, the cross as the archetypal symbol of death. The textual antecendent is clearly the account of Christ's withdrawal to the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26: 30), but in "The Garden at Night" there is no evidence of the introspective resolution found in many poems by Harwood. Regeneration is not around the corner in Josephi's plot of nature. "To My Daughter, at Night" (FNP 217) confirms her rejection of Biblical 'truths'. Biblical naming and blaming is a "lie". Animal nature is driven simply to survive, although humans may dream otherwise: "Darling, snakes always sleep at night" (line 1).

In "To My Daughter" and "The Garden at Night", real nature is not nice. In the natural cycle of the icy yard in "The Garden at Night", living things dominate and consume one another, albeit on the other side of the glass. In this heartless space, the source of spiritual assurance is negated: "not one fish's fin moving in the pond" (line 14). The crucifixion, seen at second hand as an artistic representation, is part of a lifeless decor belonging in a gallery, where cultural convention, rules and regulations sanctify the object and make it impossible for the observer to break the glass, to reach out, touch and feel. The preserved object is not part of the real world, but protected for all time from the observer, as she is from nature. Behind glass, nature is turned into culture. In this safe space, the human observer is spared the direct experience of death and she escapes the brutal destruction of the real world. Her desires are satisfied: life is seen to carry on in the same eternal cycle, but she and her family are screened from all extremes of joy and suffering.

In "The Garden at Night", Josephi refers to the painter Altdorfer, known best for representing nature in a new and startling way. In "Saint George and the Dragon", nature appears to overwhelm the saint, who almost vanishes in the luxuriant growth of the forest (Tuan 123). Tuan continues that the artist's intent is to reveal the complexity and vigour of biological nature, and the painting's battle setting reflects the Biblical concept of the wilderness as dangerous and beset with evil. Tuan speculates that the natural landscape captured the imagination of fifteenth century European artists like Altdorfer because it was the domain of the hunt, the place in which humankind could display dominion over animals and so-called monsters. At the same time, the artist remained aware of the aesthetic qualities of nature, even where it dominated humankind. In the case of Altdorfer's famous "Crucifixion", the landscape is stylised and the painter does not attempt to represent the desert of the Middle East. A Protestant activist, Altdorfer was one of the first to paint the natural landscape without humans, and Hugh Honour and John Fleming (2002) suggest that Altdorfer's landscapes are imbued with the mystical significance that Franck (1533) described in his "Paradoxa": light is present on the earth

in the same way as God is present, so nature can be understood as a metaphysical representation of God. By extension, an absence of light indicates an absence of God. In the case of the "Saint George" canvas, the saint is seen to face his nadir in the dark forest. For Josephi, the loss can only be metaphorical, and the scale of threat (a snail can be stepped upon) indicates her ironical view of the suburban garden as a godless and threatening place.

In the article "Images of Suburbia", Josephi (1978) describes the general tendency among Australian writers to ignore the suburbs and look to the bush for inspiration. The suburbs, she writes, formed and still form a powerful barrier that stops Australian centres from becoming the venues of dramatic exchange that cities are meant to be. Most Australians live in an enclosed world with its own set of rules and attitudes. Stranded between the dramatic landscapes of city and wild nature, suburbanites can only hope to observe some semblance of the natural world from behind glass. From a Romantic perspective, they eschew the profound experience of joy associated with direct encounters.

Humans living in such a controlled environment might well experience a longing for the wild, if only from the comfort of their own home. In this regard, poetry which represents the suburban home as a safe haven – from which to explore what lies beyond its limits – might provide a glimmer of hope. "The Garden at Night" as a vehicle through which to compare culture and nature constitutes a real and metaphorical space of reflection. Nature is "so quiet" (line 1) that it only expresses itself as a visual entity. Thus the poet feels drawn to represent it in this poem, to make the garden the object of *poiesis*. Absences culminate in the metaphor "*nature morte*", represented as plant life in the Altdorfer canvas. Endless reflections leave one with a sense of permanence and an appreciation of the transformative and affirmative powers of culture. As Ricoeur points out, even if the poet renounces the principles of the Judeo-Christian faith, the Other can be recovered as symbol: the idol dies so that the symbol might speak (1996: 467). Resignation can be transformed into 'poetic life' and the tension between humankind's concern for the divine, and for the rootedness of its

own earthly existence, maintained.

In Josephi's work, nature is not always seen to be productive of joy, but some elements remain a source of affirmation, as for Yeats and Harwood. Natural and artificial sources of illumination work together in "The Garden at Night" as metaphors for revelation, the effect of the lighting being to "turn" the garden into an artwork. The *frisson* when confronted with a suburban version of the sublime is heightened through the ironic selection of the "crucifixion" artwork. In a certain light, the back yard possesses the kind of terrible beauty familiar to students of English eighteenth century gardens like Kew, designed with crosses and gibbets as part of the décor of the 'terrible sublime' (Soper 227). While nature and artistic works about nature can (often deliberately) elicit anxiety in humankind, it is also true that the observer simultaneously experiences an equal and opposite reaction, the joy of relief. A different movement occurs, as Jean-Marie Schaeffer contends, when the auto-referential quality of artistic language renders it capable of revealing a 'real' reality (1992: 354). The poem in this instance provides a space for questioning, reflection, evaluation and revelation. In Josephi's poem, both movements come into play. Nature is given its own 'space' on the other side of the glass frame and the reader is left to ponder the 'shifting' view mediated by the poet and her speaker.

While Josephi's speakers and readers take up their own vantage points and use their own rational capacity, language and imagination to come to terms with nature, nature remains itself and proceeds with its own mode of life that owes nothing to humankind. The voice of the one human who rejoices unequivocally in nature, Baron von Mueller, is patriarchal and elitist. Destroying the natural habitat to make his mark, the Baron takes enjoyment at a massive cost to the environment. For human speakers in other poems by Josephi, nature serves a purpose: natural entities confront us with the brevity of life and remind us to embrace each momentary opportunity with joy. Poems in which women rejoice in defying the gender stereotyping which supposedly predetermines their 'nature' are discussed in the chapters "Joy and Desire" and "Joy and Madness".

Harwood, on the other hand, often chooses to invest her creatures with mothers' voices. Death and danger are omnipresent in the world of birds and animals, but nature's immediate concern is to care for its offspring. Instinctual care ensures the survival of the species and Harwood's speakers do not voice 'the angst experienced in the case of the child – whose exposure to risk we continue to feel very acutely' (Soper, 1995: 278). Generally optimistic, nature's voices reassure humans of the earth's reproductive continuity. Yet poems in which Harwood invests animals with the capacity to 'know', rather than to follow the instinct to survive, are ironic in tone. The attribution of names and human characteristics to the entities in question reveals humankind's ongoing desire for substitution and identification: people want to understand, to feel that nature is within their grasp. While Yeats obscures 'the less than picturesque aspects of rural life' (Soper 110), Harwood does not. Animals are seen in real terms to form part of the human diet: that poetry often glosses over this fact provides Harwood with a rich source of humour. Until their deaths, however, the animals are seen to lead their own existences and make their own meaning of the world.

In Yeats's poetry, nature is viewed as a construct derived from myth, supporting the writer's personal vision of ennoblement. Nature is a source of joy and terror, the one sensation verging on the other in the Yeatsian sublime. Yeats's iconography of nature serves to legitimate the social order of 'rural' England (albeit in Ireland) and to confirm 'the well-being of the status quo of class division and private ownership' (Soper 193). Within Yeats's scheme, culture retains priority: nature as a normative concept has a regenerative capacity paralleling the survival of his own poetry. Nevertheless, nature is seen to have beauty and value, which make it worthy of conservation. And all projects promoting the 'joys of nature' are in the interest of conserving resources for the future: they legitimate environmental preservation and are therefore valid (Soper 209).

Clearly, the brief analysis of the nature poems offered here cannot lend itself to generalization. It is obvious that the poets in question choose to represent nature differently. Nevertheless, to resume a concern stated in the introduction to this chapter, it would be misleading to speculate that one

poet is more ethical than the other. To make such an assumption would be to ignore the complex social context in which the poems were written. It would also entail the conflation of real nature and its multiple needs with its representations in art and its function in various ideologies (Soper 251). As Soper suggests, people might more usefully choose to explore ambiguities and reveal elements of human self-interest in poems about nature, because attempts to construct divisions and dualisms are not in the interest of nature itself. In Josephi's poems, the inscription of humans' complex relationship with nature means that the production of joy is limited. Human nature comes under closer focus in the next chapter, which investigates certain binaries operating within representations of humankind. How the two women poets conceptualize joy and desire is of particular interest.

The Production of Joy

Joy and Desire

In 1974, Luce Irigaray issued a challenge to patriarchal institutions in *Speculum*, a critique of the representation of one sex by another. She was expelled from the École Freudienne for this attempt to establish 'the beginnings of a woman's phenomenological elaboration of the auto-affection and auto-representation of her body: Luce Irigaray, signatory to the book' (1987/1993: 59).[28] Bringing together the work of Harwood and Josephi in this chapter, I examine how desire and the sexed body might enter by way of language into 'the culture of the sexed subject' (Irigaray 1993: 58).

Before I begin detailed analyses of specific poems, I will briefly outline the recent history of desire that provides the context for this study, for each 'turn' is important to the elucidation of the poems concerned. Freudian theories engaged and challenged Harwood, and many of her poems about the formation of desire seem to respond directly or ironically to Freud's theorizing of the desiring process.[29] Freud was primarily concerned with desire in the context of melancholia and loss. In his 1933 lecture on femininity, Freud stated that the adult male's desire was satisfied in active roles outside the home and that the woman would find joy in caring for husband, children and habitation: her 'unhealthy' desire for her father was transferred to her mother and sublimated into her longing for a child (Anna Freud ed., 426). Although Freud stated that he did not fully understand the

[28] Irigaray cites Joseph Goux, who affirms Heidegger's 'quest' for dwelling on earth without renouncing the divine: Goux observes, however, that the Indo-European roots signifying Being and dwelling are related not to the gods but to the goddess Hestia, the guardian of the hearth (1993: 18).

[29] Hoddinott (1991) refers frequently to Harwood's constructions of desire. Harwood's scientist Eisenbart, despite his supposed mastery over the processes of the physical universe, is profoundly unsettled when confronted with his own heterosexual and homosexual desires (116). Harwood's representation of human 'hunger' for the other that is transient or nonexistent is similar to the Romantic dilemma Keats expresses in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (149). Hoddinott's analysis of "Carnal Knowledge II" addresses Harwood's conviction that 'song' captures that which is known in the flesh (196). Strauss discusses Harwood's 'scintillating' fantasies, which illuminate the question of how human beings live with the knowledge that they will die. The 'most intense' poetic encounters occur in littoral regions where the 'psychodramas' between body and soul, flesh and spirit, play out (1996: 36-38). Motherhood and sexuality are discussed in the chapter "Not all of me shall die" (Strauss 141 - 152). Rose Lucas (2005) elucidates Freud's theory of desire in convincing detail, and provides an exemplary psychoanalytical reading of Harwood's poem, "Herongate".

more complex sexual development of girls, he famously claimed that there was no such thing as a female libido (429). This supposed lack is one hypothesis that writers such as Harwood and Josephi might wish to contest.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a number of women writers challenged Freud's Oedipal theory with respect to the formation of feminine identity and sexuality. Among these were Karen Horney, Helene Deutsch and Jeanne Lampl de Groot.[30] By the end of the 1950s, sociology had become a major academic discipline, and the previous interest in the psychic structures of children had declined. In London, Anna Freud, Dorothy Burlington and the influential Melanie Klein set up clinics to investigate normal and abnormal childhood development. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir contended that the patriarchal culture gave women a sense of inferiority (Mitchell 1974: 317). Betty Friedan situated Freud's theories in the repressive late-nineteenth-century society in which he wrote.

In Paris, however, Lacan set up the aforementioned Freudian School. His theory of desire emphasized the role of language within the unconscious. In the 'economy' of *jouissance*, he claimed, women's desire of the Other – whatever that Other might be – was open-ended and untotalizable. Unlike the man's *jouissance,* the woman's joy in the Other was not limited by sacrifice to the original phallic signifier (castration). Felt in the body, although having nothing to do with bodily organs, *jouissance* in the Other could be satisfied by 'encounters' with God, the fine arts, and other love objects: the satisfaction obtained was both imaginary and real.[31] Julia Kristeva, who came to France from Bulgaria in 1965, rearticulated Lacan's model with a focus on the infant's earliest, pre-Oedipal, libidinal drives in the womb. Here, surrounded by a kind of poetic pre-language, rhythm, movement, sound and chaos, the beginnings of desire were formed. Kristeva's analysis of melancholic patients offered new understandings of women's sexual and psychic fulfilment (see 1989: 78 – 79). Her case study notes reveal the fundamental problem at the heart of melancholia, the

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[30] For a detailed discussion of these women's contributions, see Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1994).

[31] For an extended discussion of Lacan and female desiring, see Bruce Fink (1995: 112 – 125).

sufferer's incapacity to name the desired object and understand its significance: '*It means one is the prisoner of affect, of the archaic Thing, of the primary inscriptions of affects and emotions. That is precisely where ambivalence holds sway*' (58, Kristeva's italics). To be able to leave the 'prison' of affect, it was necessary to find the right language. Thus Kristeva studied women's dreams, fantasies and figures of speech. Not only could women achieve physical *jouissance*, she found, but their imaginative capacity could produce a second kind of fulfilment, aimed at the psychic space as well as the body, which allowed the dissolution of the melancholic 'block'. Poetic language, Kristeva claimed – through its use of 'melody, rhythm, semantic polyvalency' – could 'decompose and recompose signs' and secure a tentative hold over the lost object of desire (1989: 14). The other could be transformed into a cultural object, for example, and 'recovered' as a suitable erotic object (28). Josephi takes this idea as the theme of her playful poem "My Heraldic Animal Speaks".

Major political shifts challenged the Freudian school's pervasive 'Oedipal' theories. Although Freud, according to Niall Lucy, influenced Marxist thought initially, his family-centred position was at odds with Marxism's politicization of history (1997: 195). Widening the gap, Michel Foucault exposed hierarchical discourses as polemical, and promoted a way of knowing that would recognize the struggle of certain groups to be heard and to have their rights and capabilities recognized (2003: 6-9). When Marxist utopianism failed, the women's movement began to establish deep links 'between the global and the personal, the political and the cultural' (Eagleton 2004: 45). Leading feminist writer Hélène Cixous challenged the 'laws' of writing to develop a new 'embodied' style. Joining Irigaray and Kristeva, Cixous revealed literature as a largely masculine body of work that was fundamentally oppressive: women had been marginalized for centuries. Too often the object of the written word, women had to extract themselves from endless repetitions of paternal sermons, to break free of the limitations that had traditionally kept them quiet (Kristeva 1977: 512-513). Clearly, social and political changes needed to be put in place to allow all artists greater freedom to represent themselves and their desires in their own ways.

For new representations of desire to emerge, social values, institutions and processes had to become more democratic. *Bricolage* was one practice that allowed new styles and products to be developed by using and re-purposing what was to hand, and this technique is addressed in readings of poems by Josephi. *Bricolage* assumed a positive counter-position to psychoanalytic negativism and Marxist pessimism by returning the power to the producer, who enjoyed more freedom in the 'expression of desire': indeed, *bricolage* allowed a 'joyous affirmation of producing' (Lucy 196 - 197). Not all critics agreed. Claude Lévi-Strauss at first claimed that constant re-production was destroying the integrity of the original product and that society was in decline (1961: 394). Later, however, he affirmed the artist's right to choose what she wanted or did not want to represent: the artist 'never walks alone' (Lévi-Strauss 1982: 144; 148).

With its focus on individual expressions of desire, new writing shared some features of Romanticism, but there were two important differences: the canonical status of Romantic works was opposed, and culture and cultural producers were seen in their social and political contexts. Thus, as Threadgold suggests, the analysis of late modern or 'postmodern' poetry needs to take into account the notion that poems are not autonomous artefacts: they can only be understood in terms of their production processes, which are affected by the complex ways in which diverse social and cultural contexts interact in the creation of meaning (1997: 85). Certain poems studied in this chapter grapple tentatively with new and old understandings of desire.

Many thinkers of the late 1960s and 1970s, profoundly disturbed by the failure of the May 1968 revolution in France, had already sought to explain the way in which desire propelled society, first towards a struggle to realise its needs, and then apparently in the opposite direction, towards compliance with higher authorities. Unless subjugation could be overcome, there could be no real progress towards the free expression of personal desire and social reform. Psychoanalyst and ardent Trotskyist, Félix Guattari, studied the writings of the Freudian school and, in particular, Lacan's effort to 'disentangle' the object of desire from 'all totalizing referents that might

threaten it' ("Deleuze and Guattari Fight Back", 2004: 222). It seemed possible to provoke a complete shift, a re-conceptualization of the desiring process, for societies and individuals freed from the 'opaque' and confining groups and ideologies that sought to 'brainwash the masses' (Deleuze 2004: 217). The anti-Oedipal, 'schizo' theory developed by Guattari and his collaborator, equally concerned philosopher Gilles Deleuze, issued a particularly cogent challenge to Freud's traditional, hierarchical model, which acted to constrain both desiring and the production of joy.

In schizophrenia, intense anguish is associated with a fear of fragmentation, of 'radical, paroxysmal' disintegration (Kristeva 1989: 19). Using 'schizophrenia' as a paradigm, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualized desire as a proliferating network of connections that linked and broke with different discourses: madness, politics, social and religious history, ethnology, and the arts. Desire in all its domains worked like an economy, a 'subjectivity of flows and their interruption' (2004: 195). In the 'schizophrenic' economy of desiring, duality was replaced by complementarity, and verticality by transversality and multiplicity. In short, Freud's 'Mommy-Daddy' concept (194) gave way to an understanding of desire as already present, if unconsciously, in all societies, contexts and transactions. Disturbances or changes would occur through ruptures that had political and social perspectives and implications, and such ruptures could be highly productive.

In 'rhizomatic' schizo-theory, every body and every action is part of a network whose growth is constantly burgeoning, accelerated by technologies, globalization and the ease of travel.[32] Each re-beginning destroys the essence of the original, and provides 'the radiating seed or egg' from which arises the next production. Applied to the arts, 'rhizomatic' theory allows the re-conceptualization of common myths and narrative motifs: thus in certain works of art we find 'respective circuits of indifference, each one mirroring the other, exchanging with the other …

[32] In his essay "Desert Islands" Deleuze explains further how repetition and disruption form the basis of all production processes. The 'desert' island, for example, loses its identity as soon as it is described. In order to be represented, the island must be visited, yet from that point on, it is no longer deserted: it is 'not the beginning but a re-beginning' (2004: 13).

something keeps disrupting the apparent equilibrium' (Deleuze "Hot and Cool" 2004: 250). Working with these 'disruptions', the artist extracts 'a life for tomorrow … to create joy, to cause an explosion, to start a revolution' (251).

New theories of production fed an increasingly sceptical disregard for Freud. Yet some Freudian ideas persisted, promoted by a lively interest in anthropological studies of isolated tribes. According to Freud, the desire to kill the father, and the necessity of choosing a substitute, dated back to the period of ego formation, or perhaps even earlier, to the development of the id (Anna Freud ed. 2005: 461). Kinship was reinforced by celebrations of the god or gods, during which tribal members consumed the same substance: in early human cultures flesh was shared, later wine, and finally fire (Freud 1938: 909). Within the primitive tribe, Freud claimed, people and animals took on symbolic functions. Women were 'circulated' as items of exchange. Totem animals were treated as tribal kin whose sparing or slaughter took on symbolic significance: by consuming the animal, tribal members became holy in their own right (915). As the representation of the gods became progressively abstract, however, art and language played an increasingly important role in the incorporation of human desire. Deborah Cain suggests that totemism was absorbed gradually into aesthetic discourse 'as a mode of signification' for the primal moment when humans began to walk upright (2001: 20).

Despite the revolutionary theorizing that provoked rewritings of the desiring process, psychoanalytical studies of dream content, the language used to interpret dreams and associations between dreams, desire, memory and creative writing continued to influence twentieth century writers, among these the poets under study. Lacan's language theory remained widely accepted: language brings into presence that which is lacking and thus desired, the ultimate absence being death. In other words, language serves to satisfy the fantastic desire of the subject, who yearns for annihilation. However, as Martin Hägglund (2009) adduces in a seminal article that elaborates his theory of 'chronolibido', Lacan could have questioned the imbrication of desire and joy with death and he chose not to. Hägglund

argues convincingly, using Freud's own examples and case studies, that the never-satisfied desire for immortality is actually preceded by the desire for survival. While it is true that the subject and object of desire can never coincide, it does not stand to reason that fulfilment is always lacking. Rather, desire and fulfilment are changed from within by the approaching future. Without finitude there would be nothing to enjoy (2009: 1). The logic of lack leads to an inevitable and undesirable end: by contrast, the affirmation of survival furthers the process of desiring. And it is the drive towards life, Hägglund argues, rather than the longing for extinction, that gives rise to the tensions which propel humans to think, feel and act. Humans want to live on despite any 'unpleasure' they must face. Desire is attached to the joys and pleasures of this world. Indeed, mourning exposes the imbrication of radical loss with precious happiness (17), an idea taken up frequently in this study.

Writing the body – new ways of conceptualizing desire

New ways of representing desire in terms of the gendered body are addressed by Threadgold, who draws on Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* to outline the operation of discriminatory processes (1997, Chapter 5). Groups, institutions, classes and genders 'incorporate' certain privileges, rights and values, such as the ownership of certain goods and powers (Bourdieu 1979: 112). The fundamental group constructs are determined by a system of oppositions, including gendered opposition, in a structured and structuring way (191), so that individuals' histories become progressively embodied in their *habitus*. Such histories can, however, be challenged and changed by re-writing or re-membering to achieve 'the investment, the desire, feeling, pleasure and pain ... the possibility of renegotiating the multiple positions which have interpolated the body' (Threadgold 1997: 101).

In two key poems about desire, Harwood and Josephi incorporate and interrogate Freud's 'totem' theory: the animal is the symbolic other which, when consumed, literally or figuratively, surrenders its power to the chosen human (1938: 915). In "Night and Dreams", Harwood draws on the familiar nexus between union with the other, dreams and creative writing. Here, she

overturns traditional expectations by blurring the line between object and subject and by giving the 'other' the voice that claims its own *jouissance*. "Night and Dreams" constitutes a cogent inscription of the desiring process and will be discussed later in this chapter. In the aforementioned "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" (FNP 248-249), Josephi's 'cultural object' becomes the desiring subject at the centre of its own infinitely creative realm. "Pilgrim Routes" brings to the fore the possibilities of becoming and desiring in a world of nomadic movement and shifting boundaries. Joy, desire and poetry writing are seen to overlap with the social, cultural and political becomings that influence the *habitus* of author and work.

Josephi offers diverse cultural 'openings' through which the production of joyous desire is revealed through multiple experiences of the world. Some poems are set in a museum, which provides the site of interaction between the contemporary speaker, anthropological object and desire. The inert artwork is given the voice required to (re)establish its identity and state its longings. For the speaker's purposes, the (cultural) object is always available, exceeding temporal boundaries and challenging the observer with brilliant, changing showings of its presence. In Ahmed's words: 'The body unfolds into the unfolding of a world that becomes approached as another body' (2004: 180). My readings of poetry elucidate 'unfoldings' in the desiring economy, in which language produces libidinal pleasure when the poet-creator claims the freedom to experiment with fantasy beneath the reader's gaze. Poetry, I argue, responds to the world of desire with surprise, wonder, creativity and joy.

"My Heraldic Animal Speaks" (FNP 248-249) is clearly a playful poem.[33] Techniques similar to Josephi's are described by Gregson (1996) in Bakhtinian terms as 'carnivalesque': in order to highlight the very strangeness of being alive, the postmodern work shifts between oddness and familiarity, which can be evoked both as a 'realist resource' and as a 'device for opposing hierarchy and authoritarianism' (Gregson 1996: 9-10). The following section sets out to explore whether Josephi's poem constitutes

[33] In a personal communication (August 20, 2006) Josephi stated that "Heraldic Animal" was inspired by a postcard of a sloth, most unlikely to be the subject of European heraldry.

a parodic diversion from real life or whether the production of desire is being addressed at the more profound level suggested by Gregson.

First, the animal's being is framed by a context in which medieval monastic life is preserved. Distancing strategies are used by Josephi to show how *jouissance* might be produced in the textual rather than the actual bed. Unusual metonymical and metaphorical relationships are created between poet, text and the (contextual, cultural) bed, firmly located in histories present, past and imagined. From the Lacanian viewpoint, "Heraldic Animal" provides the ideal location for a simulated seduction, as Josephi's speaker gleefully observes. In the abstract world of aesthetic culture, however, the ultimate desire is not annihilation but continuity.

My Heraldic Animal Speaks

My heraldic animal speaks
sitting under a canopy of Latin words
held by four gold & night-blue columns
on a black bed, a dead branch in its mouth,
addressing no one in particular it says,

imagine me with tousled fur & half-opened eyes
my great love for beds, with or without canopy
holding something other than wood between my teeth
and my ears attuned to the sights of the night
gently I will place my not-so-soft paws, and 10

without undue movement will sink back
into my dream of glistening letters
above my head fading into smaller
and smaller stars on the firmament
of faith, wisdom and calligraphy.

On closing my eyes I acknowledge
the largest letters, spelling my name.
Beati illi, blessed are those who
like me are assigned to the smallest hour
as light offends their eye and I prefer 20

the unspoken secret sounds of the dark.
My night-blue complexion and curls match
the canopy posts, cushion and bed frame
and my strong arms & rounded back direct
their finesse to avoid tedious exertion.

> Yes, I am praiseworthy. Why else would
> my inscription, beautifully crafted,
> begin with the words, blessed are those
> who relieve misery & do not inflict pain.
> Idly shall they continue ... 30

Desire is satisfied in the text which constructs the animal's physical and metaphysical world, framed by Latin letters and embellished with script. Letters are part of artistic reproduction and the happy "dream" (lines 13-15): the larger letters in the foreground spell out the device "*Beati illi*" which echoes the poet's first name. Thus it is possible that the identities (and desires) of animal and poet (Beate) are metonymically linked and the text(s) established as the ground of comparison. This parallel identity is not, however, a stable reality in the poem.

The blessing comes from line 27 of St Francis of Assisi's "The Canticle of the Sun" ("*beati illi, qui in pace sustinuerunt*") that provides the discourse of "wisdom" and "faith" from which Josephi draws, as well as the Latin "letters" in which these qualities are inscribed. In the St Francis canticle, joy is produced when the desire to commune with the Other is met: here, He is represented to the mortal human by the distant and immortal illuminators of the firmament. Measured against human frailty, the power of the *Laudetur Dominus* is almost unimaginable, and thus desirable. Humankind aspires to befriend, enjoy and praise God's creatures and the lights of the known universe, "brother sun" and "sister moon", before accepting the inevitable death that must be faced when God wills it. In Josephi's poem, by contrast, desire is satisfied in one bed/one text; physical manifestation is privileged over transcendent joy. In the immobile animal's world, familiar binaries are thus inverted: darkness is privileged over light; rather than defend the faith, the animal claims to avoid conflict and inflicting pain; far from being active, the animal eschews "tedious exertion" (line 25). The subject finds pleasure simply in its own quotidian existence. Text removes God from the first place as the source of creation, and the joyous delights of the 'little death' displace the fear of the tomb. Limitations that might otherwise impede the free generation of desire are 'enfolded', as Threadgold puts it (1997: 101), from

idea into body into text, so that the whole object (text-body) of "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" occupies a powerful and pleasurable space.

Physical *jouissance* is not the theme of "Heraldic Animal", although sexual innuendo piques curiosity throughout the free verse stanzas. From the title, it is clear that the poem's subject is a stylized representation of an animal, a construct of art and imagination. As a participant in its given class context, the iconic animal voices its certainty that the history and culture that constitute its identity will continue to satisfy its principal desire: survival. It speaks to "no one in particular" (line 5) because it has no apparent need for affirmation. "Imagine me" (line 6) is, however, ambiguous; it is unclear whether the animal addresses itself or its audience from the bed, where it lies all "tousled fur & half-opened eyes" (line 6). The ampersand that occurs four times in the poem is not a part of spoken speech and is instead a feature of the printed word, perhaps a catalogue or an illuminated manuscript. The animal's 'speech' is represented ironically. Yet the conjunction "and" occurs too, to effect a continual sliding between constructions of the creature's worlds (real, imaginary and present) and the past. Of these worlds and existences, the privileged context is the textual bed, where time is elastic and the cultural space bridges different ways of knowing and experiencing. The parallels, "a dead branch in its mouth" (line 4) and "something other than wood between my teeth" (line 8), destabilize the view of the 'someone' who speaks and the "no one" who supposedly imagines the speaker's progressive transformation from mere representation ("black bed" / sculpted wood signified by "its") to living beast ("my"). It is possible that the poet is using prosopopeia here to blur the distinction between creator and creature, although to claim that she elides the identities of animal and poet would be too simplistic. Josephi transposes herself into the historical context, but history is not fixed but left open-ended. '(A)cknowledging the otherness of the other' by making it the object of a body of knowledge involves the 'fundamental suspension of his claim to truth'; the horizon keeps shifting (Gadamer 2004: 303). In "Heraldic Animal", the 'horizon' of truth shifts between that which is other and that which is known: evolving tensions and revelations can only be explored in

the text and contemplated in the imaginations of poet and reader.

Death itself is thwarted, however, in the 'reproductive' desiring process of the poem. The "Heraldic Animal" performs in this secondary textual space, which ends in an imperative calling for renewal. Once the self-ness/alterity distinction between creator and creature has been blurred, ways of desiring can be reconstructed and the next step towards permanence can be taken. The beast's mouth is made for more than idle chatter; one self is ready to seduce and incorporate the other(s). The viewpoint shifts between St Francis of Assisi's, through the canticle, back to the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6: 20-38) and forward to speculate on the act of *poiesis*, the interaction between an unknown (voyeuristic) audience, the cultural capital of the animal 'self' and the realisation of desire. The animal as artefact functions perfectly well without further human intervention, but the act of writing both furthers iterability and opens new possibilities for being. The writer can, for example, reject the 'prestige' attached to the person and transfer it to the text (Lodge, David 1988: 168). She can re-invest desire, memory, feeling, pleasure and pain, and 'enfold' body and text in such a way as to construct the body and the body of text anew (Threadgold 1997: 101). In the case of "Heraldic Animal", the text supposedly spoken by the animal challenges existing paradigms of past-present, self-other, transcendence-immanence and sexual difference to promote a re-prioritizing of traditional hierarchies and a problematizing of the text-context relationship. The real or imagined subject-object may stay put: it is a 'body that matters' (Lee & Poynton 2000: 53). The textual frame is constantly renewed and re-purposed around it.

In the re-writing of desire, the text exerts an important interpersonal function. Language, as Threadgold contends, allows for metaphoric and metonymic exchanges to take place, and these interactions do not only take place among texts: they 'must move through the corporeality of those who read and write' (1997: 13). Since Josephi is at pains to distance herself from personal exchange – the speaking subject is clearly an iconic representation – a more subtle interplay takes place here. Josephi constructs what Barthes calls a 'neutral, composite, oblique' space, in which

the real identity of the author is dissolved (1977: 142). By contrast, the animal's identity is well defined, framed by the bed that is also a text. Life spent in the one place as a cultural artefact creates a way of being that contrasts with 'real life', identified elsewhere in Josephi's work as constant movement. In the animal's world, all desires are realised and there is no need for striving ("tedious exertion"). Indeed, once it closes its "eyes", the creature becomes completely embodied in the bed/textual bed (lines 22-25), the timeless space that resolves expansive desire with the hierarchical structure of western cultural heritage, suggested here and inscribed in another Josephi poem, "Schwerin Castle" (FNP 224). The museum exhibit with its "inscription, beautifully crafted" (line 27) is alive; it gives a (con) textual voice to the past and issues a St Francis-like blessing to those "who relieve misery & do not inflict pain" (line 29). Again, the ampersand as a feature of past texts serves to destabilize the possibility of real speech. The animal's reality, however, accessible through dreams, imagination and art, begins to seem more real than the actual world outside.

The process of desiring evident in "Heraldic Animal" culminates in the establishment of a mutable yet enduring identity. Inscription in this instance bridges different spaces and times to provide the joyous 'bed' in which transformation takes place. The moment when *poiesis* begins is suggested at the heart of the poem: "On closing my eyes I acknowledge / the largest letters, spelling my name" (lines 16-17). Closing the eyes to the visual text suggests the possibility of a dreamlike interplay between the poet (Beate), the animal, "*The Beatitudes"* and the "no one in particular" addressed. At the centre of the wordplay, lexical choices underline the contrast between the animal's passivity and its appropriation of the discourse of patriarchal power and self-affirmation: "not-so-soft paws" (line 10); "my strong arms" (line 24); "Yes, I am praiseworthy" (line 26). By changing the shifters from impersonal ("it says") to personal pronouns ("I", "my", "those who / like me"), power is invested in the animal as it comes to life in the text. Power is immediately deflated, however, in order to emphasise the inverse hierarchical order and the value of product and process over subject. The animal endures, it "speaks" of history and the possibility of a different,

peaceful existence, but being "praiseworthy" is conflated with art ("beautifully crafted") and the product (inscription) with inactivity: "Idly shall they continue ...". While the ending of "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" is left open and the "*in pace*" of the canticle only obliquely suggested, parallels linking the interior space (the real bed and the metaphorical, textual 'bed') to a world that is joyous, creative and sensual have been established.

In general, postmodern artforms promote the release of emancipatory energies, and in this sense they may be regarded as Utopian (Herman, David in Natoli & Hutcheon 1993: 171). Utopian energies are strongly felt in Josephi's exuberant poems, where fluid interactions between traditional narratives of transcendence and imaginary experiences of joy take place. "Heraldic Animal" and "Tuscan Dream" (FNP 191), also discussed previously in the chapter "Joy and Text", allow access to an aesthetically pleasing, emancipated Eden in which desires are not only met but also reproduced.

In "Heraldic Animal", Josephi constructs the desiring subject/object within a sliding timeframe that begins with the medieval period. Art and the imagination are privileged over real life, and the poem appears to share certain features of Romantic poetry. More will be made of the similarities between postmodern and Romantic poetry later in this chapter. In "Heraldic Animal", the blessing on "those who" embrace a tranquil existence remains unchanged across the centuries, but the God who promises joy in death is removed from the foreground as the desired object. The Other is present only in a residual, textual form. St Francis of Assisi's world is glimpsed in terms of his word, which is appropriated to suggest a timeframe for the animal's creation and a position within an existing religious and cultural frame, for which the bed frame provides an apt visual metaphor. Giving a voice to the iconic "Heraldic Animal", however, blurs the distance between poet, subject, object and context so that the permanence of familiar hierarchies and the discourses of desire that enfold them are called into question.

In rewriting the desiring process, Josephi plays her own 'game of truth'. And there are many different 'games of truth' to be played (Foucault, ed. Rabinow 2000: 296). While "Heraldic Animal" is a poem about presence(s),

other Josephi poems inscribe human desire as the need to be 'elsewhere'. These poems have contemporary settings – suburban bungalows, cheap hotel rooms, Germany 1989 – where the speaker reflects on desire, identity and belonging in a rapidly changing world. The desire to escape, not uncommon as a theme in postmodern poetry, is taken up by Tuan (1977), whose conceptual elaboration echoes Baudrillard. Cultural consumption, Baudrillard contends, is a 'caricatural' resurrection, the evocation of a paradise that no longer exists (1970: 147). Tuan describes this paradoxical escape as a function of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' experience: for the 'authentic' individual, actions rather than mementoes support a solid sense of identity: in the lives of those caught up in 'inauthentic' experience, changes occur too rapidly and life appears to spin out of control. The missing stability is provided by 'cultural relics, leather-bound books and oak beams' (Tuan 1977: 201). In a similar vein, Soper writes about the desire to return to the time, space and simple joys of the rural order. Yearning is a human response to a present 'that is too quick to eradicate its past'; it can be sufficiently strong to stimulate the desire to artificially recreate historical contexts in order to (re)discover 'a time *of* and *for* experience' (201). Thus, as David Harvey indicates, tension between the desire to belong and the desire to escape is not uncommon in contemporary society: fear compels people to cling to their particular space, religious grouping and specific marks of identity while spatial barriers disintegrate around them and time appears increasingly compressed (1996: 239-247). In Josephi's "Heraldic Animal", the desires for permanence and change coexist within the metaphorical body. In other Josephi poems, actual human longing for change and movement comes to the fore. Tension exists between an equal and opposite desire for rootedness and rootlessness and, again, the poem provides the context wherein competing desires can be resolved.

Poetry does not relegate desire to the future, but rather demands it here and now (Baudrillard 1975: 165). The familiar desire for escape based on fear elaborated by many social commentators is subverted by Josephi, both in "Heraldic Animal" and in the poem "Yellow Posters" discussed in the chapter "Joy and Text". In "Heraldic Animal", the textual space at least is

revealed as richly productive. Constant reinvention (*bricolage*) allows the continual re-visioning of desire, which the poet manipulates and controls in a suggestive word dance. Josephi's reflexive style embraces a playful rewriting of desire, while subtly suggesting a moral message: if one can imagine the desiring process as joyous rather than overshadowed by death, then surely desire can be satisfied in real life when mind and body remain open to the possibilities of reinvention. By questioning the process of repetition, Josephi creates disruptions within that process, so that the release from constraints imposed on society over time by various institutions seems finally within reach. In "Heraldic Animal", for example, the limiting concepts of personal space and ownership are questioned, one bed at one point in time versus a textual space that expands backwards and forwards towards as yet unknown understandings and becomings. The actual and the textual bed are related metonymically so that language, dreaming and experiencing are seen to form part of the same continuum, the production and satisfaction of desire.

Josephi incorporates the familiar and the unfamiliar so that assumed relationships with the Other are first exposed, then blurred and finally subverted so that a more expansive and joyful way of being is produced. Despite her light touch here, Josephi uses language to link notions of alterity with iterability, change and productive power, thus performing what might be described as a useful 'intervention' (Threadgold, in Lee, Alison & Cate Poynton 2000: 55). Within the postmodern project, poetry can elucidate a new social order, '*both* imbricated in language, textuality and semiosis *and* … corporeal, spatial, temporal, institutional, conflictual, and marked by sexual, racial and other differences' (Threadgold 1997: 101). Josephi's poem dispenses with suffering and endorses the pleasure of an always freshly created world where order and hierarchy are replaced by infinite possibility.

Josephi engages in the language game in poems that exceed the limitations of the context and inform the 're-writing' of the body. Indeed, the production of desire in Josephi's "Heraldic Animal" echoes Hélène Cixous's concept of writing as eroticism, a listening to what the body wants

and a performance of the song of the flesh in which the rhythms of body and text merge: '*l'oscillation sexuelle et textuelle (c'est pareil)*' (Bray ed. 1994: 52; 60). A 'third body' both virtual and anchored in the flesh allows the rewriting of oppressive fictions and opens strategic possibilities to the writer, subverting the collapse of sexuality into a fixed identity (194). Similarly, as time and space seem to unravel before one's eyes, Josephi writes desire in terms of the multiples within the realm of the creator's control. Time and words appear as commodities that can be sped up and slowed down. Death is only part of a text and can thus be edited out. By representing the "Heraldic Animal" as icon, text and speaker, Josephi draws attention to its arbitrariness as a sign: open to otherness, the sign's mode of being resists violence (Threadgold, in Lee & Poynton 43). And Josephi is acutely aware of real injustices, as the previous discussion of patriarchal language and violence in "Joy and Nature" shows.

Existing power structures often impede the satisfaction of personal and transpersonal desires, free identity formation and the creative process itself. Desire is liberated, by contrast, when the individual is not bound to take any confining theory or limiting 'truth' too seriously (Deleuze 2004: 217). Animal discourse, for example, permits joyous desiring because creatures are written onto the other side of the mirror, as Derrida might say (1967: 52). When otherness is voiced, the normal limitations of time, space and language as we know them are exceeded: the transgression of linguistic boundaries and the re-purposing of previous limitations are adapted to suit an original purpose. Josephi, by leaving the narrative to the voice of the imaginary "Heraldic Animal", promotes a playful flowering of libidinous *jouissance*. Indeed, a re-visioning of what might be possible takes place so that the life-death binary might be breached in the 'body' of the ever-present other. Through the text of "Heraldic Animal", the subject is able to share an intimate relationship with the object, and these relationships are seen to be folded into each other and into texts both present (the poem) and past. Multiple positions are endorsed and productive possibilities are not closed off, but rather opened up. The text thus serves the purpose of

interrogating previously accepted certainties in the manner described by Threadgold (see Lee & Poynton 47).

Parody highlights and deflates pomposity in "Heraldic Animal", but as the preceding exploration showed, the poem is more than a parody. An understanding of actual oppression, real joy and their effects on the human body is more apparent, however, in other poems by Josephi: by way of example, "Germany 1989" (FNP 222)[34] is elaborated in the chapter "Joy and Madness". Like Josephi, Harwood writes radical alterity into certain poems about the relationship between the self and the animal other, creating spaces in which desire is freely voiced, reinvented and satisfied. In "Night and Dreams" (CP 397- 401), the disparate worlds of self and other are blurred by a poetic discourse which locates desire in the liminal dream realm between one way of being and the next, the 'fold' of time, space and language. Harwood draws on Freudian dream analysis and Lacan's claim that language allows the replacement of the absent Other with a real or imagined other. One of Harwood's more postmodern compositions, "Night and Dreams" allows desire to be reconstructed with considerable irony and ambiguity. The significance of the totem animal in psychoanalysis has already been mentioned, and Harwood, an avid reader of Freud, is clearly well positioned to write a provocative re-inscription of established myths of desire.

In poetic convention founded on the story of humankind's relationship with God, desire is fulfilled when the beloved object cedes willingly and silently to the power of the greater force, full of joy and awe at having been chosen as the sacrificial object. "Night and Dreams", originally published in *Bone Scan*, is unusual because Harwood rarely incorporates dialogue with the other into her poems. The actors are the human speaker ("I"), "crab" – the creature once caught by her father and ingested at the family's Sunday lunch – and "Crab", the significant Other in the narrator's dream. Harwood establishes the relationship between consumer and consumed, then disrupts

[34] Since the collection was written at the time of Reunification, it is not unlikely that the real tensions between value systems and the people who must live with such tensions provide the subject matter of some Josephi poems.

the balance of power suggested in familiar hierarchical schemes. From the outset, Crab attempts to seize the power of the word. Harwood, inspired perhaps by Donne's "The Bait" (ed. Redpath 1956: 76), turns Donne's line "thou thyself art thine own bait" (line 26) into an invitation to be dined upon. "Come live with me, and be my love" is voiced by Crab as "Come live with me and be my supper" (Part IV CP 400, line 21). In Donne's poem, the subject seemingly has no real need to fish: sea creatures "amorously" swim towards her, glad to be caught (lines 10-11). Nevertheless, Donne suggests that the female object, adored and passive, will become "the bait" in a deadly game of desire. Meeting death is also the theme of "Night and Dreams", but as might be expected the tone, mood and register shift abruptly depending on the point of view, that of the seducer or the seduced.

"Night and Dreams" is Harwood's adult reflection on a childhood experience, the killing of a crab by her father and its presence as the featured dish of the family's Sunday feast. Harwood's letters reveal her pleasure in food: she prepared food herself, killing poultry for family and guests' meals and fishing for the table. Several poems, however, register the mythical significance of ingestion, establishing the close nexus between lover and predator, beloved and food. The subject matter in "Night and Dreams" clearly allows a play on familiar metaphors and metonyms. 'You are what you eat' comes to mind.[35] According to Hoddinott, Harwood's poetry 'affirms and celebrates' the female's role in the cycle of love and reproduction and demonstrates her willing acceptance that joy and pain often coexist (77). Stephanie Trigg agrees that desire and (self) sacrifice underpin Harwood's work, colouring her 'lying down' with the muse and her 'joy and pleasure in the world' (1994: 76). But in "Night and Dreams", Harwood confronts humankind's ultimate desire: annihilation. Is it possible, faced with the dire consequence, to represent desire in a promising way?

At the centre of "Night and Dreams" lies Harwood's recognition in Eucharistic imagery of a desiring process that might be seen as mutually beneficial: the prey freely gives itself up to be eaten and to become part of the other's body. Slips of the tongue and puns ("THE DIRE BELLY

[35] Hoddinott reminds Harwood readers that all humans are caught up in the economy of predation: even the loving mother who breastfeeds her children is literally consumed by them (1991: 77).

VARIATIONS" Part III, line 5) are common in dream fragments and reveal familiar Freudian preoccupations (see 1938: 745-750). In her complex, original poem, Harwood incorporates literary clichés, appropriations from Donne and Eucharistic imagery, with discourses on the interplay of Eros and the death drive that confirm the relationship between eater and eaten elucidated by Freud (see 2005: 462). Such a view may seem eccentric but it is well tolerated, even among ecotheologists.[36] Human expectations, confirmed by centuries of literary representation, can be destabilized, however, by the 'radically different' that comes from a place beyond normal societal hierarchies (Boyne 1990: 124). Certainly, the voicing of radical otherness transgresses the usual boundaries of time, space and language to allow an eruption of laughter (Derrida 1967: 52). In the case of "Night and Dreams", the process of breaking down traditional boundaries between the known and the unknown, the self and radical otherness, traces a new trajectory of desiring. The real crab killed for a family dinner is anthropomorphized and endowed with speech that is sufficiently persuasive to challenge the human predator in a debate about absence and presence. While the sex-death parallel is upheld, the human-Other and life-death binaries are among the 'certainties' that are challenged as the power balance shifts in "Night and Dreams".

First, however, Harwood foregrounds the familiar, metonymical relationship between desire, death and language explained by Lacan in the context of Freudian dream analysis:

> when we wish to attain in the subject what was before the serial articulations of speech, and what is primordial to the birth of symbols, we find it in death, from which his existence takes on all the meaning it has. It is in effect as a desire for death that he affirms himself for others (1977: 105).

Within the presumed hierarchy of "Night and Dreams", the human dreamer has power over crab/Crab, whom she has resurrected in dream and reconstructed in poetry. Desperately intent on reversing the human-animal dynamic, however, Crab threatens to seize power from the human narrator

[36] See Linzey, for example: "the gospel of 'hunting with Jesus' is a gospel of Predation; life eating life is not some unfortunate aspect of the natural world, God's will *is* death" (1994: 119).

by stealing her words: "'No, let *me* tell'"(Part I, line 12). In order to confirm the new order between the consumer and the consumed from "ages / past" (Part 1, lines 1-2), Crab's voice adopts syntactical forms of expression derived from poetry and prophecy: "'Seek help! Sea kelp for drowning sailors'" (IV, line 27). Clearly the purpose of punning is to underline certain parallels: the parodical substitution of Crab for God and/or Death; Crab's word "writ" in water — an allusion to Keats's bitter epitaph — and the implied opposite, the Biblical laws set in stone.

Familiar hierarchies of desiring are interrogated as Harwood uses irony to draw attention to the cultural constructs and social relationships reproduced through the literary canon. Crab as Other has a seductive "sidelong charm" (Part IV, line 12) that derives from his privileging of the body over the mind (IV, line 10 and 24-26) and the fluid language of poetry over less adaptable forms of speech. It is from Crab's watery wor(l)d that the poem's punch line comes: "'Great questions all have wavering answers'" (line 28). The Wittgensteinian allusion turns the focus towards the role of language to mediate between that which is present and the invisible world, which still exerts real force upon the present. The tone of the poem changes in the last two stanzas as the human speaker, caught between the gentle embrace of the oceanic element (death/Crab) and the harsh return to earth, finds that her self-construction as a desiring subject is unstable. Questions take the place of answers in the concluding stanzas:

> Ghosts crowd to hear. O my lost loves.
> Waking to hard-edge sunlit colours,
> sharp birdsong, lamb-bleat, I recall
> myself among the moonlit sheep
>
> questioning - what? Why should I care
> how long ago my death began?
> Am I a ghost dreaming I'm human
> with herbs to plant, a fence to mend?

Given the speaker's self-description as a dreamer returning from the fluid world of absence to the unforgiving present ("hard-edge", "sharp"), the ending of the poem could be described as an elegiac lament. In this reading, the final stanzas capture the tension between the speaker's desire for continuity and her brutal separation from loved ones (Schwartz 235).

Only memories, dream fragments, the written record and death itself have the power to bridge the gap between the living self and the past.

A different reading of this darkly humorous *pastiche*, however, would foreground the aforementioned Derridean notion that poetry and ecstasy escape 'the system' of repetition or logic (*sens*): the explosion of laughter as a reaction to non-sense affirms a heroic form of expression, a mocking confrontation with the absolute risk when death is at stake (1967: 376-377). The real and the imaginary planes intersect in "Night and Dreams" to suggest the signified that is rarely mentioned in Harwood's verse: 'cancer'. The object or muse here is given a radically different voice, that of the harbinger of the poet's own death. Crab, like Josephi's heraldic animal, is clearly an imagined, textual construct. Unlike Josephi's iconic beast, however, Crab's engagement in dialogue with the human speaker furthers comedy as well as bathos, opening the possibility of shared jokes about composition and decomposition. Crab's sibilant self-renewal, "Shell after shell my soft self waxes" (Part IV, line 26), provides a metaphor for the layers of memory that gently protect creatures from annihilation and further a rewriting of absence into a presence, always already past. Yet Harwood inscribes the excess of non-sense in the *comique absolu* and it does not seem coincidental that the *mésalliance* between human and other develops in an undersea theatre: "At interval he buys refreshments, / 'Two seafood sticks. One without crab'" (Part IV, lines 19-20).

The theatre of dreams and imaginings allows a reversal of familiar power positions in the process of desiring. Crab snatches the objects the human values most, beginning with language: familiar western narratives, the human speaker's own story, and her trivial excuses for the part she played in the animal's killing. As the victim of the inversion, the human speaker is forced to acknowledge death and 're-member' that the process of her own death has already begun, a shared knowledge that manifests in a new and closer relationship between self and other: "I ate him sixty years ago. / Ocean of memory, transposing / feaster and feast" (Part IV, lines 9-11). The overlap between the past and present is registered at the level of language: while the human voice records western dialectical thought and the

irrational overturning of established power relations allowed in the dream, Crab's discourse parodies the form of human prayer in the vocative and with left-branching syntax: "'O Salt Redeemer, come'" (Part I, line 33). The "Redeemer" clearly cannot rescue Crab any more than God is able to spare humans from suffering, pain and death. It is the human speaker-writer who begins Crab's "recomposing" within the poem itself.

Sovereign of the realm of excess, however, crab/Crab affirms the success of his desire for continuity: "'Boiling, crab died. I became Crab'" (Part I, line 46). The "I" is deliberately ambiguous, and a newly elevated and capitalized Crab joins the Harwood family at table to become incorporated within Christian ritual and culture. There is a further twist in store as attention is brought to the signification that Biblical narratives and established literary clichés have often sought to hide. Crab is served for lunch as the centrepiece of a "colour wheel" of foods, reflected in the sideboard mirror. Thus his realm is synonymous with light: "more light. Such light, restoring, recomposing / many who dined here. Most of them are dead" (Part II, 16-17). Here, the traditional expectation of continuity is confirmed and then deflated with black humour: Crab may have been temporarily resurrected in dream, word and ritual but he has already joined the company of ghosts from the speaker's past. Crab's unwelcome illumination on the point of death parallels the revelations of other Harwood animals facing their end at human hands, notably the object of *Barn Owl* ("Litany" Part III): animal eyes mirror the human realisation of wrong doing; they communicate in their final moment an intimate knowledge of the inevitability of death. Yet, since Harwood is never morbid or moralistic for long, Christian notions of sin and redemption are introduced and then quickly deflated in "Night and Dreams". Death brings its own compensations, Harwood suggests. The reward, animals living on to haunt those who killed and ingested them, seems barely plausible and the humour of "Night and Dreams" borders on bathos at this point.

Nevertheless, Harwood's observations about how the Other is constructed in relation to the self within the desiring process are acute. The Other enjoys apparently unlimited power, used and abused at will. As the

star of the cultural feast, Crab maliciously appropriates the language game to announce his Christ-like attributes. He could choose to reproduce the accepted discourse in which the Other promises everlasting love and life. Instead, Crab exacts his revenge on humankind by pronouncing his own sinister Word: "'Shall I rehearse / the names of those who've died from cancer? / O I'm the original merry prankster'" (Part III, lines 12-14). While the Crab character allows Harwood to experiment with new ways to construct the desired other, it also delivers a re-writing of finitude: death's incorporation into the fabric of life is made possible in the worlds of dream and text, which blur truth and reality. The computer language of information-sharing is used in Part IV to mock and disrupt metaphysical associations, furthering the metonymical association of the Other, memory and new ways of using language: "'Now I'm programmed in your brain'". In a twisted romantic scenario, the human is to become the crustacean's bride and engage in an endless oceanic cycle of ingestion and *amour*: "'I'll put my arm around your waist. // I'll put my armour round your waist'" (Part IV, lines 24-25). From a Freudian perspective, the human speaker's desire for what she lacks is satisfied in the knowledge and acceptance of her own death. Crab's slip of the tongue uncovers the game of substitution. His shell will be sacrificed to protect the speaker from merging with death's vast oceanic continuity, the ghastly joke being that her *petite mort* would entail her death of the illness that Crab calls to mind. Only then would she be able to experience unlimited *jouissance* in what Irigaray calls 'the rapture of incorruptible sea' (1991: 12).

Crab's speech allows the voicing of new and more hopeful ways of facing the threatening otherness of death. Harwood's incorporation of elements from familiar discourses furthers the notion that the language of poetry is able to adapt to new ways of seeing and understanding, to bridge different worlds and question established binary divisions. "Night and Dreams" may be read in terms of substitution and deferral, but the writer's innovations overcome repetition. Harwood shows how the death space (absence) might be constructed as Utopian in terms of *différance* and the sliding between self and other. The macabre poem shocks, the abrupt

changes in register reinforcing the dissonance between Crab's alluring discourse of death and the human questioning of life as finite and mundane. Yet in the liminal folds between discourses, the parodying of established literary parallels promotes *jouissance* as the product of the interplay between desire, reality and transcendence. While the deceased crustacean's seduction of a live human is risible in the rational domain, Crab's intimacy can be read as a metaphor for Harwood's 'incorporation' of cancer.

In this idiosyncratic love poem, Harwood represents desire and death in the familiar Freudian scenario, but since the representation of death is more vivid and loving than the real world, the line between mortality and immortality is blurred.[37] In Trigg's view, Harwood makes deliberate deflections away from her own voice to invent 'a new discourse of love, an erotic language': the 'characteristic' Harwood mode is grounded in physical experience and when the blissful encounter is over, the female subject is left alone (1994: 76). This is the case in "Night and Dreams", but the unlikely parody of the union with her killer prepares us for the speaker's defiance at the end: "Why should I care / how long ago my death began?" (Part IV, lines 33 - 34) Harwood turns the potentially sombre encounter into an opportunity to challenge narratives of desire, finitude and subjugation.

Women's desire – the other as master?

Like males, Freud thought, females might also suffer from the castration complex. In the healthy female, the forbidden desire for the father was sublimated in the desire for a child (Anna Freud ed. 2005: 426). Needs and desires remained suppressed in daily life, however, and were only expressed during sleep, a state that allowed for the relaxation of the 'censorship' that operated in waking life (117). The analysis of the dreams that provided clues to behavioural psychology required the expert intervention of an external party (87), trained to reveal the workings of the sexual instincts. These instincts were shown to comprise uninhibited sexual needs and 'aim-

[37] In an interview with Jenny Digby, Harwood stated that she did not fear her own death, but rather the deaths of the people she loved (1996: 60). Elizabeth Lawson (1991) describes 'the keenness of the sense of loss of friends' written into Harwood's later poems (55) and compares Harwood's "'ghostly' diction'" with her allusiveness, the 'movement between straight and modified echo' (58).

inhibited' or sublimated desires. Eros, which worked to reproduce, complicate, disperse and preserve life, was in constant conflict with a 'striving towards death' (462). Freud's widely disseminated research supported the conclusion that women were frigid, consumed with envy and prey to desires they could neither express nor understand by themselves. As passive partners, they could best hope for male children onto whom to project their unsatisfied desires.

Lacan, while endorsing the significance of Freud's castration complex theory, pointed out that all mapping of the female sexual organs had been excluded from Freud's interpretation of the Oedipal stage (1977: 282). For Lacan, schooled in Freudian dream analysis, absence and presence were abstractions that could be represented by signs and language. In the "mirror" stage, the child supposedly rejoices in the possibility of becoming one with its other. Speech introduces a 'deviation' into the field of human desire, 'in the sense that in so far as his needs are subjected to demand, they return to him alienated' (286). While demand is unconditional, desire is 'neither the appetite for satisfaction, nor the demand for love that is resistant to the satisfaction of a need, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second' (287). *Jouissance* might thus be identifed in this system of signification in the context of sacrifice and loss (319). In fantasies, the subject makes herself or himself the 'instrument' of the Other's *jouissance* (320), while the castration principle is still operating under a different, hidden form (322). By drawing attention to the absence, the subject is turned into the object of desire, and in the case of the hysteric, desire is maintained and even enhanced through the lack of satisfaction. Language, however, allows the human being to express not only life (presence) and death (absence) but promotes speculation about the process of transfer from one state to the other, how it feels and how it is registered in the body. In the "Castration Complex" chapter of *Écrits*, Lacan describes the oscillation between the binaries of presence and absence that characterises the production of desire (281-291). Paradoxically, desire is expressed and satisfied through the subject's own suffering when the object is withdrawn. The Other is desired in its absence, ultimately in death: as

Lacan summarizes, 'castration governs desire, whether in the normal or the abnormal' (323).

The production of erotic joy from suffering and loss is a theme of several poems in which Harwood foregrounds discourse with the Other. "*In Articulo Mortis*" (1958, CP 84) draws on the common linguistic root of "raptor" ("raptor Christ") and "rapture", along with the established, metaphoric connection between the falcon and Christ.[38] The female human chosen as the bride of Christ is caught up and carried to heaven in the raptor's claws to become part of His body forever:

> so locked, so cradled that I bless
> this agony's antiphonal
> response to my heart's distress:
> this heart whose pulsing discords fall
>
> to peace, its mortal tensions gone,
> is gripped at last to its last good
> long known, long loved and circled on
> to be the noble Falcon's food.
> (Lines 17-24)

Desire and terror, presence and absence, language and loss of language, share the same space.[39] In many poems by Harwood, the text itself provides the space in which desire culminates in *jouissance*.

The lost object of desire is restored in the text, and Derrida therefore compares writing with the death drive, which repeats incessantly without apparent purpose (1997: 362). Similarly, conceptual systems such as writing remain forever open, bound for centuries to be repeated and continued (Derrida 1997: 6). Harwood well understood the selective nature of the repetition process, exemplified in her fight to be published. It does not surprise then that so many of her poems have as a theme the imagined transformation of absence into presence and suffering into joy through the gift of language. Joy is usually privileged over the yearning for annihilation, although the close observation of the majestic predator as he captures the desired object does not preclude the affirmation of death. Harwood's intent

[38] For a terrifying variation, see Yeats's "The Second Coming" (MW 91, lines 1-3).

[39] Rose Lucas argues that Harwood's later poem "Herongate" is characterized by 'the ambiguous movement between the here and the there, the place of exile and abandonment and the place of relief if not plenitude' (2005: 155). To Lucas's list I would add tension and release.

in poems such as "*Sea Eagle*" (CP 423) is to inscribe an overwhelming experience: the feeling is sometimes represented as an encounter with the unknown that Tacey aptly describes in his discussion of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (2003: 149). At the moment of capture, the boundaries of time, space and language are trangressed. In "*Sea Eagle*", the "lordly hunter" makes small creatures "tremble", but when the human speaker watches him in his natural context as he sights, seizes and soars away with its prey, her "old hesperian sadness" (line 19) is lifted. Here, established notions of the so-called 'natural' hierarchy are confirmed. Love, death and language form part of a life experience that first gives and then takes away.[40] Significantly, however, Harwood illuminates the power of language to (re)construct life experience here and now.

Revolutionary poems by Harwood show the female writer wielding her pen to take charge of the way in which the desiring process is constructed. Established positions are interrogated as the inscription of the erotic changes the power dynamic between subject and object. These contentious poems helped to make the work of writers such as Beate Josephi possible and publishable in Australia. For example, Harwood's "Carnal Knowledge" poems, published in *Poems* 1969 – 1974, caused an outcry in conservative circles, but Harwood had writing itself in mind rather than the transgression of the law (Strauss: 1996; Hoddinott, notes to CP: 591). The poet claimed in a letter to Tony Riddell (30.8.1972) that she wanted to represent the 'ravishing sensuality' of nature as a feeling or experience parallel to the sense of the lover's physical presence: 'I shall have to write poem after poem about this mystery' (2001: 270). And indeed, Harwood repeatedly inscribes lovemaking as both pleasurable and 'natural'. The act that allows the human species to continue by replacing itself before it dies is compared in "O Could One Write As One Makes Love" (*Poems* 1963) to writing, which entails the mind's "torment". If writing were as easy as physical love, poems would "spring / like children from the mind's desire" (lines 19-20). [41]

[40] And to compensate, Lawson argues, the poet must promise an unknown discourse of renewal beyond death (1991: 48-49).

[41] Strauss notes the 'metaphoric elision' between desire and language in Harwood's poetry and cites Malouf's claim that she is "'the most openly sexual'" of poets (1996: 93). On the other hand, Lawson in her discussion of "Address to my Muse" claims that Harwood problematizes the nexus between

Hoddinott (1991) aptly suggests that Harwood's sensual poetry is often addressed to the muse because what is known and perceived through the human body is transformed in the imagination and stored in memory before it is released through poetry writing. In the "Carnal Knowledge" poems, the adjective carnal is to be taken literally: 'the material of poetry is the familiar and natural world perceived with love through the flesh' (Hoddinott 1991: 195).

In "Carnal Knowledge 1" (CP 263), Harwood states and subverts the traditional conception of the desiring process. She evokes the natural landscape (archetypal, of fable or myth) gendered as a (masculine) text, and describes a particular way of relating to it. The famous "fabulous animal" may be read literally. Powerful evocations of land, ocean, air and the evolutionary shaping of the animal to fit them ("skull", "fingers", "hand", "wings", "fins") joyously draw together real world, body and text. The verb "grasp" lends itself to multiple interpretations, literal and metaphorical. Yet the most obvious assumption, that Harwood is recalling an actual experience of lovemaking, is deflated by the final line: "But what you are I do not know." It seems most likely that the poet is playing on Wittgenstein's notion of "what is", ways in which humankind can "grasp" or "know" the world and speculate about the unknowable.[42] Acknowledging Wittgenstein, Harwood suggests that although some joys may exceed the limitations of the language game, they not only exist but exert a powerful force. The creature-creator and object-subject parallels are firmly established by Harwood, but in her 'natural' hierarchy the female subject remains in control, seducing the "lover" and perhaps the literature lover to instigate the (re)productive process. The old discourse of desiring is thus rewritten as an affirmation of the survival process in which desire, although elusive, is continually satisfied.

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language and sensuality by subverting the traditional Greek and Romantic notions of the muse as "'nature herself'", the source of inspiration for male poets: Harwood looks for the muse within the parts of herself responsible for writing and wondering at the world (48-49).

[42] In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein considers what can and cannot be 'grasped' by humankind. God does not reveal himself in the world: 'Not how the world is, is the mystical, but that it is. One contemplates and feels the world as a limited whole. … There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical' (1961: 6.44; 6.522).

Harwood's poems, as previously stated, often parallel the processes of desiring and writing. Writing overcomes finitude in its perpetuation of romantic fantasies and loving memories. "A Valentine" (CP 491) leaves no doubt that the speaking subject "I" is the active partner in the game of desire. Composed two years before the poet's death, "A Valentine" is dedicated to Harwood's first love, Peter Bennie. Harwood appropriates Yeats, Psalm 81, and finally Donne, in her celebratory poem:

> "Old age is meant for contemplation"
>
> you said when I was young and merry
> and seldom of a mind to hold
> one thought of westwardly decline.
> Remember me. I'll beat all airy
> thinness back to solid gold
> if you will be my Valentine.
> (Lines 12 – 18)

It is pertinent that Harwood praises Bennie as the "Hierophant", the Egyptian high priest who preserves institutional and esoteric knowledge: the alchemical transformation of base metal to gold is evoked in all three sources from which she borrows. Transformation may be read here as a metaphorical and metaphysical process. The last lines of "A Valentine" echo Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning": "Our two souls, which are one, / Though I must go, endure not yet / A breach, but an expansion, / Like gold to airy thinness beat" (in Redpath ed., 1979: 82, lines 21 – 24). In Harwood's version, the verb "beat" is attributed to the female speaker who initiates the action: "I'll beat …". The conceit addressed to Bennie retains the mood of light optimism (mourning is forbidden) but privileges the real over the numinous as the woman states her role as the desiring agent. Although the contrast of contemplative old age and "merry" youth appears clichéd, Harwood successfully adapts familiar tropes for her purpose: to affirm that desire endures and sustains.

"A Valentine" also echoes Harwood's earlier poem, "Mappings of the Plane" (from *The Lion's Bride* 1981, CP 298 - 300). Here, Harwood names the late Romantic poets of despair, "Hölderlin, Nerval, Lenz, Novalis, Trakl" (line 40). Rather than speak as the forlorn love object ("Isolde on the

rocks", line 41) her subject imposes upon the discourse of loss "a new interpretation" (line 47). Harwood echoes Yeats's "The Circus Animals' Desertion", "The heart's a carnival, the mind / a cloudy mirror gone half blind" (lines 64 – 65), exposing then immediately subverting the old discourse of desire in the lines that follow:

> Let me be your golden child.
> Father Aether, lift me high,
> let the darkening gold of churches
> shade the souls for whom Christ died.
> When the cataclysmic waters
> wash towards chaos, let me be
> your golden child aloft on discourse,
> tell me what I long to hear.
> (Lines 66 – 73)

In this final, triumphant stanza, "shade" is used as a verb to carry the connotation of protection and to suggest the role played by the language of praise that allays humankind's fear of cataclysm, chaos and death to produce hope and joy in the human heart. The decline of religion is suggested in the trope "the darkening gold of churches", yet Harwood incorporates the form and left-branching syntax of the hymns she loved as a child as examples of the language which might keep her and others like her "aloft on discourse". Exhortations, "let", "let me", "tell me" and "lift me" occur on ten occasions in the last stanza of "Mappings", addressed to "Father Aether". Given the poem's dedication to an Anglican priest, a powerful parallel is drawn between language and the Christian faith, the hymns and narratives heard and read from an early age, and the love interest of the speaker's youth. The last stanza in particular has structural features in common with a psalm or hymn. It is implied that the loss of language as she knows it would entail a loss of faith and vice versa: the absence of either would mean that sustaining "dreams" (line 82) would also collapse. By contrast, the body of text that promotes the language of affirmation allows for the sustenance of desire and the deferment of loss.

Yet, like so many poems by Harwood, "Mappings" may be read as an ironic rewriting of established discourses of desire, a critique of the patriarchal language that excludes the "golden child" who begs to be allowed to join in the serious (men's) game. The discourse and its

implications are familiar to Bible readers and non-believers alike. Writing against any such 'Name-of-the-Father' system, including fascism and Freudian psychoanalysis, Deleuze comments:

> Oedipus and castration work like a charm. But we want to know what are their effects: they work but at what price? … (Oedipal theory) has usurped its reputation for promoting, or even participating in, any effective liberation. It has smashed the phenomenon of desire onto a familial stage, and crunched the whole economic and political dimension of libido into a conformist code. (2004: 229).

Read as a resistance to established hierarchies of desiring, the repeated "Let me …" of "Mappings" suggests the urgent demands of a young woman faced with the beloved who spurns her advances. The later poem "A Valentine", dedicated to Bennie and explicitly referring to the object of the poem as "the proper saint" (line 2), throws light on "Mappings of the Plane". Ironic distance allows Harwood to conclude "Mappings" in a mock reverential voice, as she partially reveals the unholy interests nourishing her speaker's *jouissance*. The appellation "Father Aether" playfully recognizes the numinous qualities of the beloved, heavenly figure, unknowable in the Biblical sense. Language in this instance places the "golden child aloft on discourse" at the centre of a universe in which she is free to voice desire with good humour. Thus Harwood reproduces and affirms as productive of joy the whole spectrum of desire from *eros* to *agape* that is inscribed in the human body and in the body of poetry.[43] Refusing to allow the language of the established moral order to spoil her fun, Harwood rewrites the discourse of desire to serve her pleasurable purpose.

Breaking free

The final section of this chapter addresses the aforementioned conceptual shift, away from Freudian thought and its implications, towards a rewriting of desire that furthers the production of joy. Although at first glance it may seem to have little in common with traditional representations of desire, the 'schizophrenic' desiring process outlined at the beginning of this chapter

[43] Hoddinott includes in her notes to the poem quotations from a letter by Harwood about "Mappings of the Plane" and its theme of "'crazy love, sex" (CP 594).

shares some of the aesthetic preoccupations of the Romantics. In Freudian theory, desire, death and language are inexorably linked. As Deleuze has suggested, however, artistic production today effects the free, *rhizomatic* proliferation that is a characteristic of 'schizophrenic' desiring; springing up across continents, politics, cultures and races, creation erupts, exceeds and defies the Oedipal or hierarchical relationships described by Freud (2004: 235).

In his elucidation of the liberating process, Deleuze acknowledges Heidegger's contribution, but suggests a way of thinking and describing which evolves 'for itself', without anteriority: like nature, art can be understood as exceeding the mechanisms and structures of existing hierarchies (2004: 235). Deleuze's theory approaches Heidegger's when the first philosopher describes the 'voices' of the earth which subvert the centralizing processes of capitalistic societies by 'playing freely, that is, esthetically':

> little territorial songs, or the songs that birds sing; the great songs of the earth, when the earth cries out; the powerful harmony of the spheres, or the voice of the cosmos … from the most humble melody to the grandest of songs, a sort of cosmic *sprechgesang* (Deleuze 2007: 316).

Previously, freedom from earthly limitations and a quasi-spiritual desire akin to worship found expression in the *Liebestod*, discussed in the context of Yeats's poetry in the chapter "Joy and Text". Dying for love is the theme of several works by Harwood, and, according to Lawson, echoes of Blake and Yeats can be heard in poems such as "Mappings of the Plane" (1991: 22 - 23). In this reading, the body burning with desire generates the language that surpasses communication in conventional speech.

The postmodern era, which Eagleton calls the new *fin de siècle* period, has however brought a new language of desire to the fore, the language of culture, which has forged unusual links between personal and social contexts (2004: 45). 'Culture' has become indistinguishable from industry, economic production, ideology and representation as two movements have come into play: aided by technology, a 'drearily uniform' culture has propagated itself across the planet while, at a local level, men and women

struggle to establish their identities (49). In the real world, optimism is compromised by 'the emptiness of desire, the impossibility of truth, the fragility of the subject': it is left to the aesthetic universe to provide the 'substitute utopia' of erotic intensities, 'the delectable sensuousness of signs' (51).

The relationship between individual identity and mass culture outlined above provides the background tension in the poem "Flying Goddess" (*Poems Volume Two* 1968, CP 153), in which Harwood parodies the *Liebestod* normally associated with high culture.[44] In this and other works, as loving as they are playful, Harwood indulges her fascination with Freudian psychoanalysis: desire is produced in the absence of that which one desires; what one desires is absence from day to day realities; all desires are directed toward death, even the desire to create an artwork or a poem. In "Flying Goddess", the skilled classical musician, Kröte, is appalled by the idle chatter and the unappreciative responses of his audience. For the pretentious local art crowd, fine playing is 'mere décor' (Josephi 1978: 66). Kröte raids the drinks cabinet and, alone with bottle and glass, he imagines that a batik picture has sprung to life: "a Flying / Goddess made luminous by dying / sunlight" (lines 28-30). Sunset, that brief, golden pause when life and death are held in balance, enhances the potent sensuality of the cultural representation. Kröte remains transfixed until the failing light and an empty bottle ruin his fantasy of escape from the "sober prison" of his daily existence. "DIE!", he shouts as he kicks a piece of plastic art, yet even this response is unoriginal: the cube is already labelled with that word. The possibility of Kröte's immortality as an artist 'dies' too. Only Harwood's use of parody and irony allow the desiring process in "Flying Goddess" to be constructed as humorous rather than melancholic.

Not unexpectedly, Josephi deconstructs and subverts the familiar *Liebestod* narrative in "Pilgrim Routes" Part V, *The Squirrels* (FNP 262-264), which draws on the established parallel of sexual union and conflagration.

[44] Hoddinott notices 'witty and serious' parallels with Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn", which also contains the paradox of movement and stillness, and 'celebrates the power of art to speak across the centuries and surmount national barriers and cultural differences' (1991: 139).

In the preceding poem, "Love and Loneliness", the speaker "nicknamed … Penelope" has left her sexual partner to return home and wait: "the demise of a heroine, she thought" (line 78). The last scene of "Love and Loneliness" is played out in a museum and the protagonist describes her face as a death mask caught in an eternal scream. The fifth poem of the "Pilgrim Routes" cycle, however, marks a new attempt to voice her desire.

The Squirrels

It did not end here, with these melodramatic
sentences about the hollowness of masks.
The nightbird came and sang again.

Do you know the play about squirrels,
she wondered, turning to Pierre who was lying
with closed eyes on the bed. They're balancing
on wires, hardly touching the snow. Pierre
sat up, listened to the sirens in the street below.

The play about the squirrels, she took up again,
was about love. Absolute love. Our love? 10
Pierre tried to catch her naked arm. She eased
herself from his embrace, leant against the window.
For days, they'd been cooped up in an over-
heated apartment in New York, no longer
cared to dress and hardly ate. No, she said.
It was a love so absolute that anything outside
became its enemy. It turned into a pyre
consuming everything. He looked up, suicide?

No, death, she said. The squirrels helped.
I can't remember how. She forced her eyes away 20
from the streetscape on the other side,
the basketball court a field of white.
Now. What happened to the woman who
tried to kill herself because of you?
He looked her straight in the eye. I never
found out. Believe me. It was her doing, not mine.

In a careful dance of words, they measured
their innocence and guilt, their suffering.

You've taken on my pilgrim routes, she said,
the rough skin of her lips caught on a hair 30
of his arm, while I search for the river's source,
and at that moment they could have merged
on a Chagall canvas as bride and groom,

perched ablaze on the flight path of angels –

but of course they didn't. She had understood
enough of the squirrels' warning to settle
for a lesser heaven, Pierre murmuring nightclub
songs into her ear, *Put your head on my shoulder,*
baby, tell me that you love me, too. Is that
what you want to hear, he wondered. She smiled, let 40
herself be caught in his arms like a blown feather
which in the smallest place has found its peace.

In Josephi's poem, the overlapping binaries are familiar: nature and the un-natural, love and death, pain and joy. The territory upon which these are contested is desire and its representation. As Lucy states, summarizing Foucault, the concept of love has a history: it is an 'assemblage' of sexual practices, mores, codes and regimes that attaches itself to the human body (206). The lover expects at the outset that the satisfaction of desire will produce joy, but instead 'love' may lead to a feeling of entrapment.[45] In "*The Squirrels*", Josephi's lexical choices "cooped up" (line 13) and "no longer / cared to dress" (lines 15-16) suggest that the speaker's desire, once satisfied by romantic illusion, is fading to *ennui*.

Underscoring the wintry landscape of "*The Squirrels*", the real and metaphorical "field of white" begins a series of word groups alluding to death and surrender. At issue is whether the female speaker will affirm illusion or strive to uncover truth. The moment of revelation, "Now", is the turning point at which she risks ending her love relationship. Although death appears as a metaphorical and an actual, threatening possibility (the ex-lover's suicide, the squirrels on the electrical wire), the joyous release of the *Liebestod* is absent. Instead, the romantic union of two individuals is conveyed as a fiction, possible only in art: Chagall's painting of lovers "ablaze on the flight path of angels" (line 34). Language falls short as each speech performance is revealed as a poor imitation of the ideal. Real life slides into trite *simulacrum.*[46] The popular song lyrics of Paul Anka and the content of the play betray the inadequacy of common language to grasp and hold moments of supreme transformation. Thus the speaker must grapple

[45] "Maybe the bride-bed brings despair" writes Yeats in "Solomon and the Witch" (MW 83-84, line 25).
[46] In David Mamet's play *Squirrels* (1974), to which the speaker presumably refers, writers struggle hopelessly to find the right language as their scripts degenerate further and further into banality.

with the decision to settle for a "lesser heaven" (line 37). Should she allow herself to be "caught" in the trap of the language game? Surrender is suggested by the simile, "like a blown feather", and the imprisonment suggested earlier in the poem is increasingly elided with the speaker's cowardly participation in a hollow love drama.

The lack of joy in this new arrangement is suggested in lexical selections that bring the ambiguity of the negotiated settlement to light: "uneasy sleep"; "ravines of New York"; "narrowed in"; "the sound / veered wildly like the wind". It is in the big-city wilderness of the speaker's ensuing dream that a new truth becomes apparent:

> She fell into an uneasy sleep, in her dream
> walked the ravines of New York. The shop windows
> narrowed in on her, the cold no longer cutting her
> into a thousand pieces. She sat down and listened.
> The world was only a tape, no more, to be slowed down
> or put in reverse. She laughed out loud, the sound
> veered wildly like the wind, only the glass came closer.
>
> And the sticky warmth of the subway tunnels 50
> gathered under her skirt, lifted her past posters
> of red barns and meadows. She rose beyond
> the setting sun, a light tinged with blood,
> was Red Riding Hood again, twirled between
> the wolves, unconcerned by their howling,
> she knew it was only in her mind, whirled away
> in the dance of snowflakes which continued
> to fall outside her window until morning.
>
> In the end it had come to this,
> a small room and a song 60
> playing like a dead bird's wing in the wind.

The noun group "shop windows" brings attention here, as in "Yellow Posters", to a metaphorical process deriving its force from personal as well as textual reflection. As in Josephi's "Ithaca", wisdom comes in a moment of stillness for the restless female protagonist. In the current poem, the elders are not specifically mentioned, but Pierre's logical, somewhat callous argument and ironic reprise of the familiar love song is contrasted against a more authentic way of knowing. "She sat down and listened" (line 46) begins a sequence of events in which the woman progressively disengages

from her lover, no longer hearing the voice which once subdued her, but rather feeling her own growing power.

Lexical choices accumulate to suggest the defiant, sexual energy of the fertile woman: "sticky warmth"; "gathered under her skirt"; "lifted"; "rose"; "unconcerned"; "twirled"; "whirled away". While the paradigm of the powerful woman's ascent has resonances of "The Wizard of Oz" and Angela Carter's version of "Red Riding Hood", the earlier metaphorical frame suggests that the subject ascends into the western sky like the Chagall bride, alone. A similar figure can be observed in Chagall's "Song of Songs" series, and, as in Josephi's "My Heraldic Animal Speaks", the context of high culture provides the Utopian space in which profound transformations can take place. The way in which the body of Pierre is constructed at this point is strikingly different. At the beginning of the poem, he is referred to metonymically as "the night bird" (line 3), presumably in line with Chagall's paintings of masculine figures soaring with birds. Now Pierre's body is killed off and dismembered. The nominal group, "song / playing like a dead bird's wing in the wind" (lines 60-61), refers to Pierre. His "song" as well as his body are now exposed through the simile as "dead", in strong contrast to the powerful and vibrantly expressive Chagallian bride figure. The present continuous verb form, "playing", links the simile metonymically with the singing night bird metaphor, thus emphasizing the contrast between the earlier and later constructions of Pierre. The same wind whirling the female up and away can only ruffle the dead bird's feathers: Pierre is left earthbound and impotent, while his lover soars, capable in the end of confidently directing her life, "only a tape, no more, to be slowed down / or put in reverse" (lines 47 – 48).

The potential joy of uncontested freedom and power is, however, deflated. The actions take place in a dream and the "tape" of the world is a simulacrum, as is Pierre's version of the nightclub song that he murmurs into his lover's ear. Indeed, in Josephi's world, all performances are simulacra. The machinic discourse (tape) substitutes for real experience: in earlier poems, "tapes" refer to ethnographic recordings, which remain as residual representations or traces of dialogue (machine) rather than dialogue itself

(people, body). And it is impossible to (re)produce authenticity when the authentic slides continually into representation. While the time phrase "until morning" (line 58) suggests a possible change in direction, and that waking after the dream might provide the impetus to break free from a relationship that has run its course, it is not certain whether the last three lines reveal a real decision. As this is the last poem in the collection and "the end" is left open, it is possible that the lines refer neither to Pierre nor to his ironic "murmuring". The "song" provides a reminder of the previously mentioned texts, against which the nightclub lyric seems insubstantial and inauthentic, as perhaps does the poem itself: "a song / playing ...".

A third interpretation of "playing" is possible, with the whole of "Pilgrim Routes" providing a reflection on desire and its metaphysical trappings as a game, a construct "only in her mind" (line 56). There are echoes here of Lacan's concept of castration: in the fantasy (dream), Pierre is killed off as a substitute for his former (suicidal) partner in order to serve the *jouissance* of his new mistress. Alternatively, Pierre represents the poet's alter-ego, the author killed off, as Barthes (1977) would have it, at the end of the work. If the Chagall scenario is followed and Pierre and the bird are seen as metonymically connected, as they are in Chagall's metaphysical paintings (the Vitebsk and Paris Opera series, for example), the fate of Pierre mirrors that of the fallen angel groom. Josephi's "Ithaca" has its source in myth, and here Pierre is represented as an Icarus who could not find the culturally appropriate words and music to 'soar'. He is constructed as a failed hero, incapable of living up to romantic illusion.

Josephi carefully marks the beginning and the conclusion of the final stage of desiring: "in the end it had come to this". Represented synecdochically by the text he (re)produces, first Lorca and finally a poorly remembered nightclub lyric, Pierre and his double status as lover and literature lover progressively slide to make way for a final transformation. The end/ "end" of "Pilgrim Routes" is markedly different from the conclusion of Yeats's "Solomon and the Witch", where Sheba cries: "'O! Solomon, let us try again'". In Yeats's poem, the Word possesses a magical power that manifests joyous change. For Harwood, language provides solace

(presence) against absence. In Josephi's poem, words are wasted, left unheard or unsaid, as the descriptive phrase qualifying "song" suggests: "playing ... in the wind".

Josephi's poem seems far from overtly positive. It demonstrates what Hutcheon calls a 'commitment to doubleness, or duplicity' (2002: 1), a 'duplicity' that renders the production of joy problematic. In "*The Squirrels*", however, two possibilities allow for the production of joy through the desiring process. First, joy is produced through dreams and real or imagined aesthetic experiences. In the first part of this chapter, I suggested that "Pilgrim Routes" has a Romantic quality in the sense that Lucy defines Romanticism, with reference to Deleuze and Guattari's 'schizophrenic desiring' and Heidegger's 'poetic thinking' (1997: 202-203). Heidegger claims that poetry is the exemplary artform, and 'in the midst of beings, art breaks open an open space, in whose openness everything is other than usual' (1993: 197). The making of art, *poiesis*, is an act of 'unconcealment' rather than the mimesis of an actual being or experience (163). The poet brings a new truth or essence to light. While it cannot be said that Josephi is writing in the Romantic genre, her speakers are framed by the aesthetic contexts of painting, cinema, myth, poetry and song. In the real and imagined 'schizophrenic' world Josephi constructs, the heroine reflects on the qualities of authentic and inauthentic experience, exerting her power freely, editing the text or "tape" and effecting her own escape from the desiring process imbricated with death.

There are also resonances in Josephi's poem of *Sprechgesang*, the joyous, symphonic layering of the earth's voices described by Deleuze and mentioned earlier in this section. Josephi's assemblage of clichés and re-workings of familiar texts (*bricolage*) facilitates a certain kind of transformation, as shaping and fictioning flow together in a fragmentary, experimental way: art and life reflect and connect in the dreamlike, imaginary space of the poem. To use McHale's term, life is seen to 'empty out' into text, and text into life, with each reframing the other (2000: 571). Appropriately, the entire poem 'empties out' into the final image, which is perhaps the most striking of the collection. The production of joy within the

desiring process is anchored in the musical connotation of the present participle "playing", which emphasizes the metonymical relationship between lover, dead bird and game of desire: "In the end it had come to this, / a small room and a song / playing like a dead bird's wing in the wind." The speaker's cowardly yielding, caught in her lover's arms "like a blown feather" (line 41), was cited earlier. Finally, however, cowardice seems to be attributed to the lover, who, rather than tell the truth about his failed relationship, repeats a trite but memorable nightclub song: "Is that / what you want to hear".

The endurance of the "song", with its echoes of postwar American 'crooners' and also of the folk classic, "Blowin' in the Wind", [47] raises the question of which art forms are legitimized and authorized as part of the prevailing culture. Josephi's poem shows the shift from individual expression (Yeats, Harwood) to 'new forms, new self-consciousness about representation, and new awareness of both contexts and particularities of gendered experience' (Hutcheon 2002: 139). The woman's ways of being, knowing and desiring are foregrounded, and ultimately these challenge the culture of the simulacrum. 'Real' desire exceeds "the song" that marks both the end of the cycle and of the collection. Like Harwood's "O Could One Write as One Makes Love", "Pilgrim Routes" constitutes a reflection on originality and authenticity. Words, art and dreams can be separated neither from the world nor from culture. The right texts can (re)produce a more vibrant way of being in the world: clichéd exchanges, by contrast, reveal the desiring subject as 'inscribed in and by certain ideologically determined subject-positions' (Hutcheon 2002: 140). Josephi allows text to speak for both text and world, so that there is a continual sliding between the two. The politics of cultural conventions are exposed, and the poem allows for the dismantling and/or inscription of rhetorical and metaphysical structures. Feelings – pain, anger, hurt and joy are brought to the fore – and such an 'opening up' reveals what might be possible in future (Ahmed 2004: 181). Josephi's speakers want to leave behind the culture of repetition, and the ending of "Pilgrim Routes" can be read as a reflection on

[47] Bob Dylan, from the album "Freewheelin' Bob Dylan" (Warner Bros. Inc.: 1963).

the conclusion of "Ithaca": "When it is time to go, I'll go".

Since Josephi finishes with the song "playing in the wind" over the dead body of its producer, the question of iterability is raised. Is anything worthy of repetition? Currently, the language of 'reporting' is omnipresent: can one, Gadamer asks, 'demonstrate that even today one can still build a lasting image out of words, which is not passé but present and forever?' (1992: 74). In Josephi's last poem, the final stanza lingers as might a recurring musical refrain, defying a finite ending in its suggestion of infinite repetitions and deferments. Any search for truth leads inexorably back to the acknowledgement that there are no definitive answers. Yet, more important than the belief in the 'truth' that desire ends in death, is the courage to create and celebrate a vibrant and continual becoming free of limiting beliefs. Residues of familiar metaphysical discourses remain, attached to significant and signifying cultural artefacts, but these narratives are recycled to suit new purposes. "*The Squirrels*" reveals the complicity between culture and power. Nevertheless, in the world of infinite representation the right 'dream' can provide a 'convenient safety-valve' and allow for the fulfilment of desire that cannot be achieved in reality (Eagleton 2004: 100). Josephi's version of the Chagallian 'dream' provides just such a 'safety-valve'. Breaking free of predetermined boundaries is addressed again in the next chapter. Freedom of a different kind is the theme of the penultimate chapter, "Joy and Travel".

The Production of Joy

Joy and Madness

This chapter does not for a moment suggest that mental illness is accompanied by feelings of joy. Nor does is it concerned with the poets' mental health. It does, however, take up Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytical theory that poetry allows, at least temporarily, the recovery of the lost other and the sublimation of the death wish. Kristeva describes the 'melancholy substratum' of the imagination as the part that is deprived of classical and religious 'stability' but still longs to give itself meaning (1989: 171). In her work on the melancholic French poet Gérard de Nerval, Kristeva contends that poems 'accept' polyvalence and dispersal as a 'replica' of fragmented identity: the assimilation of loss into language is assisted by poetry's 'oralization and musicalization'. Kristeva's theorization here is pertinent to my line of argument in this chapter, and it brings me to my second point: poems are objects that circulate in public and affect audiences, readers or listeners. Can poetry as a language of feeling compensate in some way for loss and perhaps provide the means to turn melancholy into joy? How?

Contemporary critical theorist, Wendy Brown, argues that melancholia, wedded to the world of lost objects, turns feelings into 'things': the melancholic is caught up in an attachment to the past that blocks the opening to new and fruitful possibilities (in Eng and Kazanjian eds. 2003: 459; 464). Citing Freud, Judith Butler contends that attachment begins when infant subjects respond guiltily to a call from an authority figure. The formation of conscience enacts an ongoing attachment to prohibition. Butler engages with the theories of Lacan, Foucault and Althusser to argue that the imaginary works differently to real life, and it can break down the 'disciplinary' process of subjectivation. Although structured like the law and preoccupied by the law, the imaginary does not immediately obey the law: disorder, instability and unpredictability erupt from a site where identity is 'contested' (Butler 1997: 96). Butler's main concern is the social production of subjectivity. Foucault, she contends, successfully shifts the focus to

'contestatory' discourses of power, wherein the created subject is not 'fixed' but open to the productive process of making and remaking the self: in this way, the subject defies the 'hegemony' of the original (violent, melancholic) process (99 - 100).

Butler does not cite Deleuze as a key theorist, probably because his conceptualization of 'nomadic' proliferation is not firmly situated in a historical context. Colebrook argues, however, that Deleuze skillfully negotiates a path between 'radical' philosophy and the 'unthinking vitalism' of the Romantics (2008: 86). For the purposes of this chapter, Deleuze's 'schizo-analysis' provides a useful way to think of poetry, production, madness and joy together: madness is no longer tied to personal grief and melancholic loss, but rather to 'schizophrenic' desiring which is proliferating, virtual and joyous (1975: 427). While Freud's linear, arborescent model favours reproduction, Deleuze's 'rhizomatic', or root-like, productive system frees the creative artist from a repetitious cycle. 'Schizophrenic' production is not held back by the ghosts of the past.

In the imaginary world of the poem, poets affirm and break with the laws of language by manipulating structure and metaphor. If joy is to emerge from discomforting content, the poet must draw on revolutionary, subversive forces inside and outside familiar domains. Poems that produce joy may also interrogate the 'madness' that invests whole social fields, and transgresses history, politics and economics (Deleuze 2007: 26). Written against absence, 'delirious' language voices a vibrant process of becoming, an overflow of intensity: 'a rupture, an eruption, a break-through' (27). Approaching madness from a different perspective, Foucault also speculates that irrational language can constitute a kind of plenitude, wherein imagination, desires and arbitrariness 'fill the void ... joining to the figures of night the powers of day, to the forms of fantasy the activity of the waking mind' (1973: 106). When the voices of the delirious are released and heard, he contends, real change can be initiated at a social and personal level: 'in that night (of madness) man communicates with what is deepest in himself' (280). Foucault's metaphor comparing the 'night' mind with madness and creative production resonates strongly with the work of Yeats, Harwood and

Josephi.

Real madness explodes in gestures, behaviours and words which frighten people taught to fear madness by the media, family, schools and institutions that keep mad people out of sight. Foucault rightly draws attention to the power structures behind madness, the treatment of so-called mad people, and their marginalization: a person might believe himself to be reasonable and happy, yet he may be judged to be 'blind' to his own madness, unable to distinguish true from false (1973: 105). Madness 'illuminates' such paradoxes: the apparent disorder of 'crazy' speech, for example, reveals a particular kind of logical structure. Poetic language operates inside and outside the limitations of 'normal' speech. It cannot profess to offer a cure as psychoanalysis does, but it can put forward new ways of understanding madness. While the Freudian school's 'economic model' retains and embodies 'the duality of symptom and expression', the creative artist's model of the transformative narrative is more hopeful and productive (Ricoeur 1974: 140).

Poetry communicates to the public affects that can be elicited neither from direct confrontations with madness nor from clinical reports. Indeed, as John Weir Perry argues, writing and madness are equally productive as creative processes. Perry suggests that inspirational writers and artists such as Blake, Goethe and Chagall have shown how the 'organism' of every person's psyche grows 'by revolutions and overthrows of what has been, and the burgeoning of new forms dislodging the old ones' (1974: 110). Not only can 'mad' language be compared to the metaphorical language of poetry (13), but it is also sometimes difficult to discern 'mad' language from the language of divine frenzy, revelation and possession by a great love (8). Psychosis and poetry share a 'raving, demonic, dangerous' language (108) in which the same familiar elements of the heroic journey myth recur (29). The 'heroic' experience, which begins with displacement and ends with the triumphant return to the centre, releases a 'new plentiful source of energy' from the 'deepest levels of experience' and this excess can produce joy and healing (83). For Perry, the journey myth as creative process honours and integrates humans' struggle with madness and furthers the positive process

of 'regrowth' (149). By contrast, Deleuze refutes both heroic myths and psychoanalytical practice and argues instead for new narratives based on 'multiplicities' that cannot be reduced to binary oppositions: 'the conscious and the unconscious, nature and history, body and soul' (2007: 314-315).

"Joy and Madness" uses psychoanalytical as well as 'anti-Oedipal' strategies to explore the possibility that poetry as a language of affect both works within and exceeds the limitations of established systems. It engages with the different concepts of madness and productivity outlined above and seeks to reveal how certain poems by Yeats, Harwood and Josephi produce joy from madness. Where this is not the case, it elucidates limitations to the production of joy.

Madness and the muse

Blake envisaged the subconscious mind as a kind of hell, from which is released the irrational energy fuelling creative genius. 'Poesy herself' would pester him like a demon until he wrote down the required lines (Hirsch, Edward 79). To produce powerful works, it was necessary to abandon the 'angelic' way of being that runs according to an unvarying set of rules and principles and, instead, harness the unpredictable energies of the night mind (Damon, S.; Foster, Robert Fitzroy 103). Yeats passionately endorsed a similar concept. In prose that reveals his obsessive admiration, Yeats praises Blake's joyous works: Blake was 'glad to be alive, and ever spoke of his gladness, would have worshiped in some chapel of the Sun' (MW 351). Blake, Yeats believed, succeeded in creating union from disunity and the rational work from irrational chaos. Indeed, in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, Yeats wrote that artists made poetry out of the 'quarrel' with themselves (MW 411), a struggle entailing the experience of pain and ecstasy, hatred and love, 'amid the whirlwinds' of a tumultuous existence (MW 413). Joy could only be attained when humans fought energetically and passionately with their fate, knowing that there was no final conquest (MW 420).

Yeats's entire mythology was woven like Blake's around the idea of conflict and resolution, in particular the struggle between creative individuals and their alter ego or *Daimon*, whose 'night mind' allows access to the

imagination, particularly when the creators are in a state of alert reverie (Hirsch xiv). Hysterical energy suffuses the artist in such a way that the intimate encounter between man and muse creates an intense passion, which can be turned into poetry: daimonic, lunar or 'night thought' becomes 'luminous' through the artist (Yeats, *A Vision*, MW 428). Yeats uses three spellings, Latin, Greek and English, to express the 'mind in this darkness' that seeks to be brought to light: Daemon, Daimon and Demon.[48] Indeed, Yeats himself was known in Golden Dawn circles by the codename 'Demon est Deus Inversus'. Several of his major poems, including "Blood and the Moon" (MW 124 - 126) and "Ego Dominus Tuus" (MW 72-74) further the parallel between the creative force and lunacy.

Harwood's "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon" (CP 267-269), originally published in *Poems 1969 – 1974,* records a schizophrenic struggle worthy of Blake and Yeats. Harwood explains the scenario in a letter to Tony Riddell: 'Baby and Demon is a dialogue between the two aspects of the self: the child and the adult, the unthinking receiver of the world's sensations and the watchful analyst, the simple human creature and the censoring artist … it is the demon, the daimon, who makes Baby unhappy' (Harwood 2001: 299). There are echoes here of the muse's pestering of Blake, and the two spellings 'demon' and 'daimon' suggest the sliding that occurs in Yeats's prose.

In "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon", Harwood parallels the process of schizophrenic twinning and separation with creative production, and incorporates the (satirized) myth of "classic rape" (line 9) along with the Freudian 'myth' of Eros and death (see Freud 2005: 478). On a first reading, there is little evidence of the transcendent joy produced in certain works by Yeats and in Harwood's own 'Saint Teresa' poems.[49] Confronting her diabolical partner, innocent "Baby" sounds weary and resigned: "Demon, we're old, old chap. / Born under the same sign / after some classic rape. /

[48] Yeats was perhaps referring to the original Greek and Latin meanings of joy, a capricious and fleeting feeling that could quickly change to tragedy (see my general introduction).

[49] Strauss compares "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon" with "*Dichterliebe*", in which the speaker is 'fed on by the demonic energy of the poet' (1996: 175). In the first poem, Strauss hears a third voice, the artist who performs the singing. In line with Talbot, she reads the concluding stanza as 'grim' (176).

Gemini. Yours is mine" (lines 7-10). Baby's colloquial language is reassuring, but responses recycled from the language of "classic" myths and nursery rhymes reveal the dangers lurking behind 'innocent' tales: "One candle lights us" (line 35) echoes "Oranges and Lemons" with its nightmarish "chopper". To add menace, the language of popular postwar Hollywood film is used ironically to reveal the sleazy outcomes of 'romantic' encounters. In lines 27 and 28, "time's rocking swell" is rhymed with "motel": sweet possibility confronts seedy reality as Demon and Baby part after a night of passion. Although one product of the meeting is a tender poem within the poem in heroic couplets, striking contrasts between the voices of Demon and Baby reveal the brutality of the production process, bound to schizophrenic suffering:

> Rock-a-bye Baby
> in the motel
> Baby will kiss
> and Demon will tell.
>
> One candle lights us. Night's cool airs begin
> to lick the luminous edges of our skin.
>
> When the bough bends
> the apple will fall
> Baby knows nothing
> Demon knows all.
> (Lines 31 - 40)

The 'dangerous' ground under discussion seems to be familiar representations of the Fall and the human's innocent entrapment in the fallible body. Baby is urged to yield to her seducer and thus perpetuate the cycle of sinning upon which that narrative insists. The nature of happiness itself is interrogated, with Baby paraphrasing Wittgenstein's tenet that the world of the happy is different from the world of the unhappy. And the voice of Demon/*Daimon* triumphs joyously over Baby's demise.

The two speakers are differentiated by name, and their voices by metric form, but the intimacy of their relationship is stated in the poem's opening lines: "Baby, I'm sick. I need / nursing. Give me your breast." The double meaning of "nursing" allows the adjective "sick" and the synecdoche "breast" to connote both giving suck and administering care: Demon is

dependent upon Baby for survival. Indeed, Demon progressively sucks Baby dry to satisfy the need voiced at the beginning of the poem. The inversion, Baby as mother, signals the abandonment of the expected language of veneration. Nevertheless, Demon's accusation, "Baby's a whore", has the power to shock. Here, "whore" is chosen to rhyme with "sea shore", in Harwood's poetry the symbolic space of reconciliation. The usual locus of healing is now rewritten as a 1960s beach peopled by 'rockers' and their whores, where deadly conflicts between opposing sub-cultures might erupt at any moment.

The reinscription of the "sea shore" metaphor amplifies the potential of the schizophrenic struggle between Baby and Demon, and it seems unlikely that any peaceful resolution will take place. Yet a quotation from Wittgenstein, used as an epigraph to "I Am the Captain of My Soul", is recycled to flag a glimmering hope: "World of the happy, innocent and whole: / the body's the best picture of the soul / couched like an animal in savage grace." (lines 49 - 51) The simile "like an animal in savage grace", attributed to body and soul, appears to contrast markedly with the cliché: "happy, innocent and whole". At this turning point in the poem, however, the 'mad' language of ecstasy signals the process of transformation. In the unusual juxtaposition "savage grace", the noun "grace" is chosen to signify the familiar discourse of redemption and humans' privileged place within it. By contrast, the modifier "savage" suggests the raw, unpredictable power of the lion in "The Lion's Bride", who unknowingly devours the bride he desires (CP 281). The metaphor allows a glimpse of a possible unity, but reveals the danger of misapprehension that underlies all simple assumptions.

The two voices of Baby and Demon vibrate against each other, split and join, until the final product takes on a life of its own as a cry of violent resistance in the face of death. Freed at last from the discipline of mind and body, Demon's crazed voice seizes the last word:

> Unhoused I'll shout my drunken songs
> and through the streets I'll go
> compelling all I meet to toast
> the bride they do not know.
>
> Till all your tears are dry, my love,

and your ghosts fade in the sun.
Be sure I'll have your heart, my love,
when all your loving's done.

Joy explodes through Harwood's multiple voices, interwoven to represent the complexity of Baby and Demon's coupling and finally in the product of their union. The alternating heroic couplets (Baby) and crude nursery rhymes (Demon) are succeeded by eight stanzas, whose rhyme and rhythm are appropriated from the well known ballad, "My Love is like a Red, Red Rose". Burns's melody "sweetly sung in tune" is, of course, absent. Satirizing Burns (rhyme, rhythm), Yeats and Blake among others (by implication, rose imagery, therefore subject matter), Harwood's poem opens to include a possible new ground: the brutality of male poets' gendering of the female objects of their verses. The final section, spoken in Demon's cruelly ironic voice, continues to work with the previously mentioned tenor and vehicle, "whore" and "sea shore". The "empty beach" (line 55) / "empty shore" (line 63) are ruthlessly exploited ("ravished") by Demon, and Baby suffers like any other nameless animal. Viewed from Baby's perspective, little joy is produced from the scenario in which the "gentle creature" cannot win. Demon, on the other hand, thrives on Baby's heartfelt suffering, as the penultimate stanza quoted earlier shows. "Unhoused" suggests freedom from physical limitations, while "drunken songs" and "toast / the bride" evoke celebration. Joy comes from the creation of a lasting work of art, feted here as enduring "songs". Though neither gentle nor politically correct, they cannot be erased.

To produce joy from madness, Harwood uses metonymy to suggest the building of a different kind of body, the body of work composed "bone by bone" and "grain by grain" (lines 66-67) even as the physical body is dispersed. The "sea shore", the site of danger and loss, now becomes the place for seeking, finding and recreating: "sift you through my hand" is used twice (lines 64 and 65) to mark the overlap in process as physical decay (absence) is transformed into the body of work (presence). Burns's 'sands of life' metaphor is appropriated here, but the conceit is deflated and surpassed. Human love and its limited life span are acknowledged and displaced by the permanent trace, the poem that commemorates living in all

its sublime savagery.[50]

Although "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon" has the nightmarish intensity of a Grimm's fairytale, separation is succeeded by synthesis of a kind as Harwood successfully marries subject matter and language to produce the *frisson* of horror mixed with glee. As in other Harwood poems, madness is conceptually and metaphorically imbricated with creative production. Conventional discourses of body and soul are disrupted. The body and its hauntings, dreams and illnesses are inscribed in the new work, whose role exceeds that of psychoanalysis by incorporating the social unconscious in consciousness and furthering an opening to otherness: sensations and possibilities for understanding are expanded, the usual presuppositions are deterritorialized, and compulsions are dramatized in a way that challenges the 'mad' forces acting on the body. "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon" voices a rupture and a new becoming: from the site of schizophrenic suffering emerges a new body in which the healing of Oedipal repression begins the transformation of rage into joy. The political implications of such an exchange will be explored later in the chapter.

Madness, heroism and joy

It was stated earlier that psychotic episodes, myths of the heroic journey and recorded experiences of rapture, ecstasy and illumination share the same themes and metaphors (Perry 84). The idea is not new: Plato and Socrates noted the similarity between 'mad' language and poetry (Perry 8). While joyous revelations are forgotten when the psychotic 'patient' is 'cured', the body of a poem can trap the multiple intensities of transformative experience. The following section seeks to show how this process takes place.

Yeats's poems celebrate heroic acts and allow for the transformation of irrational processes into powerful syntax and metaphors: *A Vision* describes the means by which 'the *Daimon* creates a very personal form of heroism or of poetry' (MW 428). The 1887 poem, "The Madness of King Goll" (MW 7-9), elucidates Yeats's developing understanding of the creative process.

[50] While I agree that the poem presents no firm resolution, I cannot concur with Strauss and Talbot that the conclusion is 'grim'.

Here, with help from the *Daimon*, Goll spins horrifying experiences into the songs he continues to sing joyously:

> But slowly, as I shouting slew
> And trampled in the bubbling mire,
> In my most secret spirit grew
> A whirling and a wandering fire:
> I stood: keen stars above me shone,
> Around me shone keen eyes of men:
> I laughed aloud and hurried on
> By rocky shore and rushy fen;
> I laughed because birds fluttered by,
> And starlight gleamed, and clouds flew high,
> And rushes waved and waters rolled.
> *They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me,*
> *the beech leaves old.*
> (Lines 24-36)

"But slowly" introduces the transformative experience. It is evident by the third line of this (the third) stanza that a spiritual epiphany is taking place: its peculiar quality is suggested in the rhyme of "slew" with "grew". A series of motion verbs, "trampled", "hurried", "fluttered", "flew" and "rolled", allow parallels to be made between Goll's wandering and the forces of nature which voice themselves around him, even in the leaves' language. Relentless movement contrasts markedly with "I stood": only when the speaker stops is he able to listen and to feel a different energy, "A whirling and a wandering fire". This current, which Colin McDowell and Timothy Materer liken to the Kundalini (358), fuels an ascent from the hellish "bubbling mire" to the trees and stars. It stirs the creative juices and returns the sentient human to his forest path:[51]

> I wander on, and wave my hands,
> And sing, and shake my heavy locks.
> The grey wolf knows me; by one ear
> I lead along the woodland deer;
> (Lines 42 - 45)

It is precisely because of his madness that King Goll can rejoice and create: "Murmuring to a fitful tune, / How I have followed, night and day, / A tramping of tremendous feet" (lines 52-54). Line 52 evokes Goll's crazed

[51] Brenda Webster reads "The Madness of King Goll" as autobiographical: the poet's 'terrifying isolation' is transformed into uniqueness; passion and sexual dream are 'metamorphosed into the fire of inspiration and purification' (1973: 28).

inward debate, while the noun "tramping" echoes the battle suggested earlier.

It is not clear whether Goll's battle actually took place or whether Goll is merely following the voices in his head, but Yeats underlines the significance of repetition. Writers can rework familiar myths to one of two ends: humankind falls back into its mire of madness, or it frees itself from entrapment so that it can spiral and gyre rejoicing into eternity. The second possibility is voiced in the 'excessive' song, through which the artist turns chaos into joy. In "King Goll", a clichéd metaphor links the 'wild' voices of human and drum: "Of some inhuman misery / Our married voices wildly trolled" (lines 58 - 59). Now, although a rupture with the past means eternal wandering for the singer unable to join the living or the dead, old losses are overwritten. In this instance, the poem concludes as Goll remembers taking his instrument back into the forest to sing and play:

> When my hand passed from wire to wire
> It quenched, with sound like falling dew,
> The whirling and the wandering fire;
> But lift a mournful ulalu,
> For the kind wires are torn and still,
> And I must wander wood and hill
> Through summer's heat and winter's cold.
> *They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me,*
> *the beech leaves old.*
> (Lines 65 - 72)

Since the personal attribution of "kind" to "wires" is unusual (line 69), it is impossible for the strings of an instrument to be kind, it may be assumed that Yeats is writing metaphorically about the speaker's broken connection with his instrument. Indeed, the long vowels of line 68 suggest the plangent cry of separation and longing. The simile "like falling dew" promotes a comparison of music and its origin, suggesting that Goll's musicianship was a heavenly gift, and the verb in the imperative ("lift") invites listeners to join the hero in a song that transcends loss and finitude to celebrate, echo and memorialize the multiple voices of nature.

It is possible then for sense to emerge from the hysterical song of the lunatic, perhaps because madness frees the 'sufferer' from the limitations

imposed by the rational mind. The hero's attunement to "wild" nature is foregrounded in "The Madness of King Goll". "A Crazed Girl" (MW 158), from *New Poems* 1938, confirms that for Yeats there is a productive way of knowing and understanding centred in the body and its cycles. The dance of the "Crazed Girl" takes place in darkness and celebrates the 'lunatic' tides of the sea:

> That crazed girl improvising her music,
> Her poetry, dancing on the shore,
> Her soul in division from itself,
> Climbing, falling she knows not where,
> Hiding amid the cargo of a steamship
> Her knee-cap broken, that girl I declare
> A beautiful lofty thing, or a thing
> Heroically lost, heroically found.
>
> No matter what disaster occurred
> She stood in desperate music wound
> Wound, wound, and she made in her triumph
> Where the bales and the baskets lay
> No common intelligible sound
> But sang, 'O sea-starved hungry sea.'

The first three syllables, "That crazed girl", are heavily accented, like a 1-2-3 count into the dance. A string of present participles follows to suggest that the particular "girl" is caught up in the continuous present, in the actions of her body: "improvising" (line 1); "dancing" (2); "Climbing, falling" (4), and "Hiding" (5). The sequence subverts the usual expectation of ascension, and the girl is found down below, "Where the bales and baskets lay" (line 12). Since the rhyming scheme is irregular, the full rhymes "found", "wound" and "sound" assume particular significance and, added to the spatial indicators, suggest that the crazed girl is completely possessed by her "desperate music" (line 10). The descriptor "heroically found" (line 8), however, appears to imply an observer, maybe a man, who hears the girl singing in the cargo space of the ship. Perhaps this person is the poet, since the girl is declared by Yeats to be an object, a "thing". The description of her body as lamed, "Her knee-cap broken" (line 6), further exposes the madwoman's dependence, helplessness and confinement to the ground.

Yet the speaker describes *the girl* as "heroically found". A different picture emerges: the order of "lost" and "found" is important, and the gap

between the two states is bridged by the girl's imaginary space. The damage to her knee suggests classical myths in which the wounded warrior transforms pain and suffering into the gift that is the source of art. Indeed, "heroically found" signals the process of metamorphosis described in the second part of the poem, the aforementioned full rhyme "found" connecting the two stanzas. The girl's "triumph" (line 11) is now made clear. In the relative clause, "No matter what disaster occurred" (line 9), the noun "disaster" is chosen for its association with cosmic mythology. Calamity is anticipated, and Yeats allows a moment of hesitation before confirming that "wound" (line 10) is not a noun but a past participle. It is then repeated to emphasize the girl's accelerating, spinning dance: her "desperate music wound / Wound, wound" (lines 10-11). The whole of the second stanza works to affirm the significance in the girl's rich, imaginary world of the mad dance and the improvised music to which she whirls. Her paradoxical song, "'O sea-starved hungry sea'", seems meaningless unless it is understood that the girl's lived experience *is* her oceanic excess. Her transformative, "desperate" music transports her to a state Yeats describes in "An Introduction to my Work" as 'beyond feeling'. Blurring the boundaries between self and other, Yeats creates an unlikely Utopia, wherein the song opens the mad dancer to joy.

A reading which establishes the girl as the heroic subject reveals Yeats's inversion of hierarchy. For Yeats, the spatial location of the "Crazed Girl" among the "bales and baskets" of the ship's hold can be compared with the "foul rag and bone shop of the heart" metaphor used later in "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (*Last Poems* MW 181). Here, the speaker appears to be the poet, who casts an eye over his entire body of work and directly accredits woundedness as the condition under which poetry is written. The list of sources includes experiences inscribed as current and real, for example an encounter with "that raving slut / Who keeps the till" (lines 37-38). Female voices are, however, not the only voices heard to rave. In "Circus Animals", Yeats groups the various expressions of human tribulation together in the trope "sweepings", a metaphor for the pieces of myth and experience incorporated into the poet's body of work. Among such myths is

that of Cuchulain and the "ungovernable sea" ("The Circus Animals' Desertion", line 26). In "Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea" (MW 14) the crazed hero is driven to battle the waves when he hears his own name called. "Cuchulain Comforted" (MW 170), published in *The Rose* 1893, describes the hero's last great fight. His 'comforters' tell him to take up a needle and prepare his own shroud for death, but the voices of the 'Shrouds' are inhuman:

> … the man
> Took up the nearest and began to sew.
>
> 'Now must we sing and sing the best we can
> But first you must be told our character:
> Convicted cowards all by kindred slain
>
> Or driven from home and left to die in fear.'
> They sang, but had not human tunes or words,
> Though all was done in common as before
>
> They had changed their throats and had the throats
> of birds.
> (Lines 19-26)

The paradoxes suggested in the Cuchulain poems are taken up in "A Crazed Girl" and show how complete immersion in one state furthers an opening to alterity. A lifetime of forging connections, between apparent nonsensical chaos and those events and feelings appreciated by the senses, prepares the hero and heroine for an eternal union with the inhuman song of the spheres.

"A Crazed Girl" is, it seems, based on an actual encounter. Towards the end of Yeats's collaboration with Shri Purohit Swami on the Upanishads, he was visited by Margot Collis, known by the stage name of Margot Ruddock. In a letter to Olivia Shakespear (22.5. 1936) Yeats states that Ruddock

> said she had come to find out if her verse was any good. I had known her for some years and had told her to stop writing as her technique was getting worse. I was amazed by the tragic magnificence of some fragments and said so. She went out in pouring rain, thought, as she said afterwards, that if she killed herself her verse would live instead of her. Went to the shore to jump in, then thought that she loved life and began to dance. (Wade, ed. 1980: 856)

The next day, Yeats adds, Ruddock 'went mad' and jumped from a window, 'breaking a kneecap, hiding in a ship's hold, singing her own poems most of the time' (856). Yeats was asked to provide for Ruddock's care, her husband apparently regarding the tragedy as nothing more than good publicity for Margot's career.

Yet, as Nicholas Miller (2002) argues, Yeats's poem reaches beyond one particular circumstance, for comparisons are drawn between heroes, mad women and Ireland. Like Ireland, the "Crazed Girl" is defined by the paradox of her boundless boundaries; she feels the sea on all sides. Miller compares "A Crazed Girl" with another Yeats poem about Margot Ruddock, "A Sweet Dancer", in which the mad girl is delirious with joy when dancing. As a result, she rejects suicide in favour of gaiety: "... she is happy being crazy; / ... / Let her finish her dance, / Let her finish her dance.'" Miller notices correspondences between the 'Ruddock' poems and "The Death of Cuchulain" too, suggesting that Yeats deliberately overturned received notions of heroism to achieve 'authentic Irishness' (Miller 149). Heroism is reproduced within the familiar Irish economy of poverty and madness. While Miller's analysis rings true, it must also be said that in "A Crazed Girl" the woman's passionate song and dance constitute excesses which allow joy to exceed all boundaries including the limitations of time and space. Such a performance might communicate the 'mysterious relationship between a work of art and an act of resistance' (Deleuze 2007: 328). It is for this reason perhaps that Yeats "declare(s)" the girl to be a "beautiful, lofty thing", not only for the poetry she writes and sings but also for her way of being and experiencing. Indifferent to pain and death in her productive Utopia, the girl eludes finitude and becomes a work of art in her own right.

Mad or ecstatic states had intrigued Yeats for some time. Five years earlier (23.11. 1931) he had written to Olivia Shakespear about his poem "Crazy Jane and Jack the Journeyman" and had requested that Shakespear send him the details of 'the Chinese book – golden flowers or whatever it is' (Wade ed. 1980: 785-786). Wade adds that this book was most likely *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, an old Tao text translated by Wilhelm with a psychoanalytical commentary by Carl Jung. Jung had found in the

alchemical tract a new way to understand schizophrenia, the animus and anima and the collective unconscious. He was able therefore to bring empirical understanding 'alongside' the concept of 'instinct' (Jung, in Dongbin Lu xv). Tao meditations countered the 'deracination' of consciousness by tracing the psychic process of development, which 'expresses itself in symbols' (Jung 99). Tao teachings detailing the meeting of Eros and Logos, 'the creative fantasy in richest measure', were far more useful than western analysis, which devalued the importance of 'day-dreaming' (120). The obscure text piqued Jung's interest because his patients had sometimes brought him drawings similar to the mandalas found in *Golden Flower*; indeed, some patients had danced the mandala patterns for him (100).

In his notes on *Golden Flower*, Jung explained how meditation and mandala dances induced death-defying cosmic experiences that could lead to healing. Jung was also familiar with the meditations of the poet, musician, healer and theologian Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179). Hildegard's work, he believed, demonstrated her attainment of an 'acute state of consciousness', in which the inner personality released emotional and intellectual bondage to create a 'unity of being' (107). In this state of intense freedom, all melancholy seemed to vanish in the 'light of the soul' (106). Lunatics reported similar experiences, and ecstatic states could become fixed as 'mental disturbances' (109). In Hildegard's time, these episodes might have been decried as signs of diabolical possession. For Yeats, they heralded the disruptive arrival of the *Daimon*. It seems likely that Yeats spent years researching the mental states that bring the individual closer to the detached yet joyous state that he, like Jung, called the 'unity of being'. His study culminated in the practical collaboration with Shri Purohit Swami.

In "The Three Hermits" (from *Responsibilities* MW 54 - 55), Yeats parallels madness and the ecstasy of joyous detachment. Two ascetics discuss death and escaping the round of incarnation while the third, "Giddy with his hundredth year, / Sang unnoticed like a bird" (lines 6-7). Like a refrain, these lines are repeated at the end of the poem (lines 32-33).

"Giddy" connotes the imbalance of mind and body associated with great age as well as the effect of the winding dance that will soon send the happy old hermit gyring beyond the earthly round of duties and rational thought. The spinning song voices an opening to boundlessness and an indifference to death. Similarly, in "A Crazed Girl" the madwoman's performance challenges fear and redefines madness. From the observer's viewpoint at least, madness and joy are able to coexist and share the same linguistic space. "No common intelligible sound" ("A Crazed Girl", line 13) may be read to emphasize the negative, placed at the beginning of the line: far from common, the girl's song works as a potent vehicle for transformation.

According to Yeats, writers might do well to remember the nexus between madness, suffering and exultation: he comments that writers too often become caught up in the factual reporting of tragic events, which renders their work lifeless and timebound. In "A General Introduction for my Work", Yeats claims that the writers of his day have forgotten tragic gaiety, the balm which soothes the "pain" of a generation. Significantly, Yeats foregrounds female figures as embodying tragedy:

> The maid of honour whose tragedy they sing must be lifted
> out of history with timeless pattern, she is one of the four
> Maries, the rhythm is old and familiar, imagination must
> dance, must be carried beyond feeling (MW 387).

The 'old and familiar' rhythm of the dance is heard in the *Crazy Jane* poems as well as in "A Crazed Girl", where suffering, madness and joy allow the girl to become 'carried beyond' the limits of feeling and world.

Yeats does not reveal in the poem, however, that his muse was an aspiring poet, whom he advised not to write: he preferred to objectify her in his own work. The power dynamic between the 'mad' person and the authority figure who diagnoses madness is explored by Josephi in "Nietzsche's Last Trainride" (FNP 205-206). Rather than silence Nietzsche by paraphrasing his work, Josephi uses direct quotations, allowing the philosopher's own voice to be heard. A footnote to the poem explains that the italicized lines are translated quotations from Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*:

> The gentleman donned his Dracula teeth,
> a dentist, hired by the consulate

and asked to accompany Professor Overbeck
and his friend, mad now, utterly mad,
night has come, on his last journey.

They did not want other passengers
Staring, endangered by his embraces,
Now all songs of lovers awake,
In the compartment, calmingly offered
Explanations for the crowd at the station: 10

'A festive gathering for you, sir,
In awe of your work, *your Geist.*
My hands are burnt by ice.
But you have to pass without greeting.'

My soul, too, is a fountain,
I have suffered like a God.
And he, reassured, knowing he was
Dionysus and the Crucified in one
and, more recently, Voltaire and Napoleon,
sailed into his longest night 20
wearing a night-cap, singing:

'Once on a bridge I stood
in a brown night.
Songs came from afar …'
lingered like a waterfall
which lingers even while it falls,
sang on bravely, sang out loudly,
'Did anyone listen to my soul?'

Josephi reveals the play of forces between dangerous madman and rational human being as an exchange of language that can be used to suit a particular purpose. First, the *pastiche* effect allows a contrast to be made between Nietzsche's voice, heard through his writing, and the voice of the poet, who distances herself and ensures that her voice is acknowledged as separate. The first line reinforces the distancing and makes clear that the "gentleman" guardian is or has become a monstrous figure of the poet's imagination, a "Dracula" rather than a dentist. By giving him fictional status, Josephi undermines the doctor's importance and suggests that his function is theatrical rather than professional; his authority cannot be taken seriously.

The poet's allegiance is with the hero, Nietzsche. "They" (line 6) is the group of people who want Nietzsche silenced. "They" provoke imagined reactions from the "endangered" passengers (line 7) in order to hide the

truth of their charge's abduction, yet even "They" are pawns in a bigger game. As in other poems by Josephi, the "consulate" is the official state entity with the power to manipulate the fates of disenfranchized individuals. Here, Nietzsche's "gentleman" minder has been "hired" and "asked" by consular officials (lines 2-3) to keep the philosopher poet away from other people; Nietzsche is in the eyes of officialdom "mad now, utterly mad" (line 4). Rational and irrational states are conveyed by language as much as behaviour: Nietzsche's passionate voice, heard in the "songs of lovers", contrasts with the words of his minders who speak "calmingly" (line 9). Thus the lie is perpetuated: the minders' words confer upon Nietzsche the status he deserves (lines 11, 12) while their actions conform to the bidding of the state. Innocence rather than madness, however, is suggested in the signifier "reassured": Nietzsche is left unaware of what is really happening to him. Yet, transcending the clichéd placations of the "gentleman", Nietzsche's language of excess reveals his heroic will, not only towards survival, but also towards the *becoming-fountain* whose flow constantly renews itself. In the last stanza, the voices of philosopher and poet "sing" together, so that both poetry and madness are seen to share a paradoxical space.[52]

Madness, gender and joy

With its potential to distort communication and to disrupt the flow of joy, the language of madness can be far from pleasant. For certain masculine characters created by Harwood, language is a barrier and a source of irritation. It spoils the pleasant silence of reverie and provokes irrational behaviours when fueled by other excesses. Harwood's "Saint Teresa" voices, however, turn suffering into songs of rejoicing. Although characters are, as Cassandra Atherton has suggested, constructed as playthings for Harwood's personal enjoyment and cannot be taken too seriously (95), a comparison of the male and female personae Harwood constructed early in her career highlights her female constructions as ecstatic and her men as melancholic.

[52] Eleanor McNees describes a similar state as an 'ecstatic' revelation of presence (29).

The collection referenced in this thesis contains published and previously unpublished poems, including pseudonymous poems (CP xxi): Walter Lehmann (originally published 1960-1961), Miriam Stone (1962-1965), Timothy Kline (1968-1975), and Francis Geyer (1960-1965). Harwood preferred for some years to keep her personae multiple, publishing sporadically in various journals during the 1950s and early 1960s before having her first book *Poems* published (Strauss 1996: 23). Harwood admits she invented a background for each 'self' and even gave each one an address, usually that of a friend (SS 237). Writing as Francis Geyer, supposedly a migrant to Australia, where his culture was neither understood nor appreciated, gave her particular pleasure. Geyer's best known characters, physicist Professor Eisenbart and musician Dietrich Kröte, allowed Harwood delicious opportunities for irony as she inscribed the stereotype of the suffering artist, exiled from his homeland and forced to endure the locals' limited cultural understanding.

Personal letters indicate that the voices of Harwood's 'lunatic' men were not meant to be taken in earnest; Harwood also expresses considerable scorn for editors unable to discern good, authentic poetry from bad. In a letter to her great friend Tony Riddell (November 1961) she wrote: 'I just don't know why you don't think all these pseudonymical games are funny. I think Geyer is very, very funny' (Harwood 2001: 145). It seems that at least one other writer agreed. Harwood later commented to Riddell that a "'fake'" Geyer poem had appeared in the journal *Meanjin*: Vincent Buckley might have written it 'as a private joke' (Harwood 2001: 147). Buckley himself acknowledges in an essay on Harwood that play is the 'object' of Geyer/Harwood's Kröte and Eisenbart poems: 'playing' may be taken to mean both having fun and making music or dancing (in Sellick, Robert ed. 71).

The malicious 'fun' of the Kröte poems emerges as a product of the discrepancy between the hyperbolic language of tragedy and the degree of Kröte's suffering.[53] The Kröte poems may be 'very, very funny' in Harwood's

[53] Lawson describes the movement back and forth between the tragic and comedic modes as a fluid play between 'shocks of pain' and 'comic buffoonery' (1991: 29). Vincent O'Sullivan calls the effect the 'combing of the comic across the *almost* unbearable' (in Sellick ed. 38).

eyes, but they are tragic too. In "Fever" (CP 139), which was published in *Poems/Volume Two* (1968), Kröte seems to suffer in a savage world like a modern version of Yeats's King Goll. Unlike Goll, Kröte finds little sweetness in life and even language seems to alienate him from his surroundings. Misinterpreting in his delirium an innocent pupil's statement, "'I've brought / a gift'" (lines 20-21), Kröte hears the noun in its German version: "'Poison!'" His nightmare is even worse than his conscious imagining:

> ... He sleeps. A seething
>
> darkness finds where his life is laid.
> Maps of an empty continent,
> himself, are drawn in bleeding scrawls.
> Keep me, his spirit prays, from ill.
> By its own scope, the heart's betrayed
> to monstrous dreams, and throbs assent:
> "I'll make the creature mine." He falls
> through a black void, himself, and still
>
> falling wakes into darkness, crying
> "Poison!"
> (Lines 48 - 58)

Here, the repetition of "himself" draws attention to the absence of a love that might heal the musician, whose madness is suggested in parallel metaphors: "A seething // darkness"; "an empty continent"; "a black void". Absence is inscribed too in the dream language of crazed excess as "bleeding scrawls". Enjambment sustains momentum through the horrifying recount of Kröte's nightmare. Waking offers no joy, for as the "empty continent" metaphor suggests, the musician finds himself not in his beloved European birthplace but in Australia, the *Terra Nullius* which perfectly mirrors the state of his soul. While Kröte experiences a triple absence, his loving female pupil sleeps "sure-hearted".

Men's tragic experience of melancholy and addiction is also the subject of Harwood's poem "I am the Captain of My Soul" (*Poems* 1963, CP 40-41) with its epigraph by Wittgenstein: "*The human body is the best picture of the human soul*".[54] In "I am the Captain", "old wounds" suggests the

[54] Hoddinott contends that this poem, among others, traces the longing of the self for permanence:

archetypal 'heroic' grief, which is buried and can be neither healed nor endured. Like Kröte, the Captain can only mask his suffering temporarily with alcohol until his body loses control: "Hands, eyes, body keel to the void as the drunken / Captain sings in his wilderness of water." (lines 31-32) Here, "wilderness" suggests the same void inscribed metaphorically in the Kröte poem as "an empty continent, / himself" (lines 49-50). Alienated in their melancholic space, both characters desperately try to steer a steady course and fail.

Harwood constructs her masculine characters as depressive and tragically wounded. Her women tend to conform to the psychotic or neurotic patterns that Freud concludes are typically feminine (2005: 357). These characters do not deny the value of their thoughts and experiences, unlike the melancholics Kristeva describes (1989: 245). Rather, the self joins with the other: 'it carries it within, it introjects its own omnipotent projection – and joys in it' (64). Harwood's early poem "*Caro Autem Infirma*" (CP 47) begins with "the common / denials of nightmare" (lines 7-8) and ends in triumphant jubilation. As an 'intervention', the voicing of the dream content is successful: a satisfactory resolution is found to the 'generation of hysterical symptoms, of phobias, obsessions and delusions' to which Freud refers in his 'dream-work' (see Freud ed. 2005: 113). Perhaps Harwood claims triumph over her own 'anxiety dreams' in language that becomes increasingly ecstatic. In the first person, she narrates the nightly battle between opposing forces:

Caro Autem Infirma

Often I wake in darkness
from a dream to a crying bird or child
and hear faint cockcrows summon
a time unreconciled
with sleep or waking.
Who turns by the heart's brazier
untempered eyes on the common
denials of nightmare shielding
the sleeper from worse waking?

Harwood explores the paradox that our 'most intense' experiences take place in the 'fragile' body, and contributes to Romanticism 'a twentieth-century awareness from a woman's point of view' (1991: 149).

I walked on water. Night's hollow 10
cranium sutured by lightning globed
miraculous visions. A flame-like
hand drew the waters robed
in tempest to naked
calm. The black deep sustained me
and past and future came like
the arms of a cross to hold me
fast in time's flux, rejoicing.

I battled that night the protean
inscape of self, and held it fast 20
one moment, prophesying
in its true shape at last
my inward epic:
life's flowering *now* enclosing
its bitterest fruit, a dying
brazier, and fugitive cockcrows
in cadence on cadence enshrouding

the fossils of youth (ah, Renoir-
flesh!) Light's twittering servants shrill
good news of their lord's returning, 30
his night-rinsed winecups fill
between cypress and cypress
as children wake to his goldsmith-
graining, his radiance burning
dreams' spade-black mischief from bodies
that walk on day's flood, rejoicing.

Harwood's poem reads as a resistance to the 'dry' language founded, according to Jung in his commentary on *Golden Flower,* on a pathological denial of richly productive fantasy. In his history of madness, Foucault draws a similar conclusion. Mad voices are increasingly silenced by a 'structure … which does not resolve the ambiguity but determines it' (Foucault 1973: xii).[55] Harwood's "*Caro Autem Infirma*" rings with the voice of ecstatic power. Eroticism surges from the speaker's description of the sun, personified as a lover in lines 12-15, and the whole sequence captures the force of the 'mystic marriage' paradox: Logos and Eros become one through the ecstatic vision (Jung 1972: 102). Indeed, the language of excess can, paradoxically perhaps, heal and unify by connecting words with

[55] By contrast, argues Foucault, in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, 'mad' language allowed for dramatic 'debate'; a 'very old tradition' claims that dreams and delirium originate in a 'supernatural intervention' that supposedly empowers the individual to see strange portents and visions and predict the future (1973: 101-102).

world so that transformation can take place in both speaker and surroundings (McNees 29). It cannot be accidental that Harwood appropriates the Hopkins term "inscape" (line 20), which refers to the nexus between words and the sacramentalization of the landscape. While the lexicon and syntax of *"Caro Autem Infirma"* are not as bold as those of Hopkins at his most passionate, Harwood anthropomorphizes the natural world and draws it into the expression of the speaker's healing.[56]

Through the speaker, a passionate way of being in the world is expressed in a manner that contrasts markedly with the alienation and melancholia so acutely inscribed in the 'Captain' and 'Kröte' poems. The religious assurance suggested in the verb "sustained" and in the adverb "fast", chosen to qualify "to hold me", add to the tone of highly charged emotion. In lines 23-25, the gerund "flowering" and the noun "fruit" connote regeneration; nevertheless, the qualifier in the superlative, "bitterest" ("bitterest fruit") reveals the truth — death, loss, madness — that must be denied if healing is to be effected. From this turning point, Harwood's language affirms joy, hope and renewal. The adverb "*now*", emphasized by italicization, evokes the present or presence which banishes the inevitable "then" of absence. Anxiety is momentarily overcome and "rejoicing" is cited as the survivor's appropriate response: it is the last word of the poem. Ecstasy rings through the final lines of "*Caro Autem Infirma"* as the archetypal battle between madness and sanity, darkness and light, comes to a victorious end. While the title ("But the Flesh is Weak") suggests familiar narratives of the Fall, the body of the poem echoes a more promising discourse in which the ecstatic woman enjoys *jouissance* through her intimate relationship with the Other. Joy is promoted by female fantasy that, in Kristeva's words, 'imagines and carries out by aiming more deeply at psychic space, and the space of the body as well' (1989: 78). And within certain poems the 'intensities, sounds and significances' constitute within their metaphorical framework a sublimation which allows for the reordering of schizophrenic fragmentation: mourning and erotic ordeal are overcome

[56] Discussing Harwood's later poem "Herongate", Rose Lucas beautifully captures the intensity of poetry of loss, which 'circles around and draws its sustenance from the unsayable, from fantasies of plenitude and from the dying fall of what cannot be held' (2005: 148).

when assimilated into the body of the poem (170-171). These joyful processes are inscribed in the dramatic movement and hyperbolic language of "*Caro Autem Infirma*".

Another early poem, "A Case" (CP 45), deals with madness from a different perspective.[57] The indefinite article "A" denotes the medical treatment of one patient, whose 'deviant' behaviour is analysed by a doctor. Here, the patient believes her "righteousness" endows her with "powers // beyond belief" (lines 8-9), but her diatribe against the "wicked, feasting town" (line 5) and its "bawdy spires" (line 23) reveals the origin of her erotic repression. Her libidinal dream of a "clean" world where only she can enforce the Redeemer's "horizontal law" (line 28) has its own paradoxical logic and, against the unnameable enemy, the madwoman fights fearlessly to assert her power: "Her Samson mind cracked pillars down / and left no trees, no upright towers" (lines 6-7). The Biblical narrative (Judges 16) endows Samson with superhuman power. In "A Case" the familiar story of destruction is used ironically in a new psychological context: common metaphors for male sexuality are "cracked … down". Denial on a mythical scale might seem irreversable, but the narrator-analyst's 'permission' to voice suffering flags a possible path to reintegration.

Madness brings the woman face to face with the (imagined) Other: "She met him in a crowded street, / tore off her clothes, and kissed his feet" (lines 31-32). The positioning of the woman suggests subjugation before the male, yet Mary Magdalene enjoyed a privileged relationship with Jesus, whose feet she wiped with her hair (John 11:2, 12:3). A new connotation of the title emerges: "A Case" suggests the many 'cases' in which women have been misrepresented as mad, repressive virgins or whores doomed to render sexual services to men. With reference to the Christian tradition, Irigaray (1991) suggests why women have so often been misrepresented:

> In the body of the son of Man there reappears, in the form of a wound, the place that, in women, is naturally open. Also by and for him, perhaps? Does this mean that Christ takes it upon himself, mimics, the female in order to effect the passage back and beyond that creature whose flesh constantly incites men to

[57] Strauss reads the poem differently as a satirical critique of 'the elements of the love-and-life-denying puritanism within religion' (1996: 87).

lose control. (166)

Irigaray goes on to describe women as having to close off their *jouissance* in order to enact the role of 'the dumb virgin with lips closed' who mourns the sexual body that has become her 'cross'. Woman's purpose is clear: she is the vehicle for the Other. While this role is suggested in "*Caro Autem Infirma*" and "A Case", Harwood's women are neither virginal nor dumb.

In "A Case", the unusual choice of the proper noun "Samson" to qualify the noun "mind" (anthimeria) furthers a subversion of Biblical narratives in which men who challenge the system are celebrated as heroes and women are denigrated and expelled. Harwood's representations of ecstatics and hysterics align with a different discourse, which challenges the construction of women as weaklings. In the Middle East and Europe, women were often highly valued members of the community, entrusted with the time-honoured role of carrying out religious practices: Eve D'Ambra gives the example of Isis cults, which influenced religious practice in the Mediterranean even after the emergence of Christianity (125). A woman's place was in the temple: the role of Vestal Virgins to keep the hearth alight had a sacred significance rather than a domestic function (168 - 169). Ironically, "A Case" begins and ends with the woman's place: "Uprights undid her"; "kissed his feet". A psychoanalytical reading might highlight the woman's violent obsession with the object she lacks and her struggle to find it in the place of the other. Harwood's 'lunatic' women, however, are active language users, able to turn absence into presence and madness into joy. Feminist counter-arguments might flag certain concerns here, especially the undesirable perpetuation of a stereotype: woman as hysterical sensualist (Goodchild, Philip 1996: 137). Harwood's narrative, however, probes the power relationship between patient and analyst, subject and object, hero and victim. The woman enters fearlessly into the space of the other.

The schizophrenic struggle between competing selves and influences is familiar from Yeats's *A Vision.* Here, 'a man's combat with himself' and 'a combat with circumstance' (MW 431) are resolved in the 'unity of being', in which rational forces identified as masculine (sun, external) meet their opposite, the irrational, feminine, lunar world (internal) in which the Logos is

silenced. As a theorist, Yeats could be accused of stereotyping, but his representations are 'plainly symbolical' (*A Vision* MW 437). Certain poems bring to light the paradoxes, possibilities and intensities of the creative experience, where the *Daimon* drives the hero 'from thought to passion' (MW 430).

The passionate madwoman is given a voice in Yeats's *Crazy Jane* cycle, included in "The Winding Stair and Other Poems" under the subtitle "Words for Music Perhaps". In the aforementioned letter to Olivia Shakespear in which Yeats requests details of the 'Chinese book', he claims he based Crazy Jane 'more or less' on a real woman with 'an amazing power of audacious speech' (Wade ed.1980: 785-786). For the most part, Yeats's letter to Shakespear deals with a recent experience of 'the nature of the timeless spirit' that is akin to sexual excitement: 'erect, delicate featured, and mixed with it the violent physical image, the black mass of Eden.' *Crazy Jane* draws on familiar Yeatsian paradoxes: defiance of death in the face of the body's physical limitations, sex as a holy encounter, and the logic of irrational speech.[58]

In Part V, "*Crazy Jane on God"* (MW 138), Jane's voice initially seems incoherent. Each of the four stanzas has a different theme: transient love, a battle, an uninhabited house, and the female body. In the opening lines, "'That lover of a night / Came when he would'", human love is expressed as finite, in contrast with God's eternal love voiced in the refrain: "*All things remain in God*". Here, the verb "*remain*" suggests permanence and "*All things*" expands the scope of God's concern from the one to the many. Jane's physical resistance is futile; the lover comes and goes whether she "would or no" (line 4). Acceptance, however, leads to a resolution of the struggle stated in the final lines:

> Though like a road
> That men pass over
> My body makes no moan
> But sings on:
> *All things remain in God.*
> (Lines 20-24)

[58] I concur with Bloom that there is 'no tragedy for Crazy Jane'. In Bloom's view, Yeats's 'Mad Songs', influenced by Blake and Rabelais, were driven by the 'apocalyptic vitalism' Yeats described in *A Vision* (1970: 399 - 401).

Although the poem seems dislocated, mirroring the fractured mind perhaps, it ends in rejoicing. The simile "like a road" (line 20) amplifies the metaphors of the second and third stanzas and suggests that the human body, specifically the female body, constitutes a site upon which the needs of the Other are met. Jane's apparent humility and suffering ("men pass over") belie her flexibility and endurance. Indeed, the lived experience registered in Jane's torn body becomes the conduit to redemption. The heavily stressed penultimate line and the final refrain "*remain in God*" express the lasting significance of Jane's song, which ruptures the silence of the final resting place, "Uninhabited, ruinous" (line 15). The underlying metaphorical tension, between God's house and the human 'housing' of the soul or spirit, is revealed in the triumph of the body's language over religious dogma. Through Crazy Jane, Yeats inscribes a resolution of 'antinomies': rationality and unreason, innocence and sin, joy and pain, and mind and body. Delirium allows Jane to voice joy, inclusion and a sense of permanent presence: "*All things*" is a set which must include the singer, and the verb "*remain*" used in the present tense opposes notions of physical transience. Jane's ecstatic language forges a lasting, joyous relationship with God.

Part VI, "*Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"* (MW 138-139), has a similarly jubilant, singable quality: perfect rhymes end the second, fourth and sixth lines of each stanza, and the alternating line lengths of Iambic tetrameter and trimeter create a light, skipping pace. Yeats builds the poem around the familiar oppositions voiced by Crazy Jane and the Bishop. Again, the human body is compared with a house and the Bishop's argument dismisses Jane by emphasizing the qualities of her failing form: "'Those breasts are flat and fallen now, / Those veins must soon be dry'" (lines 3-4). Rather than reinforce the Bishop's view that Jane should mend her ways as she prepares to exchange her "foul sty" for a "heavenly mansion" (lines 5-6), Yeats allows Jane's voice to predominate. The hierarchical order between mad, old woman and wise Bishop is reversed in Jane's jaunty reply:

> 'Fair and foul are near of kin,
> And fair needs foul,' I cried.
> 'My friends are gone, but that's a truth
> Nor grave nor bed denied,

Learned in the body's lowliness
And in the heart's pride.

'A woman can be proud and stiff
When on love intent;
But Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent.'
(Lines 7-18)

The ground under discussion is the human condition, and the lofty clichés voiced by the Bishop, who draws on Biblical parallels of the human body as a temple to God, are overturned here. Jane's voice takes up the noun "mansion" and repeats it (line 15), only to crudely describe love's abode as the "'place of excrement'".[59]

'Delirious' language constitutes, as Foucault argues, an expression of the 'ultimate truth': it is 'in a sense pure reason ... the paradoxical truth of madness … since we find here both what makes madness true (irrefutable logic, perfectly organized discourse, faultless connection in the transparency of a virtual language) and what makes it truly madness' (1973: 99). Although supposedly crazy, Jane's speech successfully undermines that of the Bishop, because in its own way it follows the laws of logical argument and presents a reasoned conclusion as to why sex occurs as and where it does: "'For nothing can be sole or whole / That has not been rent'" (lines 17-18). That the past participle "rent" (torn) ends the poem and rhymes with "excrement" serves to foreground Jane's fearless voicing of the truth. Indeed, the paradoxes of Jane's speech allow for the meaningful coexistence of opposites. In "*Crazy Jane*", the past participle "rent" connotes penetration; the poem's main metaphor compares the body to a temple, and the Biblical source of metaphor and paradox is revealed. Temples such as the Arc of the Covenant had openings protected by a veil (Exodus 36: 35). Disaster could result in the tearing of the curtain, yet only by removing it could men know what lay inside.

[59] Nicholas Miller contends that Yeats's 'crazy' woman is a metaphor for Ireland. And in colonial discourse, says Spurr, the 'failure to mark the necessary bounds of exclusion' is presented as 'filth and defilement' (1993: 84). Yeats, I argue, turns the traditional colonial narrative on its head: 'defilement' signifies letting the outside in, allowing for an expansion of culture and knowledge.

The penetration paradox also lies at the centre of "Leda and the Swan", which explores the ambiguity of the archetypal rape myth. At the moment of seizure when rupture occurs, chance overtakes choice on a cosmic scale. It may be argued that the poet's privileging of myth denies the suffering of real women, but Yeats makes it clear that physical weakness and social alienation can become sources of strength. Indeed, allusion to familiar narratives allows Yeats to interrogate the construction of women like Jane as 'crazy' whores. It seems unlikely to be accidental that Yeats chose to put the following line at the centre of "*Crazy Jane"* Part V: "'My friends are gone, but that's a truth'" (line 9). The whole poem works to embed the paradox that the language of alienated women brings them closer to the source of heroic strength. They meet suffering and loss with resilience and confidence, and their intimate relationship with God continues to complete them. 'Unity of being' may arise from delusion, but it produces joy.

Yeats is probably referring to the abstract Daimonic principle when he represents madness as heroic resistance. *A Vision* reveals the 'exciting' metaphors used not only in Yeats's poetry, but also to construct the gyres 'system' as a series of dramatic interactions: 'in man's most primary phases the Daimon is at her most antithetical. Man is now pursued with hatred, or with love; must receive an alien terror or joy' (MW 430). Yeats's conceptual model suggests a parallel between the hatred introduced by the Daimon and the embittered 'hysteria' of real women, such as the political activist Maud Gonne. Such women are constructed in "Lapis Lazuli" (MW 152) as the opposite of the poets who are "always gay":

> I have heard hysterical women say
> They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow,
> Of poets that are always gay,
> For everybody knows or else should know
> That if nothing drastic is done
> Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out …
> (Lines 1-6)

While Yeats generally promotes joy over melancholy, poems about real events usually affirm masculine authority as the rational source of enduring

power and control.[60] Within this scheme, female characters are constructed as erratic, driven by irrational impulses. In "Men Improve with the Years" (MW 64), Yeats reflects on his own approaching old age and iconization: "But I grow old among dreams, / A weather-worn, marble triton / Among the streams" (lines 16-19). The poet's reification of the heroic stereotype ensures his own inclusion in the privileged group, which supposedly makes decisions for the ultimate benefit of all. Indeed, Foster concludes that the public Yeats ultimately became 'his own heroic self-construction', 'painted' in many layers using the techniques he applied to the continual reworking of poems (1997: xxv).

Lunatic moments

"Crazed through much child-bearing / The moon is staggering in the sky". Yeats's poem "Crazed Moon" begins by personifying the moon as mad or 'hysterical', that is, governed by the womb. In his thought-provoking analysis of Yeats's Crazy Jane poems, with which he compares "Crazed Moon", Jonathon Luftig suggests that human derangement is 'projected' onto the moon (2009: 1123). Thus "Crazed Moon" speaks of 'poetic impotence, a sense of diminishment, and a nihilistic pathos left in the wake of irrevocable loss' (1124). By contrast, the Crazy Jane poems are characterized by a change in perspective: the body's suffering appears necessary to the production of the soul's joy; Jane does not lament her loss, for she is 'aware of a certain excess in all desire' (1125). My analyses have consistently pointed to this joyous awareness, voiced so often by Yeats's 'crazed' characters. By gendering the moon as 'she', Yeats parallels the 'lunar' cycle of events with the regularities and vagaries of female reproductive behaviours, and his metaphoric model accounts for evolution on a transpersonal as well as a personal scale: 'all possible human types can be classified under one or other of these twenty-eight phases' (*A Vision* MW 422). Even Yeats's diagrams show the complex, metaphorical conflict between solar and lunar energy, man and Daimon*:* 'she is in possession of the entire dark of the mind' (MW 429). In a Freudian reading of *A Vision*,

[60] For Ahmed's assessment of the masculine subject, who seeks to represent himself as rational and thereby claim the right to speak for others, see 2004: 168 - 170.

Koch compares the central tenets to the integration and disintegration of the personality and to existing theories of the disruptive subconscious (110). Under certain 'lunar' phases, fragmentation threatens every entity (111). A new unity is, however, fashioned from the fragments of the old.[61]

Yeats's lunar attributions seem naïve today, yet cogent stories have always been written from 'what is spectacular and what is pathological, celebration and reminiscence' (Cixous 1996: 19). Cixous cites the narrative of the hysterical 'spider woman' whose being becomes so unstable that she can pass from one state into another when 'wild aggressivity' drives her to dance: 'a substitute for orgasm, mimed in all the forms of displacement' (21). '(D)isplacement' is the key paradigm, for women must follow nature's cycles, retaining the appropriate distance from and proximity to men that preserves balance and returns society to 'sanity'. Yeats's lunar myth shares elements of European 'madness' narratives, but as evidenced in the earlier elaboration of "Solomon and the Witch", his metaphorical system is more inclusive than many hierarchical stories. Sheba cries out "… under the wild moon /… / … in a strange tongue" (lines 2 and 4). Feminine power amplified by lunar energy (lines 43-44) infuses language itself so that, when the time for transformation is ripe, Sheba's 'wild' speech exerts the power to propel change forward. And as stated previously in "Joy and Text", Yeats also embeds an intensely personal mythology in his poetry: the "'sun-in-moon'" events initiated by George (Maddox 73-74).

'Lunatic' as a synonym for 'mad' derives from a Roman belief that madness was exacerbated by a full moon. Many cultural myths represent the moon as the passive female partner of the active sun (Chevalier, Jean & Alain Gheerbrant 1982: 590). In Yeats's system, by contrast, the moon drives the process of fragmentation and reintegration. In the charming *He and She*, Part VI of the "Supernatural Songs", Yeats parallels personal, earthly and cosmic, 'lunatic' events:

> As the moon sidles up
> Must she sidle up,
> As trips the scared moon

[61] As Koch points out, Yeats's principle of 'creative antagonism' works on multiple levels as the dynamic process that accounts for 'human and super-human growth' (98).

Away must she trip.
'His light has struck me blind
Dared I stop.'

She sings as the moon sings:
'I am I, am I:
The greater grows my light
The further that I fly.'
All creation shivers
With that sweet cry.

The colloquial "sidles up" of the first stanza suggests a courtship ritual, and the sequence of similes directly compares coquettish female behaviour to that of the moon. "Must she ..." suggests that the lunar female has little choice; in tune with her cycles she must draw towards then dance away from her partner: "struck me blind" and "dared I stop" emphasize the urgency of the moon-dance. Yet *jouissance* triumphs over fear in the struggle to achieve the elusive balance suggested in the full rhymes of the second stanza.

The 'lunatic' song shared by both female and moon ("'I am I, am I'") has been appropriated from the Upanishads to describe the self-forgetful oneness of perfected creation (McKay 114). Here, as in the angelic intercourse of "*Rhib at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn*", one cosmic light source flows effortlessly towards the other in a celebratory dance of eternal love. In the last two lines, however, the verb "shivers" occurs in the present tense, and suggests not only repetition and the excited *frisson* that accompanies sexual courtship and release, but the sense that at any moment the balance might falter and the moon and/or the female presence keel from the anticipated path into the unknown. This eventuality is explored in the next poem, Part VII of the Rhib cycle, "*What Magic Drum?"* Here, the night terror and madness of the primeval jungle yield to joy at the beginning of the new birth cycle, opening to the final questions: "What from the forest came? What beast has licked its young?" Visceral tension and suspense again elicit the *frisson* of the terrible sublime.

Yet in poems such as "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" (MW 107), Yeats inscribes the potential for humankind to enjoy long periods of peaceful productivity: "Protected from the circle of the moon / That pitches common

things about" (lines 3-4). Only "rogues and rascals" (line 16) seize the opportunity to destroy contentment, to take human lives thoughtlessly and to damage the processes that promote joy and healing. In *The Tower* collection, Yeats lays the blame for the nightmarish violence he sees around him not on nature but on crazed individuals determined to disrupt the peace.

Within Yeats's metaphorical system, relationships between humans, political parties and nations shift constantly back and forth between 'mad' disruption (*jouissance*) and the quiet contentment of the cosmos. By contrast, Harwood poems are personal, although not confessional, in tone: distance is achieved by the adoption of different voices. 'Lunatic' moments occur during crises of personal suffering and, as Atherton contends, Harwood has 'a sophisticated understanding of the division of self': her 'subpersonalities' change and are integrated into a different subpersonality or into the whole (xx-xxi) in a process with which the reader as psychoanalyst can engage. Harwood actively constructs her 'subpersonalities' to suit her own purpose, and what Atherton calls 'game playing' (xiii) is a legitimate expression of the poet's ironic distance. Human 'madness' is constructed by Harwood to elicit mixed responses of pity and laughter, but rejoicing is most often promoted as the most appropriate response to human drama.

Rather than foreground the madness of social upheaval as Yeats does, Harwood chooses to confront insanity at an individual level. For example, through the voice of Miriam Stone in "Burning Sappho" (*Poems Volume Two* 1968), Harwood inscribes the 'lunatic' moment when the woman, ever at the service of others, turns into a raving harpy. Atherton identifies domesticity as the irritant in "Burning Sappho", but it seems that loss of opportunity induces the speaker's madness: joy is equated with having the time to write poetry. The crazed excess of suppressed rage finds its voice in the poem itself, wherein the speaker achieves *jouissance* by putting pen to paper. Not surprisingly, the pen and the penis are related metaphorically here, the trope turning on the verb "grasp" which is deferred until the penultimate line. The first three stanzas are constructed carefully in tetrameter with an ababcbdd rhyming scheme. The rhyming of the last two lines and their

enjambment draws attention in each case to their 'mad' content, the expression of the speaker's hidden desire to injure her loved ones. The source of her frustration is stated in each stanza: "I find my pen and start to write" (line 2); "I take my pen" (line 11), and "at last ... I start to write" (line 20). Clearly, the speaker endures *coitus interruptus* of a literary kind. Thus her poem is personified and addressed as her romantic interest: "Now deathless verse, good night" (line 22). The farewell rhymes with "write", and the adjective "deathless" is applied to poetry, the one entity the speaker never wishes to destroy.

Despite its theme of loss, "Burning Sappho" (CP 158) produces joy from madness at more than one level. First, 'lunatic' language permits the free voicing of feminine desires and social taboos. At the end of each stanza, the stereotype of the "placid" suburban housewife is subverted: "Inside my smile a monster grins / and sticks her image through with pins" (lines 7-8, loving mother/monster mother); "Invisible inside their placid / Hostess, a fiend pours prussic acid" (lines 15-16, friend/fiend); "In my warm thighs a fleshless devil / Chops him to bits with hell-cold evil" (lines 23-24, warm wife/cold devil). Despite her rage, the speaker elicits sympathy: constant interruption has turned repression into a triumphant expression of fury. While the title refers to the famous female poet Sappho, the descriptor "Burning" connotes not only extreme passion, but also the torture of many non-conformist women who refused do as they were told. Harwood writing under the pseudonym Miriam Stone aligns with this group of women, who derive *jouissance* from the voicing of their 'lunatic moments'.

"Burning Sappho" also constitutes an affirmation of the same kind as the poem within the poem quoted in the final line, perhaps by Sappho herself: "'The moon is gone, the Pleiads set.'" The existence of both poems is evidence of the victory of the woman's word over lost time and opportunity. Participles "gone" and "set" are parts of a lexical group suggesting endings and absence. The "moon" and the "Pleiads" are also parts of a lexical set: heavenly bodies visible in the night sky. The English literary tradition, revealed in Yeats's work, associates the moon with fantasy and creative endeavour; in the French poetic tradition, the Pléiade constellation has a

similar function. In Greek myth, these stars provide a place of refuge for the daughters pursued by Zeus, and in Aboriginal legend the Pleiads are associated with sacred women's rituals (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 764). In many metaphorical systems, 'lunatic' moments provide a passage of transformation for the female, particularly the female poet who sings the absence of the helpful cosmic forces back into presence. 'Lunacy' therefore constitutes a paradoxical space in which madness and the potential for revolution (and resolution) coexist.

Yet Harwood's poem cannot be taken too seriously. "Burning Sappho" provides multiple instances in which good belly laughs are elicited from 'mad' ravings. Working with the theme 'the devil inside', Harwood gives us the delicious rhyme acid/placid and near-rhyme evil/devil, while the "friend" who plays the perfect hostess contains the disruptive "fiend". Finally, "pen" is contained in penis, and ultimately the woman's pen proves mightier than any sword. Joy is produced from the woman's mad moments as she creates a site of defiant victory and gives presence to the opportunities lost through daily upheaval.

The voice of Harwood's Kröte character is, by contrast, melancholic: only drunken delirium provides glimpses of joy. Then, delusion allows the transformation of the strange world around him into memories of his beloved Europe and his lost childhood self. The uniting of Kröte with this other half of his split identity is the theme of Harwood's "Matinee" (CP 233), which like "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon" originally appeared in *Poems 1969 - 1974*. "Baby" appears again in "Matinee" as the desired love object. The title "Matinee" denotes a daytime performance and connotes baby apparel, a decorative bed jacket: both are evoked in the poem. The 'matinee idol' is adored by his swooning female fans, often despite his lack of talent, and the first line of the poem establishes the relationship between 'idol' and accompanist: "Kröte plays for a tenor bleating". Their relative worth becomes a bone of contention:

> He sings, "My heart is like the sea",
> frowning at his accompanist,
> but at "where many a pearl may be"
> glows, to imply he can't resist
> the charm of music-loving girls

who plainly think he's crammed with pearls.

Applause! The singer's head is turned
with praise. Kröte's ignored. "I am
where those young ladies are concerned
only a giant human clam
in whose unlovable inside
dull pearls the size of golf-balls hide."
(Lines 7-18)

The ground of comparison in value is the sea and its treasures, with a further ground revealed in the clichéd simile linking the sea with the human heart. This comparison is taken up at the end of the poem.

Kröte's depressive self-reflection is prompted by sexual rejection and an ambiguous sense of his own worth: "'inside / dull pearls the size of golf-balls hide'". When he feels lonely and vulnerable, Kröte usually turns to drink, and on this occasion seeking "some drink better than tea" leads him to a new discovery:

the fretful baby's crying changes
to trembling smiles. From its plump wrist
dangles a heart-shaped locket set
with pearls. Engraved is: *Margaret*.

"My child. My sister." Kröte sits
beside the window with his prize,
marvelling how her frail skull fits
the hollow of his arm, how wise 40
yet innocent her glances seem.
He takes her, in his waking dream,

to be his own. Sober, inspired
by his enchanting child, his days
are prodigies of work; admired
by all, he writes, composes, plays
as no-one's played before. He sees
his image in the glass, and he's

himself, the man he knows, the same
suburban Orpheus reflected …
(Lines 33 - 50)

The expectation of a new life, in which Kröte's professional and romantic prospects are transformed, seems to be deflated here. A double recognition

of "himself", triggered by seeing his image in the mirror and hearing his name called to "play more swan songs" (line 53), brings Kröte's guilty awareness to the gap between his real and ideal selves. Letting the baby go, Kröte mourns his own lost innocence: "'So was I, long / ago'" (lines 56 - 57). Resurrection as a sober, admired musical prodigy is revealed as a distant dream.

Nevertheless, the ironic voice of the narrator reveals a possible truth behind Kröte's self-delusion. As is often the case in Harwood's poetry, joy is produced from the subtle interplay of tropes within the poem and in the sliding between one poem and another. "Matinee" concludes with the synecdoche "breast", attributed to Baby in "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon" and taking up the earlier literary cliché comparing the soul to the sea. In "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon", Demon "cannot sleep" (line 4) and "can't die" (line 14): he must suck Baby's "breast" dry until her "ravished" body collapses. Baby's life and death provide Demon with the body of experience ('drink') used to construct his "drunken" songs. "Matinee" bears comparison with this poem and another Kröte poem, "Fever", where love is viewed from two positions: that of a child innocently praying for a caring adult, and that of the savage rapist haunting Kröte's nightmares. In "Matinee", the synecdoche "breast" connotes nurturing and mothering, confirming Kröte's view of himself as a sensitive soul who longs to be united with his "sister", his "child". However, the sustained use of the signifier "pearls" throughout "Matinee" as a metaphor for sexual and economic exchange emphasizes that in most transactions one privileged party desires to exploit another. Thus "takes her ... // to be his own" has sinister connotations, unless the signifier "baby" is read as a metonym.

When interpreted as the outcome of a fruitless projection, Kröte's intent to steal the baby seems mad, but Harwood provides multiple indications that the events take place on the imaginary plane. A different reading of "Matinee" might foreground the creative individual's opening to the possibility of composing new selves and new works.[62] "He takes her, in his waking dream, // to be his own" can be read metonymically, if common

[62] This reading rubs against Brown's theory of melancholic attachment, where the melancholic (here Kröte) takes pride in the very feelings that block his participation in life (Eng & Kajanzian eds. 464).

cultural coding is used to substitute 'work' for "her". In this case, a creative exchange takes place, in which the "child" represents the opus Kröte needs to (re)create in order to become a prodigy again. A similar metaphorical exchange takes place in "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon". Further, the story of innocent Margaret and her bracelet has echoes of Goethe's "Faust" Part 1, where Faust seduces young Margarete by offering jewellery – including a bracelet – procured by Mephistopheles. Margarete drowns Faust's illegitimate child and, from the chains of her prison cell, pleads to be buried with her baby at her breast. In front of Faust, Margarete affirms her guilt, but is miraculously unchained and redeemed from sin by a power greater than that of Mephistopheles. A Faustian reading of "Matinee" would perceive Kröte as acknowledging his personal weaknesses and integrating the vulnerable, feminine self as "his own". Harwood, however, deflates all lofty outcomes with her irony: to regain his childhood, for example, Kröte would have to replay the old "swan songs" and engage in the cycle of repetition he longs to escape. Krote's "bleating" tenor is singing Schubert (line 2) and Schubert's swan song ("*Schwanengesang*") was published posthumously.

All avenues seem to lead to partial erasures and tentative openings. Harwood's playful selection of contrasting signifiers "pearls" and "clam" furthers anthropomorphic parallels between these two sea creatures and the musician and baby. By drawing on her own well known motif, the seashore as the space of meaningful interactions and creative re-visioning, Harwood suggests that new beginnings are always possible for humans struggling to resolve their inner conflicts. The final lines, "those ignorant of what wonders rest / in his obscure, unfathomed breast", deliver an ironic reprisal of the exisiting parallel between the human heart and the sea. Kröte clearly feels his true value is misunderstood by the "ignorant" others of his small town audience, yet he has recognized "himself, the man he knows" (line 49). The "suburban Orpheus" is not 'unfathomable', merely "unfathomed", where "unfathomed" suggests the dark or hidden beauty hinted at earlier in the metaphor "dull pearls". Beyond the irony and cultural clichés, "Matinee" reveals the process of transformative redemption in which the musician

glimpses the beautiful possibilities of his multiple selves.

Political madness and joy

Previous analyses revealed Yeats's reinscription of heroic suffering and loss in the language of rejoicing. Harwood's political struggles are more likely to occur in the home, the site of a bitter battle of the sexes. Madness erupts wildly or simmers just beneath the surface, but Harwood's irony stymies any belief that the psychodramas are real. Even when Harwood flags the dangerous potential of political madness, she uses deliberate strategies to reveal that her speakers are imaginary constructs: Harwood's voices are always complex and subtle (O'Sullivan in Sellick, ed. 1987: 39). Thus, writes Andrew Taylor, attributing identities to these voices – such as that of the disenfranchized, raving mother of "In the Park" – proves 'elusive' (in Sellick ed. 75). Indeed, the instability of the antihero's identity prompts Harwood's trademark mood swings, with comedy usually succeeding tragedy.

Angst is voiced ironically through the impotent Kröte, but in Harwood's oeuvre even madness on a grand scale has its roots in personal inadequacy. The Harwood-Geyer Professor Eisenbart character, 'logical' male turned mad physicist, hates his wife and unleashes his impotent fury on the universe. Personal conflict interacts with political will in an explosive confrontation in "Professor Eisenbart's Evening" (CP 51). Here, the bodies of woman and moon are elided: in order to annihilate both, Eisenbart must find the "formulae" to "crack" 'her' and free men from "her dominion":

> … Shall I release
> into this nightfall-conjured peace
> my stalking Jack-the-Ripper heart?
> Whom shall I shear and slice apart?
> – Dearest, what did you do today?
> "Slept late, as is my usual way.
> Did usual things at usual hours.
> Went shopping, read, arranged the flowers."
> – Come, now.
> "The moon forestalls you, dear."
> – One day I'll crack that pestering sphere,
> that night-spy, womanish Peeping Tom.
> I'll rip her with some glorious bomb.
> I'll blow her to oblivion

and howl with laughter when she's gone.
There'll be no tides in women's blood.
(Lines 11-25)

Here, Eisenbart's 'languages', the mild speech of the dutiful husband and the hyperbole of the terrorist, collide in a crazed eruption. This is a new rendering of the "classic rape" myth cited in "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon". The extreme violence of Eisenbart's thought language ("I'll rip her") creates ironic distance from the real issue. Nonetheless, the mad voice remains terrifying, for, through the power of the state vested in him, the 'logical' physicist might decide to put an end to moon, woman and world simply because he can. Even Harwood's promising oceanic metaphor is overwritten in Eisenbart's threat to annihilate the moon: "There'll be no tides in women's blood."

Yet the language of excess poses a challenge to death: it laughs at life and its finitude and even at language itself, producing joy from *la différence pure* (Derrida 1967: 362). Both the Eisenbart poem and the previously discussed "Night Thoughts: Baby and Demon", written around the same time, elicit mixed feelings.[63] Eisenbart's recurrent use of feminine pronouns and his stereotyping of 'women's work' reveal the narrator's irony. Further, through holes in Eisenbart's arrogant mask, Harwood offers glimpses of an impotent buffoon.

The strident voice of political madness rings through poems written by Harwood under the pseudonym of Timothy Kline. 'T.F. Kline, Timothy Kline (Tiny Tim!), is doing quite well, though I refuse to admit to him', Harwood writes to Tony Riddell (29.9.1969, 2001: 235). She adds a month later that her 'doppelgängers' (sic), notably Kline, are having more publishing success than she (22.10.69, 2001: 237). An earlier letter to Riddell reveals Harwood's frustration that she could find publishers more easily when she used masculine pseudonyms (20.7.60, 2001: 102). In her next letter to Riddell, she writes that she is going to submit some good poems under her own name: 'I don't think he'll publish them' (103). Kline's success was

[63] Lawson perceptively states that the Eisenbart character gives Harwood the opportunity to satirize the evolution of the human mind and its 'passions unresolved', for 'Eisenbart's most hellish cage is himself' (1991: 30).

irritating and Harwood did not want 'his' poems included in later collections (Hoddinott & Kratzmann, CP xxi).

Kline is a social commentator ("Pensioner", CP 207; "Emporium", CP 224-225) and a conscientious objector who sees no point in war ("Soldier Soldier", CP 201). Perhaps because his political identity is unambiguous, Kline's voice is less interesting than Geyer's and there is little humour to be found in 'his' poems, whose themes are drawn directly from Harwood's immediate world. A letter to Tom Shapcott (10.4.70) reveals Harwood's delight that her son was not among those randomly chosen to fight 'in the jungles of Asia' (Harwood 2001: 244). The Kline identity allows Harwood to vent her spleen, above all, to reveal the irrationality behind male chauvinism reported in the 1960s and early 1970s press and exposed by writers such as Germaine Greer. The madness driving the false construction of feminine and masculine identity becomes apparent in "Poet to Peasant" (CP 205), where Kline's personal resentment explodes as "visions welling up like madness" (line 18). A dire warning is issued to "idiot" girls who long for "suburban sweetness":

> Sweet girl, be wise. What can you offer?
> The frail cage of sobriety?
> To love me until further notice?
> Know that I am linked to space beyond
> Your honey cells, your boundaries,
> By visions welling up like madness.
> (Lines 13-18)

In the 'Kröte' poems, Harwood as ironic narrator and psychoanalyst enters into a healing dialogue with the subject, but in Kline's "Poet to Peasant" the creative resolution that could transform lunacy into joy is absent. As in the 'Captain' and 'Kröte' poems, alcohol precipitates the fall of the (anti) hero: "Sweet girl" can only offer the "sobriety" he rejects. 'She' embodies the earthly limitations that he in his omnipotent delusion is driven to conquer to reach "space beyond".

In the Kline and Eisenbart characters, Harwood elides madness and misogyny: crazed hatred amplified by substance abuse is imbricated with man's failure to integrate important qualities, such as respect for the earth and its survival as a living, nurturing entity. Yeats too constructs madness

differently for each sex. He conceives the project of transforming madness into joy as a rewriting of the voices of 'the old mad slum women I hear denouncing and remembering' ("A General Introduction for my Work" MW 386). He continues: 'If I spoke my thoughts aloud they might be as angry and as wild.' Hysterical speech must be reinscribed as 'powerful and passionate syntax' and worked into 'dance' rhythms that are 'old and familiar', timeless yet passionate. And mad episodes must be written as inevitable, yet ultimately positive, turning points in the life of the hero. Madness as a resource requires careful management. Yeats has this to say about the free verse becoming popular at the time: 'I could not (write free verse), I would lose myself, become joyless like those mad old women' (MW 386). Yeats elides free verse and madness and implies that poetry can only produce joy if it is carefully crafted. Thus the role of the 'man' as true artist is to forge an enduring body of work from the chaotic madness (Daimon) that sweeps through human speech and experience.

While immersion in the madness of a fragmented society may be joyless, the work must be joyous; the artist must distance himself sufficiently to turn observation into product. In *A Vision* Book V, Yeats discusses the perfection of early Byzantium and the style of the 'philosophical' artisans, who worked in an almost impersonal style to capture a unity of vision understood by all. They 'would make what was an instrument of power to princes and clerics, a murderous madness in the mob, show as a lovely flexible presence like that of a perfect human body' (MW 441). Politically engaged Maud Gonne, at her best, united passion with a timeless beauty which 'suggested joy and freedom': she lost credibility, according to Yeats, by 'pushing an abstract principle' to absurd lengths (*The Trembling of the Veil,* Book IV: "Maud Gonne" MW 457). Personal politics should perhaps be left unstated: 'We who are the opposites of our times should for the most part work at our art and for good manners' sake be silent', writes Yeats in "On the Boiler" (MW 390).[64] Yet in the same tract, the poet turned politician touches on eugenics as he declaims against the imprudent 'weak persons, both in body and mind' who continue to breed

[64] Ramazani notes that Yeats tends to gender silence as feminine: he himself gives vent to 'collective grief and rage' in poems such as 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen' (2001: 25).

children (391).

Yeats's anger grew when his privileged life of patronage was disrupted as 'the whole' turned 'bottom upwards' ("On the Boiler", MW 399). The 'frenzy' of the 'mere multitude' reached a crisis point in 1919 as crazed military splinter groups began killing innocent victims during the Civil War. Yeats, his family and associates experienced political madness personally. The poet's task was to turn the senseless brutality he witnessed into a dramatic 'mask', a form of entertainment and visual instruction. In the aforementioned "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" Part 1 (MW 107), Yeats contrasts a violent Ireland with its contented past:

> Public opinion ripening for so long
> We thought it would outlive all future days.
> O what fine thoughts we had because we thought
> That the worst rogues and rascals had died out.
>
> All teeth were drawn, all ancient tricks unlearned,
> And a great army but a showy thing;
> (Lines 13 - 18)

In line 17, the Irish public is compared metaphorically to a beast, a circus lion perhaps, which has lost not only its power but also the memory of its greatness; "all" is repeated to emphasize the extent and finality of the loss. "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" continues:

> What matter that no cannon had been turned
> Into a ploughshare? Parliament and king
> Thought that unless a little powder burned
> The trumpeters might burst with trumpeting
> And yet it lack all glory; and perchance
> The guardsmen's drowsy chargers would not prance.
>
> Now days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare
> Rides upon sleep: a drunken soldiery
> Can leave the mother murdered at her door,
> To crawl in her own blood, and go scot-free;
> The night can sweat with terror as before
> We pieced our thoughts into philosophy,
> And planned to bring the world under a rule,
> Who are but weasels fighting in a hole.
> (Lines 19-32)

Here, the example of the "mother murdered at her door" (line 17) is guaranteed to provoke pity in the most cynical reader. Yet in Part II Yeats

continues to develop his unlikely parallel between the civil war and the stage performance, in this instance Loie Fuller's whirling Chinese dancers:

> So the Platonic Year
> Whirls out new right and wrong,
> Whirls in the old instead;
> All men are dancers and their tread
> Goes to the barbarous clangour of a gong.
> (Lines 54-58)

In the last line, Yeats is drawing again from his evolving system of signification, *A Vision*: 'When our historical era approaches Phase 1, or the beginning of a new era, the antithetical East will beget upon the primary West' (MW 440).

A preoccupation with cultural practices, which transform political madness to joyous artworks, is evident in many of Yeats's later poems. From *A Vision* emerge the metaphors Yeats uses to destroy and restore, idealize and deface, make terrible and reinstate people and events in the 'inviolable realm of myth' (Eagleton 1986: 176). To accept Yeats's 'truth' is to affirm his dialectical model as an accurate conceptualization of political realities. And metaphor has the 'power' to reorganize the way we observe things by transposing one "entire 'realm'" onto another (Ricoeur 2003: 278). A poem, stage event or artwork may, for example, be described using the human attributes 'sad' or 'gay'; the transposition takes place when metaphor 'creates the resemblance' between real events and people and metaphorical 'reassignments' (282). At one level then metaphors are no less real than scientific fact; they 'add to the shaping of the world' and 'join fittingness to novelty, obviousness to surprise' (282). And Yeats is a persuasive craftsman of metaphor, rhyme and rhythm.[65]

In the commanding voice of the poet, statesman and national hero, Yeats confirms the resolute optimism of his 'system': inevitably, mad rage erupts in the crowd, but peace is restored again, at least in the right artistic work. Thus poems such as "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" reveal the stark contrast between the so-called patriots' indifference to violence and

[65] Yug Mohit Chaudhry provides fascinating insights into Yeats's political persuasiveness: Yeats disassociated himself from his mentor O'Leary, for example, because of O'Leary's political tactlessness (2001: 8).

'Romantic' Ireland's heroic vitality (Miller 2002: 140). A transposition is effected from the immediate political lunacy of 1919 Ireland onto the stage of the theatrical dance performance: Ricoeur calls a similar achievement a verbally realised 'non-verbal metaphorical expression' (2003: 281). Now one life mirrors the other and the order of 'reciprocity' is raised from vague confusion to 'bipolar tension' which causes us to question reality: 'poetic feeling itself also develops an experience of reality in which invention and discovery cease being opposed and where creation and revelation coincide' (291). Koch observes that a strong poem such as Yeats's "The Gyres" has by the end 'shaken' and 'changed' its readers, who have 'looked into the chasm' (111).[66] By contrast, Eagleton argues that certain lines of poetry are disturbing because it is clear that 'they are *not true*' (1986: 178). Yeats's work creates disturbance quite intentionally. Within the poem, the highly undesirable situation is stated and transformed, with Yeats's metaphorical framework providing the 'liberating deliverance' that turns political madness into a 'desirable even a good thing' (Koch 1951: 109).

In "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", Yeats's version of political madness slides between real life, embellishment and metaphoric truth to create the 'bipolar' tension to which Ricoeur refers (2003: 291). Metaphors of demonic possession placed at the end of the poem inscribe the terror of the climax, where the "love-lorn" Lady is confronted by the rapacious, "insolent fiend". Here, "fiend" denotes a savage beast similar to the previously mentioned "dragon", but it carries pejorative, satanic connotations. In his own notes on the poem, Yeats claims that his characters are drawn from Irish country tales: 'these horsemen, now that the times worsen, give way to worse. My last symbol, Robert Artisson, was an evil spirit much run after in Kilkenny at the start of the fourteenth century' (MW 483). Foster states, however, that Yeats used Seymour's *Irish Witchcraft and Demonology* to shape the Artisson character (2003: 196). To embed the monstrous 'rape' metaphor into "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", Yeats repeats the myth from "Leda and the Swan": "The swan has leaped into the desolate heaven: / That image can bring wildness, bring

[66] Indeed, Heaney argues that readers 'go to poetry' to experience certain profound feelings which they 'already seem to be remembering' (18).

a rage / to end all things ..." (MW 109, lines 79-81). Similarly, the intercourse between "fiend" and "Lady" precipitates the fateful rupture that turns the wheel of history. But "all things" will not end, if Yeats's system is to be believed. By paralleling the current conflict and the familiar myth within the same metaphorical frame, Yeats embeds a suggestion of the resolution that will ultimately take place. For order is always restored from chaotic madness as the 'dark' phase of the moon comes to an end (Koch 111).

It is probable that Yeats had his contemporaries in mind as he wrote: only Lady Gregory had survived the IRA ambush near Coole and Yeats did not dare to go back to Thoor Ballylee with his wife that summer (Foster 2003: 199). In the imaginary world of poetry, however, crazed savagery had to be overturned, for the artist's role is to heal rather than to inflict suffering. In "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", the fading dream of peace and joy is restored in the simulation, the war of the dancers' whirling ribbons: "O but we dreamed to mend / Whatever mischief seemed / to afflict mankind" (Part III, lines 84-86). The past tense here confirms the poet's feeling of powerlessness to change the real madness he sees around him. Yeats's slidings between real events, art and fictional representations, however, all framed by his own (r)evolutionary system, combine to reveal a glimpse of the transformation made possible within the poem.

In "The Gyres" (*New Poems* 1938, MW 152), as in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", Yeats compares the political madness around him with theatrical (or metaphorical) representations through which past events may be viewed with the wisdom of hindsight. Both poems are set within a cosmic timeframe: every two thousand years or so the "unfashionable" gyre rises again. Since resistance to fate is impossible, the only adequate human response is to echo the optimistic voice of resurgence: "And all it knows is that one word 'Rejoice'." ("The Gyres" line 16) The repeated responses "Rejoice" and "What matter" seem ironic or inappropriate given the historical scale of disaster in "The Gyres" and they can only be understood in retrospect. The central metaphor turns on the conditional conjunction "though": "What matter though numb nightmare ride on top" (line 9).

Resistance is affirmed here, and in the metaphor (syntagm, when applied to cultural artefacts) of excavation: from "any rich, dark nothing" (line 22) the right people "disinter" the resources needed to propel history forward. Disaster is reconceptualized as pure potential, specifically human potential, through which madness will eventually yield to justice and order.

Koch reads "The Gyres" as a personal 'fiction' of the split personality: the ecstatic voice that urges Old Rocky Face to "look forth" is the voice of Yeats's other self, which promises a 'positive deliverance' from madness (101-102). I have argued that many of Yeats's poems can be read in this way: the metaphorical system of the gyres can be applied universally. On the personal plane, however, love for a human other is often put forward as the catalyst for resolution. Yeats's emotive exclamations of longing convey an ongoing preoccupation with his body and the opportunity to unite with his opposite: "O would that we had met" ("Men Improve with the Years" MW 64, line 14); "But O that I were young again / And held her in my arms." ("Politics" MW 181, line 12)

"Politics" begins with an epigraph attributed to Thomas Mann: "'In our time the destiny of man presents its meanings in political terms'". Yeats's poem constitutes a response to Mann:

> How can I, that girl standing there,
> My attention fix
> On Roman or on Russian
> Or on Spanish politics,
> Yet here's a traveled man who knows
> What he talks about,
> And there's a politician
> That has both read and thought,
> And maybe what they say is true
> Of war and war's alarms,
> But O that I were young again
> And held her in my arms.

Yeats uses no marker to indicate a question, so the degree of certainty is hard to ascertain here. Mann's "In our time" is weighed against the politics of the ages (line 3), and it seems that Yeats offers a different idea of what constitutes "'man's destiny'": the regenerative force is human love. The struggle to balance engagement and detachment comes to the fore: "in my arms" is rhymed with "war's alarms", a significant pairing given the theme of

"Politics". Further, what is valuable and true comes under question in lines 6-10. Ultimately, immanent joys emerge as 'truer' than political speech, a sentiment echoed in "The Circus Animals' Desertion": "I must be satisfied with my heart" (MW 180, line 4). Indeed, despite his philosophical commitment to detachment, Yeats continues to learn by emotional engagement as a participant rather than an observer (Foster 1997: xxvii).

Human love offers optimism and resistance to the 'mad' forces, often attributed metaphorically to nature, that arrive unexpectedly and overturn peace and prosperity. In the aforementioned "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", an extended, somewhat clichéd metaphor likens the onset of political madness to the crazed energy of an icy wind. The citizens, blinded by dust and numbed by the chaos of war, do not know what to do or think; even the artists are left to feel "that we were crack-pated when we dreamed" (Part III, line 89). Josephi uses a similar trope in "Siena me fé: disfecemi vento Maremma" (FNP 193). Here, as other poets such as Ezra Pound have done, Josephi appropriates Pia's tragic line from Dante's *Comedia Divina* ("Purgatorio", Canto V). Josephi introduces a new signifier, the wind (*vento*). In several Western European myths, certain winds are said to cause the onset of madness, and in "Siena me fé", the wind from Maremma

> … blew up more dust
> than the boots of the Ghibelline army.
>
> On the second day people saw signs;
> doors were opened by uninvited hands,
> and at night the stars pointed a different way.
> (Lines 5-9)

In Josephi's poem, madness occurs on the cosmic stage. The wind's 'language' supposedly has physical and metaphysical powers that force even powerful human actors to obey: "The Medici, the Piccolomini and the Aldebrandini, / all stopped in their way and listened. The wind / left no doubt. A change of politics was in the air." (lines 15-18) Here, the anthropomorphization of nature allows a change of hierarchical position so that human beings appear as pawns in the unfolding drama. Of course, no wind can cause murderous madness and natural events cannot be held

accountable for human actions. Josephi is appropriating the historical context and taking the metaphorical process a step further. Unlike Yeats, Josephi neither judges the warring parties nor engages personally in the drama: political madness *is* (only) a metaphor. In "Tuscan Dream" (FNP 191), battle is nothing more than a staged scene:

> One morning they painted. Slowly they drew up pink walls and battlements, banners waved from the tower. And in front of the pale red walls they put tents. Beautifully striped tents with golden piping, braids and tassels where roofs and sides met. A mighty field of red and white stripes.
>
> But there was dust around the tents, a martial glistening of spears and lances ...
> (Lines 13-19)

Here, the noun "field" is deliberately ambiguous; it can be read either as 'battlefield' or the visual field of the artwork under construction. As in Yeats's "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", a sense of menace is created: the mood may be about to change as real war begins. Yet Josephi's actors are repeatedly described as disengaged: "did nothing" (line 1); "lay in hot rooms" (line 1); "Motionless" (line 8). The only 'blood' lost is the juice of split pomegranates, an erotic foretaste of what is to come as the artistic lovers savour their bodies: "A revelation of the beauty of inner wounds" (line 27). The poem ends with a listing of the painted details of the medieval ceiling, viewed from the bed as the couple celebrates its *jouissance*: "their cloister, their passion". As in Yeats's metaphorical Utopias, only the 'décor' of war is appropriated in heraldry, pageant and high romance. Passionate discovery allows conflict to fall into the background. Joy is produced and the madness of war is avoided.

Josephi does not always privilege art over action, but she distinguishes between the political madness she knows from experience and the 'truth' of past conflicts, which can only be known through various representations. Observations are often made from a distance as Josephi's speaker muses on an illustration, artwork, newspaper photograph, report or article. The work of the omnipresent media to frame consumers' attitudes and form their opinions is exposed in the cycle of eleven poems called "Germany 1989",

which describes the madness of political division and the real consequences for countries and individuals during phases of separation and integration. Language appropriated by Josephi from the news and political rallies sometimes lacks emotive force in comparison to the passionate excesses of Yeats and Harwood, yet an undercurrent of hysteria is never far from the surface.

The energy of excess pervades the second poem in Josephi's "Germany 1989", *Child's Play* (FNP 223), which delivers an affective impact that sets it apart from other poems in the sequence. The winding/unwinding paradigm, discussed earlier with reference to Yeats's "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" and 'Margot Ruddock' poems, also occurs in the first poem in "Germany 1989", *Surfaces*. In *Child's Play*, the winding and unwinding are transposed to the imaginary plane:

> The ducks sat as quiet as decoys in a pond
> full of dead leaves. A fresh wind came up. It
> lifted off ball and bikes, faster and faster
>
> they flew over hedges and hurdles, throwing off
> their old weight. The children stood wide-eyed.
> They did not understand this world any more.
>
> Their playthings had a will of their own. Had it
> all been a dream in a Russian toy shop?
> The wind whistled the Nutcracker Suite.
> (Lines 4-12)

Here Josephi evokes a social madness driven by uncontrollable processes. Nature is anthropomorphized: the man-made items take on the wild energy of the "fresh wind". The signifier "dead leaves" is culturally coded, connoting in the German Romantic tradition the ending of a particular political age: in this context, "old weight" has a paradigmatic significance. Further, while "it / all" is non-specific, the use of the past tense makes it clear that the speaker is alluding to past events, which may have been "a dream". The point of view is expanded from the particular, one pond and one group of children and their toys, to the whole of society, so that the mechanics of change are called into question. Josephi seems to be indicating a new phenomenon, the chaotic existence that Goodchild (1996)

describes as a sign of the times.

The normal laws of nature no longer operate in *Child's Play* and the change process itself seems to spin out of control with its own crazy momentum. The three stanzas quoted above are revealed as extended metonymy, turning on the noun "playthings" and the cultural coding of "Russian toy shop" and "Nutcracker Suite" to suggest a subversion of power relations. The spoilt children, whose world spins out of control before their eyes as their toys fly away, experience the loss, so the viewpoint here is different from that of the more personal poems in "Germany 1989". The juxtaposition of opposites suggesting endings and new beginnings, "dead leaves" and "a fresh wind", combined with verbs of liberation, "lifted off" and "throwing off", leave us in no doubt that the wild energy is joyously freeing.

Like Yeats, Josephi suggests here that surrender to the force of change is necessary in order for radical transformation to take place. Again, like Yeats, she builds the cycle by contrasting opposite states. In the next poem, *Schwerin Castle*, a mother repeats "Don't touch" to her curious child, who is desperate to feel the red velvet cord of a plush curtain. The mother's world is enclosed within tight boundaries, closed against illusion, fantasy and fairy tales: "If there were and are / they are not for us" (lines 10 - 11). Class and political ideology are at issue, and Josephi uses stereotypes sparingly to make an important point. From the gaps between one political construct and the other emerge glimpses of a joyous society, in which individuals can use their imaginations to explore, feel, play and express their desires.

Imagination stimulates a whirlwind of promising change, and to insist on the eradication of this force is to endorse fear and hopelessness. In "Germany 1989" Part 1 (FNP 222) Josephi exposes the way in which fear is constructed.

Surfaces

The sky outside a gravestone gray.
Between two coffees I open the paper
see the suffering of this century.
Again they are fleeing ...

Hands folded around bars,

two women, possibly mother
and daughter, cling
on opposite sides
to the stylish iron
fence of some embassy. 10
Foreheads touch through bars
downcast eyes acknowledge
the irrevocable sentence of separation
the eternity of goodbye.

Feeding on its outcry of despair
the paper sits on my table
until I tear it into neat strips
down the lines of the iron bars.
With the strips I twine a wreath
for a century of ill-fitting borders 20
and another for an untwining
revolution some seventy years old
for the hopes it raised and squandered.

The clichés, notably at the end of the second stanza, indicate that the photograph in question was, understandably, published to solicit sympathy. Nevertheless, the poem succeeds in evoking the "untwining" process, which ended in the storming of the Berlin Wall. The view is personal: events are seen through the eyes of the speaker who is in Germany, probably in Berlin. "Between two coffees" begins a metonymic string of associations between news and food, in which "the paper" comes to signify part of the speaker's daily diet. "Feeding" in the last stanza allows a recoding of the language applied to the body; the news in turn feeds on human tragedy, "its outcry of despair" (line 15). The anthropomorphosis entailed here underlines the emotion at the core of the interaction between the real refugees, the newspaper and the speaker/reader who tries to make sense of (digest) the chaos around her.

The central stanza of *Surfaces* describes the photograph of the two refugees, who represent the fate of many; "some embassy" suggests that the photograph could have been taken anywhere in the world. The arbitrary nature of separation and the indifference of the political machine that keeps the women apart are contrasted with the women's real suffering: "cling / on opposite sides / to the stylish / iron fence". Here, the verb "cling" is chosen to suggest the women's desperation, their tenacity in a world spinning out of

control, while "on opposite sides" takes on a double significance. The women are separated by the embassy fence: presumably one lives in the east and is trying to flee to the west. The adjective "stylish" indicates a secondary separation, by class or wealth. The embassy has superficial aesthetic appeal, but as the scant caring for the suffering individuals desperate to plead their cases is revealed, the significance of the poem's title becomes clear.

On a pragmatic level, tearing along "the lines of the iron bars" implies empathy on the part of the speaker and a desire for the removal of the barriers separating people from their loved ones. Yet a 'food chain' is set in place and the speaker's privileged position near the top of that chain is revealed: she has the freedom to choose to enjoy the comforts offered to those living on the 'right' side of the country. The personification of the newspaper as an entity which absorbs others' pain anticipates the speaker's ritual shredding: "despair" is torn up and discarded along with the strips of paper. "I twine a wreath" and "untwining / revolution" suggest the dialectic that separates those who are in control, including the speaker, from the people suffering inside their chaotic (communist) world. *Surfaces* is thus seen to explore the mechanics of power structures, the unreason behind them and the effects on real people, albeit at a distance.

Josephi's work lacks the emotional intensity of strong poems by Yeats, but it foregrounds the possibility of rapid reintegration. Part X of the "Germany 1989" cycle (FNP 232) describes the resolution following the fall of the Berlin Wall:

A Reunion

Two months ago they could not know
that today, a beautiful sunny day
in late December, they'd walk arm
in arm, possibly mother and daughter;
along Kurfürstendamm and later,
at the older woman's insistence
through the Brandenburg Gate.

They talked little, only essentials.
That there was no beauty in poverty
and a lot of emptiness in freedom,
and that neither should be viewed

sentimentally any longer.

Here, the unlikely choice of adjectives "beautiful sunny" to describe a winter's day in Berlin flags a new and optimistic beginning. The qualified signifiers "possibly mother and daughter" are recycled from the previously mentioned Part 1 *Surfaces*, but the entire word group now appears on the same line, visually suggesting the reunion to which the title refers. Here, the choice of the indefinite article "A" establishes that similar reunions occur frequently. The spatial markers, "Kufürstendamm" and "Brandenburg Gate" are chosen for their cultural coding: in the divided Berlin, it was impossible to pass freely along the main arteries, so the "Ku-Damm" and the Gate came to be known as symbols of a reunified Germany.

Importantly, the language used by Josephi in *A Reunion* is quite different from that of Part 1*, Surfaces*. Simple and unsentimental, it echoes the interactions of real women, for whom deprivation and joy run deeper than words. For them, the "essentials" worthy of discussion are the political realities which have marked their lives on either side of the Wall: "poverty" and "freedom". It may be assumed that modes of life in the east and west respectively are under discussion, but Josephi chooses not to further cultural stereotyping. Instead, the conclusion makes it clear that neither side should be sentimentalized.

The point of view in *A Reunion* is still that of the speaker, who now fills the position of viewer and listener on site, rather than that of the observer/reader and commentator at second or third hand. Nevertheless, the adverb "sentimentally" delivers a pejorative impact, suggesting the newspaper clichés of *Surfaces* and the general public's enjoyment of feeding on the suffering of others. Importantly, going and doing, experiencing life without the barriers that once divided people and states, are foregrounded over dwelling on the past. Nonetheless, as a poem, *A Reunion* is less engaging than others in the "Germany 1989" cycle. Joy has to be constructed from its shadowy absence: "no beauty in poverty"; "a lot of emptiness in freedom".

Like Harwood, Josephi draws on nature to express the jubilation of what must be a joyful reunion. This is the case in *A Reunion* and in also

German Weather, which deals with unseasonal winter warmth and sunshine. It is only in the last poem of "Germany 1989", *I Had a Hope* (FNP 231), that a possible reason for the general lack of effusiveness appears. The voice here is that of an ex-prisoner speaking at a public gathering:

> *I cannot simply turn away*
> *from this hope* said the man.
> *This hope for an end to poverty*
> *and injustice. My heart will*
> *always beat on the left.*
>
> *Opium of the people*
> shouted someone from the floor.
> The man shook his head.
> *Hope or faith*
> *call it what you will*
> *has been at the heart*
> *of our protest*
> *in Luther's heartland*
> *of protestantism.*
> (Lines 8-21)

Here, the analogy between two great "hopes" or "faiths", communism and protestantism, is made in spatial terms: "*Luther's heartland*" refers to the region of former East Germany around Erfurt, not only associated with Luther and his revolutionary Christian studies but also with Communism. The dry, if loaded, language appropriated by Josephi to suggest a political rally contrasts markedly with Harwood's use of Biblical metaphors and aligns more closely with Yeats's evocations of mythical heroism: "*It is bitter to be robbed of ideals* | said the man *even if they were | always in tatters.*" (*I Had a Hope*, lines 5 - 7) The attribution of "*always in tatters*" to "*ideals*" suggests that the ground under discussion is the elaboration of a political ideology into a covering or coat, which serves its purpose despite its inadequacies. This trope bears comparison with the metonymical contiguity at the centre of certain poems by Yeats, but the viewpoint in "*I Had a Hope*" is that of the observer/listener, who apparently makes direct quotations from the speech of "the man". As is the case in *Surfaces* ("some embassy"), the generic title given to the main speaker suggests that the same event is being reported and reproduced throughout the country. A dissident voice in the audience ruptures the discourse by shouting the Marxist slogan "*Opium*

of the people", but neither Christianity nor Communism has been able to satisfy the man's "*Hope*": "*an end to poverty / and injustice*" (lines 10-11).

In "*I Had a Hope*", Josephi inscribes the transformational moment when a new "heartland" is formed from old structures and belief systems. Importantly, the verb in the title is in the past tense, and what may appear as an opening is also a closure. Yet both the future tense, "*my heart will / always beat on the left*" (lines 11-12) and the past continuous form "*has been*" ("*… at the heart / of our protest*", lines 18-19) suggest an ongoing struggle. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes overlap at "*left*", which can be read as the literal truth or as a double metaphor: having communist sympathies or surviving despite political persecution. The noun "heart" is used on its own twice, and recurs in the compound "heartland", within eleven short lines of verse. The new "heartland" being created as "the man" speaks might well allow the reinscription of hope and indeed "poverty / and injustice" in a new language of political becoming.[67]

One among many, "the man" is attempting to heal the psyche of a fragmented society. Luther once fought alone to transform religious practice, and today's information era allows for multiple repetitions and transformational opportunities. Deleuze describes such opportunities as 'resistances' to the (re)making of a world that conforms to a set of predetermined abstract principles (2007: 309). Although terrifying and intense, the 'schizophrenic' process that Deleuze prefers powers an active, embodied, continued and evolving struggle against established conventions. And the process of artistic production (multiplying, propagating) is 'schizophrenic' because it projects forwards towards an unknowable future: 'The people are missing and at the same time, they are not missing … There is no work of art that does not call on a people who does not yet exist' (Deleuze 2007: 329). In its optimism, the 'schizophrenic' production process provides a way of overcoming death and dead ends.

Madness as a metaphorical production process has the potential to

[67] In this regard, Wendy Brown arges that Left politics has missed the opportunity to embrace diversification. Instead, it 'installs traditionalism' as it laments its losses (in Eng & Kazanjian eds. 462 – 463).

counterbalance hyper-rational thought processes and interrogate the callous actions of so-called 'logical' individuals and institutions. Although both Yeats and Harwood inscribe the irrational as a productive and potentially joyous force, Yeats's notorious preoccupation with power and established hierarchies is revealed in carefully crafted, persuasive political poems, indeed in his inscription of history itself, discussed earlier in this section. Regardless of his power games, Yeats's last poems are full of regret for personal loss. His rich metaphorical system and his application of strict quality standards to his writing yield enduring poems, which continue to bring joy to certain readers. People who read chauvinism there will find his poetry far from enjoyable. Harwood's language game elicits joy for those who affirm her skill; yet her borrowings from the Bible, Freudian discourse and the canon may leave some readers cold.

Some of the most memorable characters constructed by Yeats and Harwood are, nevertheless, eccentric if not mad. In poems foregrounding the originary myth of the word whose power turns all losses into presence, the imbrication of madness with gender difference comes into question. Harwood inscribes and often subverts the Freudian familial discourse. Her ecstatic female voices shout their truth to the world and turn suffering into a jubilant affirmation of strength. And, as Kristeva has suggested, the writing of ecstatic poems allows the lost other to be captured on a new libidinal territory. As a result, the defiance of death becomes a cause for rejoicing: 'How beautiful to be able to replace all perishable psychic values' (Kristeva 1989: 99). Harwood's mirth is, however, often directed at melancholic impotence. Her considerable range of comedic strategies from irony to bathos comes into play to reveal laughter as the only response to human frailty.

Josephi flags a new kind of social madness, humankind's obsessive feeding on the suffering of others. In her work, joy emerges only tentatively, when the world gone mad is reconstructed as art. For Yeats, the theatre provides moments for reflection; for Josephi the newspaper photograph offers a similar opportunity. For both poets, the creative work becomes a site upon which the political fragmentation they see around them

is stated, and the healing process initiated. Josephi herself lays no claim to iconic status, but her poems interrogate the arbitrary binary of madness and sanity. The ways in which different groups and individuals exert freedom of speech and action, for example, are considered in several poems in "Pilgrim Routes". In Josephi's poems, eruptions of 'schizophrenic' exuberance defy religious and quasi-religious structures to reveal the emergence of a new position that rejects the madness of all fundamentalisms in favour of responsibility and tolerance. McClure (2007) describes a similar emergence as "'postsecular'" (2007: 3). Postsecularism is pluralist; it does not take a position or 'have an effect' on politics, but through its promotion of joy, peace and tolerance, it offers resistance to dangerous fixed belief systems (23-24).

My analyses have attempted to show how the madness of the outside world can be brought into a promising balance, albeit tentatively, within the poetic work. Here, 'schizophrenia' as a metaphorical process operates joyfully to further productive rupture and achieve break-through rather than break-down. The conceptual possibilities of 'schizophrenic' change, affirmed in this chapter, are also central to the next, "Joy and Travel". Like art, travel can be conceptualized as a 'schizophrenic' flow of movement between countries and cultures. In this light, the expressed desire to eschew movement and to stay in one place takes on particular significance; it resists the current global 'game', which joyously affirms mobility and itinerant movement (Deleuze 2004: 75). "Joy and Travel" explores the three poets' endorsement of and resistance to travel.

The Production of Joy

Joy and Travel

This chapter deals with ways in which joy is produced in the 'travel' poetry of Yeats, Harwood and Josephi. It asks questions that remain valid today: How is joy (re)produced and for whom? It is important to tease out the complexities of this 'key theme' of travel (Hulme, Peter & Tim Youngs 2002: 1). Writing about travel is problematic, as David Spurr observes, because it entails crossing the boundaries of history, geography, psychology and sociology: to begin to open up the field of enquiry requires an 'imaginative' and 'nontraditional' critical approach (1993: 2). To explore the multiple aspects of travel writing, and in particular the ways that certain poems produce joy, I use – in line with Spurr's suggestion – a range of theorists: Mary Louise Pratt, Edward Said, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Julia Kristeva, Claude Lévi-Strauss, André LaCoque, Paul Ricoeur, Yi-Fu Tuan, Gaston Bachelard and Brian McHale. The first part of the chapter, however, gives a brief overview of how travel has been written about in the past, and describes the imperialist 'view' and the totalizing practices with which all three poets were familiar.

On arrival in the potential colony, the traditional, western traveler first observed the 'strange' and (to him) incomprehensible' realities of life there: unfamiliar cultural practices and languages then had to be written into a 'coherent representation' that would be understood back home (Spurr 1993: 3). Here, the expectation was that the 'heroic' journey would bring glory, if not riches, to the country of origin as well as the traveler. The language of record keeping had to disguise the facts. The 'right' language would de-legitimize the languages and practices of the Indigenous peoples, legitimize the new language and culture, and celebrate the new 'order' that had been produced from previous 'chaos' (Pratt 25). To accomplish this, travel writing tended to represent human and non-human nature within a discourse of activity (western conquest) and passivity (willing 'natives'). At the heart of

Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* is the narrative of reciprocity, which rests on the assumption that the 'native' wants to be subjugated. The upper middle class or aristocratic writer was able to use language to 'naturalize' the 'inferior' people he conquered (37), and under his 'romantic' gaze, people and places gladly affirmed his masculine authority (97). The imperialist 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' trope, as Pratt calls it, points to the extensive practices of 'rewriting' the lives and needs of real individuals, peoples and cultures, and of 'renaming' human, animal and plant populations (213). Science and natural history might be singled out as totalizing forces, but they merely followed the lead of Christianity, which, with its 'labor' of conversion, had already asserted itself across the globe (Pratt 27).

One of the earliest surviving fictional accounts is a travel story written in Egypt a thousand years before the Odyssey, and Biblical and classical traditions are 'rich' in journey narratives (Hulme and Youngs 2002: 2). In Exodus, for example, Yahweh tells 'His' people to leave Egypt, and thus identifies Himself with their freedom (LaCoque 316). The chosen tribe must respond with joy in hymns of praise in anticipation of further merciful guidance. Yet the Exodus narrative contains within it an important dialectical tension. God's name denotes both a blessing and a curse, and the path along which the Israelites are led is both alluring and full of hidden dangers (317). A similar paradoxical tension operates in Greek odyssey narratives, and an unlikely *rapprochement* between Judeo-Christian and Hellenistic themes is made possible through the resources of metaphor, dialectic and narrativization (Ricoeur 1998: 359).

Over the last hundred years, one particular story has come to the fore: the struggle of the disenfranchized against the dominant power, which, through exploitation, seeks to enhance the productive capacity of the weak (Foucault 2003: 6). The wealth and organizational structure of the world powers have become more important than any ideology which might have once underpinned the journey or conquest when 'the sheer distance of attractive territories summoned the projection of far-flung interests' (Said 1993: 9). Deleuze contends that even the concept of 'ideology' is irrelevant when considering the way in which world powers have extended their

frontiers. Like LaCoque and Said, Deleuze singles out the Christian church as an 'organization of power', which over time 'invented the idea of an international power' (2004: 264). And as Pratt suggests, successful colonizers are likely to write celebratory accounts of their exploits.

The language of the colonizer remains powerful today, Rod Edmond argues, because it disguises the colonizing process itself along with the specifics of culture, language and identity, so that the exotic 'other' becomes trapped in the language of inequality (in Hulme & Youngs eds. 2002: 152). To 'produce' the other, the colonizer uses the same metaphorical language that is used in poetry. In nineteenth century England, for example, imperialism was associated with motherhood: the 'mother' country promoted the development and prosperity of 'her' lands (Said 1993: 129). Under western eyes, the 'natives' were exhibited, studied, classified and subordinated (Spurr 1993: 13). It was not until the twentieth century that the entire discourse of subjugation met with resistance on several fronts, although diminishing colonial supremacy was no guarantee that the new social, political and cultural structures were less chauvinistic and xenophobic than those they replaced (258).

According to Said, Yeats understood the complex dynamics of the struggle: at a time of rapid change, he set out to 'remap' Ireland, to create a language for the 'new pantheon of heroes' (273). In "Leda and the Swan", for example, Yeats positions himself and his society at the decisive moment when violent and sudden transformation is unleashed. Said claims that Yeats makes the first 'important announcement in the context of decolonization' and it insists that raw power be balanced with reason, persuasion, organization and poetry (284): the revolutionary defends his homeland until the exhaustion that comes to light in the Byzantium poems takes over (287).[68] Said is right about Yeats's understanding of the complex political forces operating in Ireland. Yet Yeats romanticized and objectivized Ireland, and his language of nationalism only served to affirm existing imperialist

[68] Ramazani gives a more balanced view of Yeats's work as culturally 'hybrid': Yeats cannot 'spring free' from the collective cultural inheritance of colonialism, but neither must he allow himself to be tyrannized by it (2001: 45).

discourses (Spurr 2002: 69).[69] Both points of view, Said's and Spurr's, will be taken up in a later part of this chapter, which deals with the conceptualization of territory in certain poems by Yeats and Harwood.

All three poets reflect on what it means to be 'the same' and 'other' in one's homeland. Yeats's poetry is informed by the contemporaneous strife between Ireland and England; Harwood contrasts the dire losses faced by the Tasmanian Aborigines against the stability of her family's home. Josephi's poetry registers the concerns of a society coming to terms with globalization. In the poem "Ithaca", Josephi explores the imbrication of myth with representations of travel. In other poems, she uses the 'window' paradigm to frame glimpses of a new, reflective way of living responsibly. I argue that Josephi's poems align her with a group whose travel writing allows for an interrogation of their own 'interests'. By undermining the conventions of representation and by questioning their own authority, such writers resist the 'commanding' view that characterizes western thought (Spurr 1993: 20).

Ithacas

Imaginative humans always dream, whether in joy or fear, of 'pulling away' from their continent, for separation allows them to dream the world anew (Deleuze 2004: 10). For Said, many 'dreams' continue to be supported by the false idea that certain groups and territories want to be subjugated, and although the peak period of colonialism has passed, imperialist cultural, political and economic practices remain (1993: 8). Poetry might take account of these different practices, and include the interests of the marginalized. Indeed, it might question the very sense of what it is to live apart or together, here or there. The 'self' can be hidden and 'real' experience problematized in the hybrid text, in which a series of illusions (or allusions) multiply the number of possible perspectives. No longer the product of a 'gendered monolith', postmodern poetry can interrogate, and self-consciously incorporate in the same way as a novel, a variety of

[69] Spurr reads acts of defilement as the transgression of 'a crucial boundary between inside and out, between the self and that which it literally must exclude in order to maintain its difference from the Other' (1993: 81). Yeats seems to take Leda's side, but he is equally the "'seeing-man'" Pratt describes, the man who enters complicitly into a relationship with the rapacious imperialist. (7).

elements and strategies (Gregson 1996: 7).

Within the ebb and flow of meaning in a postmodern poem, it is hard to be sure that any one interpretation is the right one. In "Ithaca" (FNP 189 – 190) Josephi's strategies approach the style described by McHale (2000) in his discussion of Ashbery. Josephi uses recycling and pastiche, and part of her poem could be read as an 'extended ekphrasis': here, the poet "appropriates the imagery, narrative motifs, and obsessions of the 'outsider' artist" (McHale 563). Josephi holds up the appropriative practices that Constantine Cavafy uses in his earlier poem "Ithaca" as a mirror to her own, reframing the narrative in a new context, that of a European woman living today in the southern hemisphere. As McHale's discussion suggests, however, autobiographical details cannot be taken seriously because the postmodern speaker is probably fictional. Indeterminate 'ars-poetic' statements further discourage a firm reading of the text in question (562). Josephi's "Ithaca" might best be elaborated by highlighting the major shifts in content and mood from Cavafy's poem and by discussing the one important disjunction. Cavafy's "Ithaca" is reproduced below, before the Josephi poem, because Josephi herself claims it as an important intertext.

When you start on your journey to Ithaca,
then pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge.
Do not fear the Lestrygonians
And the Cyclopes and angry Poseidon.
You will never meet such as these on your path,
if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine
emotion touches your body and spirit.
You will never meet the Lestrygonians,
The Cyclopes and the fierce Poseidon, 10
if you do not carry them within your soul,
if your soul does not raise them up before you.

Then pray that the road is long,
that the summer mornings are many,
that you will enter ports seen for the first time,
with such pleasure, with such joy!
Stop at Phoenecian markets,
and purchase fine merchandise,
mother-of-pearl and corals, amber and ebony,
and pleasurable perfumes of all kinds, 20
buy as many pleasurable perfumes as you can;

visit hosts of Egyptian cities,
to learn and learn from those who have knowledge.

Always keep Ithaca fixed in your mind.
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.
But do not hurry the voyage at all.
It is better to let it last for long years
and even to anchor at the isle when you are old,
rich with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches. 30

Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.
Without her you would never have taken the road,
but she has nothing more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not defrauded you.
With the great wisdom you have gained, with so much
experience,
you must surely have understood by then what Ithacas mean.
(*The Complete Poems of Cavafy* 1961: 36)

A vast Mediterranean literary discourse dealing with the real and mythopoetical Greek island of Ithaca already exists, and Cavafy acknowledges this plurality in his closing line. In Josephi's "Ithaca", the first poem in "Pilgrim Routes", attention is immediately directed towards Cavafy and to the preceding "Ithacas" that can be traced back to the oral narrative. The 'assembly' of her "Ithaca" is partially similar to the process that Lévi-Strauss calls *bricolage* (1962: 49), with the element of freedom realised in the poet's choice of sub-themes, and the way in which the patchwork of original and borrowed texts is put together. Although Josephi engages in a dialogue with Cavafy's "Ithaca", her opening is more tentative. It cannot be assumed that the reader will engage with her retelling of the metaphorical journey.

"Ithaca"

If you asked me
how I see my life
I would answer you
With Cavafy's 'Ithaca' poem:

I pray that my way will be long
and I know
that the Laestrygones

and the Cyclops and angry Poseidon
are in my soul
making me very courageous at times 10
and then again
timid and longing for rest
the calm sea on the surface can be deceptive
a storm rages deep down
demanding the untouched and unexplored
the moment visions are made real

yes, I want to wear
sensuous perfumes of every kind
as lavishly as I can
want to wear coral and ebony 20
nothing but coral and ebony
in the warm moist tropical sun
and gather tales full of knowledge
from the learned

I'll sit at their feet
listening to their stories
I'll talk with them
I'll laugh with them
And when it is time to go
I'll go. 30

Unlike Josephi's speaker, Cavafy's narrator confidently expects that readers will join him in the adventure. The commensurate tone, heard in Cavafy's opening lines, is heroic. Josephi's "If" and Cavafy's "When" clearly invite different responses. Josephi recycles from Cavafy, as might be expected, in the postmodernist pastiche style, but there are significant points of difference between the two poems. Cavafy's poem repeats familiar moral advice: malevolent, mythical beasts offer no threat, unless travellers "carry them within" and "raise them up" (lines 11 and 12); if human thoughts remain "lofty" and their emotions "fine", fierce Poseidon, the Cyclopes and the Lestrygonians will not bother them. Here, there are echoes of the Biblical discourse concerning idolatry and the worship of false gods (Exodus 34: 13 – 17). Cavafy's speaker twice exhorts the reader, "pray that the road is long" (lines 2 and 13) and the overall tone of the poem appears to echo the value of Christian faith. The afterlife is to be anticipated with confidence

and the other is not to be feared, but rather to be met courageously.[70] It is not until the final line that the poet problematizes the concept of Ithaca by pluralizing the noun and stating that "Ithacas" have a particular meaning for "you", presumably readers. Given the poem's homecoming discourse and the life-as-a-journey metaphor, Cavafy appears to suggest that each reader brings her or his own "experience" or "wisdom" to the fore when reading this, indeed any, poem. There is no one Ithaca, but multiple "Ithacas", constructed continually by new readers and writers.

Josephi's language is more secular than Cavafy's. Nevertheless, there are similarities between the two poems. Both imply that the sea journey (the vehicle) can be read as a clichéd metaphor for the life path. Cavafy shows that he is writing figuratively by using "the road" (second tenor) as a substitute for the implied sea voyage: Ithaca cannot be reached by road. The titles also reveal that the ground of discussion is cultural/literary heritage. Cavafy's interest seems transpersonal: by contrast, Josephi uses the first person in her "Ithaca". Immediately, however, the speaker allows attention to be deflected away from autobiographical details as she claims to see her life as another poem. Here too a second tenor is added to the chain of meaning: the sea journey to "Ithaca" is a metaphor for life; life is a metaphor for a second poem, which in turn refers to other Ithaca poems. Readers, "you", need to read the other poem(s) in order to understand how the speaker sees her life, and indeed the context of the 'poem' in which she is situated. A 'hall of mirrors' effect is created, whereby one view casts back to preceding views. Indeed, immediately before Josephi's "Ithaca" is a dedication to her dead grandfather, who was a poet.

Cultural and textual comparisons, however, are more significant in Josephi's work than personal details. The point of view is kept open, and this might explain the choice of Cavafy's "Ithaca" as source text. Cavafy's poem concludes: "you must already have understood what Ithacas mean". Given that an actual Ithaca exists, and that the concept "Ithaca" is familiar because of the Homeric classics, the plural "Ithacas" takes on a new sense. Cavafy lived and worked mainly in Alexandria, where he was treated as an

[70] Hulme and Youngs compare the 'ambiguous' figure of Odysseus, 'adventurous, powerful, unreliable', and the Christian pilgrim 'carefully controlled' by the church (2002: 2).

outsider. Nevertheless, his poem "Ithaca" has endured, and although written in 1911, it 'speaks to us even more powerfully than to its first coterie of readers. Defying the critical judgement of time, it renders itself immortal' (Murphy 175). Peter Murphy goes on to state that Cavafy's Alexandrine view of 'Greekness' was broad, for unlike Athens Alexandria has always been a world city. A site of enormous cultural capital and struggle, Alexandria retains the essence of what it means to be great and Greek. Cavafy's poem affirms expansiveness along with fearlessness before the other, whatever it might prove to be. More importantly, cultural plurality and the 'immortality' of the written work are brought to light.

There is no evidence in Josephi's "Ithaca" to suggest that the poet regards her own work as immortal. Instead, the importance of Cavafy's particular culture(s) and time are emphasized and compared with a different way of being and knowing. Josephi is a frequent traveller between Australia and Europe, a personal detail that is not revealed in this poem. "Pilgrim Routes" was written around the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of East and West Germany, when a new, hybrid culture was being formed. It is likely that Josephi heard in Cavafy's work important resonances of political, geographical and sociocultural change.

Cavafy's "Ithaca" expands to include the vast Greek empire, which inspired lifetimes of exploration: "with such pleasure, with such joy / you will enter ports seen for the first time" (lines 15 – 16). Egypt was once the place to go to "learn and learn from scholars" (line 23): the breadth of knowledge and the time taken up with study are underlined by the repetition of the verb "learn". In Phoenecia, "fine merchandise" could be purchased and "pleasurable perfumes of all kinds" (line 20) enjoyed. Ithaca was to be remembered during the journey, but the return was only to be effected in old age: "Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage" (line 31). Cavafy's lexical choices highlight his optimism and his "Ithaca" retains the inspirational status and mythical reputation of the island that once 'received encomiums not only from Odysseus but also from Telemachus and Athena in the *Odyssey* … a good nursing-mother, watered by springs and blessed with good soil' (Tuan 1990: 121). Cavafy understands this excess, leaving the

conclusion of his "Ithaca" open: "Wise as you have become, with so much experience, / you must already have understood what Ithacas mean." 'Ithaca' is expanded; indeed, readers bring to 'Ithaca' their own cultural experiences and heritage, the particular attitudes and values that affect their topophilic sentiments and are affected by them. Cavafy foregrounds how hard it is to distinguish the 'real' Ithaca, indeed the many Ithacas, from the Homeric ideal, part of a cultural heritage that was transmitted orally and then re-inscribed in print. Despite successive colonizations and wars, "Ithaca" has survived and new "Ithacas" will always be compared to the imagined original, in itself the result of hybridity.

In the writing of her "Ithaca", Josephi clearly acknowledges the cultural heritage to which Cavafy alludes, borrowing from, and in the last stanza appearing to respond directly to, his "Ithaca" poem (line 17). Yet she extends the territory to embrace a broadened notion of cultural plurality. Cavafy's lexical choices confirm in the main the canonical view of the heroic journey. Josephi's "Ithaca" is voiced with less assurance. Although it opens "Pilgrim Routes", its lexical set includes neither the noun "pilgrim" nor "pilgrimage", although these are implied: "my life"; "I pray"; "my way"; "courageous"; "rest". Myths of secular pilgrimage form part of the speaker's "soul" and a metonymic relationship based on an old cultural cliché is established between "soul" and sea. Both are restless and make endless demands on the speaker and both are compared against familiar binaries: "courageous" / "timid" (stanza 2); "calm" / "storm"; "surface" / "deep" (stanza 3). Interestingly, in his discussion of the stereotypes and the Greek character, Dimitris Tziovas argues that these binaries have been traditionally linked to gender difference: the 'proud Hellenic' is gendered as masculine and the 'introverted and self-critical Romaic' as feminine (201). The "soul" of Josephi's speaker oscillates between extremes (lines 6 – 9) but inclines towards the Romaic type, so that a new perspective is provided from which to read Cavafy's Neohellenic journey.

Josephi's voyage is to be understood primarily as inner and imagined. If the poem were read as autobiographical and confessional in tone, Josephi's Germanic heritage might be cited as the 'source' of deep-seated

Angst. She checks this assumption, however, in the concluding line of the third stanza. Perhaps tongue in cheek, Josephi seems to acknowledge through her speaker the Shelleyan notion that all Europeans are Greek and owe their cultural heritage to that nation ("in my soul"). Gendered knowledge has already been mentioned: the text on which Josephi reflects was written by a male and seems to be spoken by one. Josephi's speaker in "Ithaca" appears to be female: familiar parallels are made between the soul, the sea, the act of writing and 'feminine' ways of knowing.

An important disjunction, "yes", introduces Josephi's new vision of multiple Ithacas (and multiple ways of knowing), applied now to tropical islands. The catalogue of items that the speaker will buy and wear (three of them mentioned by Cavafy) provides evidence of the sensual, imaginary space the speaker seeks. Lavishly perfumed, she will wear "coral and ebony / nothing but coral and ebony". Yet rather than study with Egyptian scholars like Cavafy, Josephi's speaker will sit at the feet of the "learned" under the "warm moist tropical sun" (line 23). This descriptive section of the poem privileges tribal life and customs, and promotes oral pedagogy over formal learning.

Peaceful voluptuousness is not, however, conceived as a permanent state. Repeated in the last line and placed at the end of it, "go" is given added emphasis: it is the most important verb and indeed the most striking lexical feature of the text. "I'll go" would in other "Ithacas" define the speaker as the active, heroic explorer moving on to new conquests. By comparison, Josephi's speaker is pragmatic: "and when it is time to go, I'll go." The poem seems relatively simple and it is possible to read the statement literally as an expression of the speaker's nomadic intent. Yet Josephi invites a comparison with the Cavafy poem, and a different interpretation is equally valid. The infinitive "to go" (open) is followed by the present tense "I'll go" (closed). There is no timeless Utopia, no blessed isle to which the poet-hero can always return in order to live happily ever after.[71] 'Ithaca' is a construct. The speaker may "pray" that the journey is

[71] Interestingly, Edmond compares the 'romantic myth' affirmed by (mostly male) travel writers and the 'more tentative' tone of Mel Kernahan's work on Tahiti: she understands 'there is no superior vantage point', 'get(s) closer' to the islanders, and takes account of the culture's complexities (in

long; she may dwell in the tropics where time slows and 'seemingly universal successions of nature disappear' (Tuan 1990: 149). Eden(s), however, cannot endure.

Prior syntagmatic and paradigmatic choices in Josephi's "Ithaca" suggest the speaker's marginality. Repetition highlights the transient patterns of her existence and the constant forging of new social relationships. Her focus is on the future rather than the past: "I'll sit"; "I'll talk"; "I'll laugh"; "I'll go". There is no intention to colonize. Unlike Cavafy's speaker (line 25), she cannot expect to arrive at the "ultimate goal" of immortal heroes and poets. Read metaphorically, "when it is time to go, I'll go" suggests a voyage towards erasure, both physical and textual. The texts she hears are oral and her own written texts may not prove to be memorable. From several different interpretive possibilities, readers can choose their own 'Ithaca(s)'.

The key metaphor in Josephi's "Ithaca" compares life with a poem, and the ambiguity of subject and object means that there is no straightforward production of joy. All the journeys lead to endings or slidings. The opening questions the interest of readers and directs their attention towards a different poet, Cavafy. Josephi's speaker, while citing proper nouns and using language to promote associations with the heroic journey, eschews colonizing practices. The discourse seems to be about writing, but the speaker will learn by listening. Cavafy's poem partly affirms the Romantic idea, behind many poems by Yeats and Harwood, that the power of the word lends immortality to both artist and oeuvre. Josephi's speaker (and her story) will "go". While it 'recycles' Cavafy, Josephi's "Ithaca" is quite different. There is no affirmation of the concept of timelessness, once related to the cycles of the seasons and the movement of stars, wherein life appeared to be continually self-generating (Tuan 1990). Yeats and Harwood constructed some of their most memorable poems around this idea. Now that migration and long distance travel are commonplace, notions of time have changed (Tuan 148 - 149). Today, time appears to pass more quickly, although on Josephi's "Ithaca", the leisurely pace of a tropical island, free of

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Hulme & Youngs eds. (2002: 153).

seasonal markers, might offer the illusion that time stands still.

For Josephi's speakers travel provides access to social exchanges which expand understanding. Several poems affirm Josephi's familiarity with the existentialist discourse of displacement, wherein the individual, instead of feeling culturally 'at home', has a metaphysical awareness that the self has become uprooted: Gregson likens a similar sense of loss to Heidegger's "'thrownness'" (1996: 155). While cultural alienation might not be expected to elicit joy, it is clear that Josephi's new "Ithaca" opens the realm of possibility to include other "Ithacas", specifically the many oral and written narratives outside Cavafy's experience.

Travel provides opportunities to reflect on a vast chain of experiences, from which multiple conclusions can be drawn. Different *savoirs* and multiple ways of knowing and understanding become accessible (Lyotard 1979: 40). In the narrative tradition, 'language acts' entail knowing how to speak, how to listen and how to behave: the rules of knowledge dispersal through narrative might be transmitted along with the knowledge itself (40). When the tribal speaker reproduces a story and states his name, he legitimizes not only his role, but also claims the right to share heroic status. Scientists might describe tribal ways of disseminating knowledge as primitive and of value only to women, children and the ignorant (48). Yet tribal discourses make no pretension to universality (53), while scientific 'knowledge' is taught as the truth, even if it is biased to ensure collusion with the funding agency (49). And the 'truths' of legal and scientific discourses can have disastrous consequences for minority and separatists groups (53). Josephi's traveller voices her desire to expand her range of *savoirs* and contests the assumption that there is only one true language game and one system in which knowledge is reproduced for consumption. She will accept the rules of multiple language game(s) and the protocols transmitted along with each narrative and each journey. Without the need to conform to one set of rules forever, the nomadic self will expand to include many new experiences in many different locations.

Both "Ithaca" poems end with the voyage and hint at what it might mean. Cavafy's journey is slow and circular with glimpses of eternity:

Josephi's contains punctuations, new starts and finite endings. Along with the exchange of sensual, material possessions, both poems value the sharing of knowledge, although the body of knowledge is different in each case. The final item catalogued in Josephi's list of purchases refers back to the received wisdom of the narrative: "and gather tales full of knowledge / from the learned" (lines 24-25). Despite worldly wealth, the speaker claims a subordinate cultural position before the tribal elders: she will listen and "sit at their feet" (line 26). When she has learned from the exchange, she will move on without any attempt at colonization. Josephi's "Ithaca" reveals the possibilities of a learning process in which hybrid, multiple becomings are promoted over reproductive practices that limit the production of joy.

Limbo

Said describes Yeats's early work as situated at 'a threshold it cannot cross' (283). Said's concerns are in the main sociopolitical, and there is no doubt that Yeats's lived understanding of sudden upheaval and political violence informs his writing of the liminal territory between suffering and freedom. Nevertheless, Yeats's poetry is full of ecstatic force (Hough 1961: 254). This part of the chapter deals with poems that explore and affirm the 'threshold' as a metaphorical space of tension between change and the desire to remain in the familiar place. 'Threshold' or 'limbo' poems open to a terrifying beauty, an ambiguous joy that fills the human heart as it faces "the increasing Night / That opens her mystery and fright" (Yeats, "The Apparitions", MW 178). In Yeats's later works all the passions are experienced, exhausted and purged until humankind is freed of them. Although peace is often achieved at the cost of life itself, Yeats gives the battling hero the voice of rejoicing.

On a different island where few traces of the violent conquest remain, Harwood laments the brutal past in poems such as "Oyster Cove" (CP 237): joyous poems affirm the peaceful existence that her own family is able to lead in Tasmania. Superbly executed poems such as "The Sea Anemones" (CP 345) and "Iris" (CP 251-252) celebrate the human struggle to attain calm acceptance. "Iris" centres on a personal experience, a "day of rest"

(line 17) spent sailing on the family boat "Iris" with its builders, her husband and sons. Far from home, the speaker surrenders to the rhythm of wind and ocean: "Tension and buoyant ease are reconciled" (line 4). Indeed, wave motion supplies a cogent if clichéd metaphor for the present moment, an ephemeral, safe point in the stasis and flow of time. The seashore is a place for writing love, loss and longing, and sailing signifies a joyous escape to the freedom of oceanic space: wind, sea and light experienced from the security of the craft "shall comfort us, who have / built our ark faithfully. In fugitive / rainbows of spray she lifts, wave after wave, her promise: those the waters bear shall live." (Lines 29-32) Clearly, Harwood is appropriating the Genesis narrative of Noah's Ark and citing God's promise of eternal life. In her retelling, "she" presumably refers to the boat "Iris", but Harwood promotes a personal parallel as she voices her independent identity: "'Beyond habit, household, children, I am I. / Who knows my original estate, my name?'" (Lines 25-26) The evocation of essence here arises from a different narrative in Genesis, the Biblical origin of names, which began with the naming of God and established the hierarchical order. "Midwinter Rainbow" (CP 470), which will be discussed in more detail later, opens with invocations of the "ineffable by name": "The immortal Signified" (line 1) and "Adonai Elohim / I-am-that-I-am" (lines 3-4). In "Iris", the speaker rejoices that identity and continuity are affirmed under Christian law.

Other groups and individuals are much less fortunate. It is not surprising that the least joyous of Harwood's sonnets lament the erasure of the Tasmanian Aborigines' generational line: "… A woman lies / coughing her life out. There's still blood to fall, / but all blood's spilt that could have made a child" ("Oyster Cove" CP 237, lines 12-14). By contrast, production and reproduction are the themes of the joyous "Iris", which acknowledges faith in religion and its language forms, and evokes important Biblical generational and naming rights. "Iris" begins with a familiar structure, an inversion, a naming and a temporal scale: "Three years with our three sons you worked to build her". Biblical narrative structure and the labour of the males of the family line are affirmed here, but "those the waters bear" and the repeated pronoun "she" suggest the feminine presences omitted from

core narratives. Similar literary parallels between the sea and the productive amniotic realm are suggested by Bachelard: 'What a lot of beings we have begun!' (1969: 112). And Harwood's familial heritage is privileged: married, stable, white middle-class, educated and Christian. The conclusion of "Iris" is full of comfort and joy, at least for those who belong to the group defined as "us", presumably her own family and other Christian families, "who have / built our ark faithfully" (lines 29-30).[72] Against this good fortune, the genocide described in "Oyster Cove" stands in stark contrast.

For Harwood, love and language defy absence: language is launched into the emptiness to bridge the distance between past, present and future; language brings joy by softening the hard edges of time and allaying the fear of facing the unknown; language is a sign of life, safety, hope and home. By contrast, language loss means alienation, and ultimately death. Since absence and the lack of language are metaphorically linked, the few Harwood poems about travel take on added significance within her oeuvre. Travel poems are not written from the position of the happy traveler, but rather in the voices of those who suffer because they are left behind. The displaced anger of the deserted love object is voiced in "Ebb-Tide" (CP 141), supposedly a reflection sparked by the photograph of an absent lover. Since the changeless image can only lie against time, the mythical 'truth' of the lover's presence is revealed: "somewhere"; "incredibly blue"; "unheard-of azure"; "You / smile there forever" (stanza 4). It is implied that, although travel furthers the romantic ideal of escape, time is relentless. Represented here by the familiar metaphor of the ebbing tide, time reduces all life to bones "flung on dry land" (line 25).

In Harwood's "Ebb-Tide", the distance between the lovers is compared with the absence of language: "Now you have no word for me / I bring your bitter silence here" (lines 1 – 2). The adjective "bitter" suggests the transference of feeling from one lover to another; "here" is the seashore, the liminal space separating the couple, defined forever in the photograph as a graveyard, "masts and shrouds" reaching for the sky (line 22). The absence, evoked paradoxically by the visual presence in the photograph and

[72] Strauss quotes from a letter Harwood wrote to Vincent Buckley. Since childhood Harwood felt secure: "'the earth itself will bear me up, the waters will carry me'" (1996: 70).

compared to a loss of words, is extended through metaphors which parallel the liminal space of the shore and the general indifference ("silence") of the universe. Nevertheless, the ocean's "unvarying seasons" provide some comfort, as the speaker's separation anxiety – her death wish perhaps – becomes increasingly apparent. Lexical choices accumulate to suggest the violence of the poem's conclusion, where finally the "meaning" (line 4) of human nature is revealed: "stone in hand" (line 5); "crippled prize" (line 8); "dying claws" (9); "agony" (13); "shaken" (24); "… I run beside my child / stoning the crabs with mindless hate" (lines 28 – 29). As in many other poems, Harwood emphasizes humankind's vulnerability and its beginnings as "wild" creatures similar to those it destroys (lines 26 – 27). The ocean is anthropomorphized and has attributed to it the godlike compassion which the human actors lack: it rocks and cradles its inhabitants, and, seemingly in reaction to the humans' "mindless" acts of killing, it "withdraws from the gold sand" (line 30). The last view is of the suffering lover, stranded on the dry shore. Previous paradigmatic and syntagmatic choices align to suggest the immanent allure of death.

Harwood's friend, critic and anthologist, Alison Hoddinott, discourages a personal reading of "Ebb-tide", claiming the poem is written in character in the voice of Geyer, the European migrant hopelessly in love with a woman who resembles Gwen herself (CP 584). Harwood's reflection on absence should thus be read as ironic in tone. Yet, as is so often the case in Harwood's poems, the littoral landscape here inspires tense 'psychodramas' involving 'oppositional dynamics' (Strauss 1996: 103). Joy is only produced conditionally, on acceptance of the vivifying word/Word that opens humans endlessly to new beginnings.

Yeats's 'oceanic' poems reveal similar tensions. Indeed, Strauss compares Yeats and Harwood's tendency to draw from 'a long mythical tradition of the sea as the medium of flux' (1996: 114). In this tradition, the dramas of the long voyage yield an excess of sensory input, which is recorded in narrative. For Yeats travel is often imaginary, as drama is inimical to the hero who longs for peace and to the creative genius seeking quietude. Thus Yeats's famous "Byzantium" poems promote artistic craft

and the magnificence of the human imagination over the joys of adventure. In "Long-legged Fly" (CP 173 - 174), Yeats foregrounds the still moment in which creative individuals produce their best work: "His eyes fixed upon nothing" (line 7); "With no more sound than the mice make / his hand moves to and fro (lines 27 – 28). In order to set the imagination in train, the artist requires an absence of visual and aural stimuli. Repeated imperatives insist on this absence: "Quiet the dog" (line 3); "Move gently if you must" (13); "Shut the door" (23). The genius must be given undisturbed access to the inner space, for the creative journey entails a release of the outside world and a complete immersion in joyous stillness: "Caesar is in the tent" (line 5); "There on that scaffolding reclines / Michel Angelo" (lines 25 – 26).

"Long-legged Fly" allows Yeats to foreground an epistemological view: the essential artistic *savoir* weds the memory of cultural representation to a forgetting of the constraints of time, paradoxically imposed by culture. R.F. Foster indicates that Yeats discussed European history and art with the famous landscape painter, Turner, and found parallels in his own evolving 'scheme': the mind of the creative genius meets fate at certain key historical points, when silent contemplation initiates momentous change (2003: 614-615). In "Long-legged Fly", the repeated simile of the refrain suggests that the genius eschews movement to enter a quasi-meditative state which imitates that of the mindless insect: "Like a long-legged fly upon a stream / His mind moves upon silence". The greatest joy is experienced and created in this extended present moment, which expands to allow the careful crafting of the work.

Harwood also compares presence and productivity. A creative Utopia is to be found in her own home, described, for example, in the 1990 poem "Midwinter" (CP 466), published posthumously in *The Present Tense*:

> Snow settles on the mountain as I read.
> If death prove an experience I live through,
> good angel, guide me to a sunlit kitchen
> with bread rising, the great black kettle singing
> of wisdom and the peaceful life to come.
> (Lines 51 - 55)

Yeats and Harwood often promote pleasure as an attachment to a familiar

milieu. The tension between release and absence, by contrast, provides a powerful metaphor for the ultimate *jouissance*, the loss of language. Both poets structure key poems around the familiar binary of loss (death, the final journey) and being called into presence, here and now. While Harwood and Yeats recycle mythical content to reinstate the established parallel of the oceanic voyage and human vulnerability, both foreground the elasticity of time and the joy of the creative act, which paradoxically transports the artists beyond the immediate spatial and temporal context while immersing them completely in the moment. Travel, by contrast, promotes in real and metaphorical terms confrontations with uncertainty and chaos.

In "Night Flight" (CP 255 - 256), Harwood represents travel as alienation from places and people known and loved. Here, the noun "limbo" conveys a physical and metaphysical state: "In the limbo of middle air / we cruise, drowned in high cloud, / between somewhere and somewhere" (lines 1-3). Lexical choices emphasize the speaker's isolation: "Indifferent", "the God in the machine", "crisply", "nothing that I need to know" (stanza 2). The "landmarks" below only take on significance when she can relate them to her loved ones. "I see" (line 13) begins a stream of memories and the cloud-covered, impersonal landscape far below is re-identified as a personal space: "my house, my children's faces" (line 15). The woman's claim to 'her' place in nature is stated in the fifth stanza in a potent simile: "… rest / like a gentle animal / with a baby at my breast" (lines 25 – 27). Here, the rhyming of "rest" with "breast" affirms the striking difference between the mother's place (her home, her body, her family) and the "limbo" of the lone traveler speeding through space.

Home and nature, which the mother relates intimately to lovemaking and children, are paralleled in "Night Flight" with another well known space – cultural heritage – through the familiar "rose" metaphor: "late roses left too long" (line 16). The nostalgic sense of loss is heavily marked in this part of the poem, which culminates in a reflection on love and the bitterness felt by all time-bound humans. Alone, the speaker imagines that she is hurtling towards "absence":

> among dazzling visions, lying
> half asleep in mid-air

between nowhere and nowhere.

What's love but this sustaining
violence – grains of time
igniting, burning, raining
through absence as I climb
on stormy air to lie
alone in a black sky.
(Lines 76 – 84)

This section echoes Gottfried Benn's terrifying "*Verlorenes ich*" ("Lost ego"), where the speaker faced with the vastness of space must re-evaluate what it is to be human. Harwood contemplates infinity from her aircraft cabin and writes space as a metaphor for the final, inevitable parting from her loved ones. Mounting tension builds to evoke the speaker's existential terror, and any optimistic connotation of the descriptor "sustaining" seems to be deflated by the noun "violence". Accordingly, although attributed to "time", the present participles "igniting, burning, raining" accumulate to suggest the repeated, visceral interactions between memory, love and loss.

The body experiences love as 'violent' when the lone individual recognizes and reacts to the magnitude of what has just been, or is about to be, relinquished. Harwood, an avid reader of Freud, suggests that love's "violence" is a product of the tension between joy and despair. Kristeva explains: the loss of the desired object, experienced as an inner void, only becomes productive when 'narrated' as sexual desire or the giving of *jouissance*, for verbal 'activity' reintegrates Eros and Thanatos by inserting desire in the place of death (1989: 82). Further, the lost object is remembered and reinstated with each verbalization (61), an idea explored later in the chapter "Joy and Rebirth".

Like Harwood's "Night Flight", Yeats's 'limbo' poem "High Talk" (MW 177-178) invites an exploration of absence and presence. Here, the concern is the legacy that the poet will leave behind. "I, through the terrible novelty of light, stalk on, stalk on" (line 13) suggests an equivalence between speaker and migratory bird (stalk/stork), and points towards the poem's ambiguous conclusion, where the speaker appears to "stalk" into the dazzling ocean of death: "Those great sea-horses bare their teeth and laugh at the dawn". As he does in "The Circus Animals' Desertion" – discussed in

the chapter "Joy and Text" – Yeats compares heritage, history and artistry in a central metaphor in "High Talk". In this case, it is walking on stilts: "great-granddad had a pair" (line 2); "Some rogue of the world stole them" (line 4); "… I take to chisel and plane" (line 8). With a bitter irony, the carnival performer confesses that his life is a fraud: "All metaphor, Malachi, stilts and all" (line 11). Here, the proper noun "Malachi" is obviously chosen carefully: the last book in the Old Testament, dictated supposedly by the eponymous prophet, is a forerunner of the Book of Revelation. Malachi repeats the judgments and statutes conveyed to Moses, and issues a warning in God's words: "'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse'" (Malachi, 4: 4-6). In "High Talk", Yeats reflects on his responsibilities as prophet and political patriarch. "Malachi" also echoes 'malarky', the colloquial Irish expression meaning 'playing up'. In this light, the poem's title reveals the ironic distance of the skilled manipulator, able to confound his public with his so-called "High Talk".

A different way of being and moving, however, reveals a powerful truth that contrasts with the trivial deceptions of the language game. A rupture in the rollicking rhythm allows the introduction of the new subject in the prophetic voice: " … A barnacle goose / Far up in the stretches of night; night splits and the dawn breaks loose" (lines 11 – 12). The bird's trajectory appears to cause the parting of the cloud: the verb to express the movement of the goose is absent, but captured in "splits" and "breaks loose", which are attributed to light and epiphany. The significance of the title "High Talk" is revealed: language allows humans to rationalize and prevaricate for political purposes. "High" (lofty, noble) talk is opposed to natural force, conviction and action. The bird's sudden flight is a reminder that natural entities face the future fearlessly and freely embrace inevitable change. Parallels between speaker, bird, light and ocean suggest the possibility of continuity, a chance confirmed in the repetition, "stalk on, stalk on". Yeats's lexical choices, however, leave the impression that the speaker

trails chaos behind him: "whatever I learned has run wild, / From collar to collar, from stilt to stilt, from father to child" (lines 9 – 10). Here, "learned" (logic) and "run wild" (chaos) are in opposition and it is impossible to ignore Yeats's preoccupation with social disintegration.

In "High Talk", the stilt-walker's journey to the shore can be read paradigmatically as the final process of detachment: before leaving the earth, the individual must confront and question his shaping of history. In an essay, Yeats reflects that artists 'are continually making and un-making mankind' ("The Symbolism of Poetry" MW 361). When poets hear of a major event such as an industrial coup, a war or some 'religious excitement', they immediately seek the simple, heartfelt lyric that gathers fervent emotions about it until it becomes an epic story (Yeats MW 361). Yet paradoxically the right language can only be found when the poet detaches from the event at hand. Yeats, aware of the depth and breadth of his influence, believed that each phase of life should be 'rehearsed and examined, as a preliminary to letting it go' (Foster 2003: 650). He was equally aware of the liminal space he occupied as a famous but contentious poet. Indeed, the tension between belonging and alienation provides a powerful metaphor for Yeats's poetry. Foster quotes from "At the Hawk's Well", in which Yeats describes life in a cogent metaphor: the poet eschews a comfortable dwelling place in the "divine house" to live as an outcast "amid the whirlwinds that beset its threshold" (655). Until the end, Yeats continued to rework the central metaphor from *A Vision* of the desert dweller, forever losing his way on the 'sands of spiritual exploration' (Foster 2003: 200).

Wandering is a powerful and positive metaphor for Yeats's imaginary explorations, in which all 'truths', including his own vision, remain constantly under interrogation. In "Man and the Echo" (MW 179), it seems that Yeats is haunted by the highly political nature of his plays, his responsibility for Margot Ruddock's deteriorating health and his lack of action with regard to Lady Gregory's Coole Estate.[73] The tone of the last stanza of "High Talk" is

[73] For Heaney, "Man and the Echo" is 'riddled … with dark'. Heaney analyses Yeats's rhythm and rhyme, and concludes that the poem is about the 'resilience' of the consciousness and its attempts to make sense of the 'contradictory effects of the destructive and ceative instincts' (21).

similarly tentative and questioning. Grim reality contrasts sharply with the light irony of the opening and the rapturous description of the soaring, wild goose. Yet a positive reading of "High Talk" draws on the key parallel between the lone stilt-walker, earthbound but elevated, and the bird: both galvanize power to split infinity and rejoice in the ecstatic light of revelation. Yeats's gaze is directed firmly and fearlessly towards the joyous irruption that ends one journey and fuels the next trajectory: into the unknown.

Travel in a world without borders

Harwood and Yeats affirm key presences and structures which support their identity and underpin their endeavour. A new *Zeitgeist* challenging poets' reluctance to break with the past had already arrived with the prophetic voice of Zarathustra. To promote revolutionary change, Friedrich Nietzsche drew on established metaphorical relationships between creative humans, the oceanic realm and language. Through Zarathustra, he flags the postmodern era in which reflexive poets direct their gaze upon their own way of being and upon the ways in which they (and we) construct the world: 'I cast my net into their (the poets') sea and hoped to catch fine fish; but I always drew out an old god's head. … Already I have seen the poets transformed; I have seen them direct their glance upon themselves' (1969: 151).

Poetry arguably (re)produces more vibrant and diverse ways of being in the world than routine exchanges, which inevitably reveal the desiring subject as 'inscribed in and by certain ideologically determined subject-positions' (Hutcheon 2002: 140). Certain poems effectively expose the confrontations, contrasts and shifts which underline people's struggle to establish identity and values in a rapidly changing world without borders. Whether these 'limbo' poems are productive of joy or *Angst* depends on the individual's position. Josephi's "Arrival" (FNP 435 - 436), a poem about a trip to Paris, centres on the point of view itself and the ways in which the world can be constructed. Josephi structures the poem (as Yeats sometimes does) as a proposition followed by a reflection, so that the poem resembles a process through which the speaker seeks to establish her own truth. First,

her (temporary) political position is stated:

> … I would have voted for
> the radical right out of an unholy alliance
> of fear and revenge, shrill thoughts
> which left me in no doubt who to blame
> for stealing my purse, one of those
> lithe dark figures disappearing into
> the deeper dark of a long platform
> (Lines 2-8)

The French "radical right" under Jean-Marie le Pen promises the return of immigrants, many of whom are African Moslems, to their first countries. The use of the conditional perfect tense, the descriptor "unholy" and the pejorative adjective "shrill" (lines 2 – 4) suggest that the speaker would not usually endorse radical right political ideologies. At the moment, her "fear and revenge" are directed against the group she believes stole her purse in the metro, the "lithe dark figures" (line 7). Here, "dark" is used in its two main denotations, shadowy (hidden underground) and dark of skin; the second carries a penumbra of racial connotations.

While the aforementioned proposition/reflection structure provides a self-reflexive framework for the entire poem, the signifier "charm" is equally important. The poem turns on its double denotation, the anticipated "charm" of a trip to Paris and a lucky token or "offering": "Then almost hysterical laughter. This was / my biennial offering to the god of travel, what else, / whose charm had gone with the purse …" (lines 17-19). Although "almost hysterical laughter" is not owned, we might suppose that the speaker shares the response of the indifferent, mythological "god of travel" to her descent "into the shady groves" (line 22). Her first reaction, "fear and revenge" (line 4), is revealed as risible.

At the heart of the poem, however, the speaker faces the plain truth of her existence: "cupboard, bed, sink, bidet, / table, chair. In the tall mirror next to the bed / I stood naked …" (lines 26-28). Confrontation with her "naked" body, a physical object among other real objects, begins a reflection on justice and how the speaker positions herself within the "shadier age":

> The warmth of the room had melted
> my vulnerability. I opened the bottle of wine

my Arab neighbour on the plane had given me
after seeing how hurriedly I drank mine.

Fürtwangler on the radio, old interviews,
old recordings, the crackling, bursting
fullness of Beethoven, songs of the night
mellowed by wine and tranquilliser.
The Seine at my feet and a brightly lit
Palais de Justice. Whose justice, anyway?
Should I have grabbed the hand pushing
against my bag and found I was holding
only the limp finger of a pink glove?

Don't be afraid, I dreamt
until the sun shone into my face.
Automatically I switched on the radio,
let in the world, the high-sea summit
off Malta, events in Germany and
Czechoslovakia, a by-election win
for the radical right in Paris's north
and, to round off the globe, riots in Manila
and a Labor win in Queensland, Australia.

Outside a body drifted in the Seine
under such a lovely sky, passers-by
crowded the bridge. I needed a new talisman,
a new protection for my arrivals, bought
a St Christopher medal in Notre Dame.
The prayer that night embraced our greatest need,
the longing for light, the desire for peace.
(Stanzas 5 to 8)

In the chapters "Joy and Text" and "Joy and Desire", I discussed the continual sliding between real world and textually constructed world(s) in Josephi's poetry. "Arrival" provides a typical example. Josephi reveals the politics of cultural conventions in her construction of Paris ('Paris') as a contested site upon which the new world does battle with the old. Josephi's speaker shifts from certainty to uncertainty, statement to question, as she confronts the ways in which she constructs her immediate environment, her 'truth'.

No simple solutions to cultural misapprehension are offered here: indeed, the politics of representation are brought to the fore in a manner described by Hutcheon as 'value-problematizing' (2002: 90). As the viewpoint changes, attention is brought to the ease with which people

embed cultural stereotypes. From stereotyping (Arabs are thieves), the reflective speaker develops a new possibility: Arabs are generous. Viewed nostalgically, "Paris" appears as a construct: the desired, absent and idealized object. The petty theft in 'real' Paris fits seamlessly into the chronicle of incidents belonging to the globalized world: "a shadier age of migration" (line 23). The listing of objects, including the speaker's body, ruptures the 'old world' nostalgia and fuels the next leap from transcendental musing into the immanent present. "Automatically" is placed at the beginning of line 45 to confirm the propensity of contemporary society to fall into predetermined patterns, constantly affirmed by external agencies such as the media.[74]

Like "Paris", "radio" is constructed as a liminal site of struggle between the old world as art form ("crackling", "Beethoven") and the politically immanent new world ("events", a win for the "radical right"). In this light, the signifiers "frame" (window frame) and "radio" operate as parallels, each acting within the poem as syntagm and paradigm: like a vast window, the radio "let(s) in the world" in such a way that it is hard to grasp the actual scope of "events". Thus the speaker engages with the real death "Outside", framed by the hotel's window, as though it were an artwork: "under such a lovely sky" (line 53). At this point, a signifier belonging to the set of items used for centuries to protect against misfortune is introduced to resolve the metaphorical problem stated in the third stanza. The speaker's "new talisman" fits both the 'new world' culture of consumerism dependent on tokens and souvenirs and the 'old world': a crowd of "passers-by" gawking at the spectacle of the dead body might have once touched a "talisman" to protect them against death. The assemblage furthers an interaction between past and present, as it once might have on a late medieval canvas; the verb "drifted" confirms the leisurely movement of the corpse observed at a distance ('distance'). Suggestive of the terrible sublime, the landscape of death under "such a lovely sky" echoes Altdorfer's representation in "The Garden at Night" (see "Joy and Nature"). Life, art and imagination interact,

[74] Josephi's poem may be read as a resistance to 'automatic' thinking. (See Malouf on poetry's capacity to 'open the way to institutional change' by uncovering what may be seen, 'dimly at first', as a new possibility 2011: 15).

with the one reframing the other (McHale 2000: 571), and the 'truth' of 'real' life is continually called into question.

The effect of the "bridge" sequence (stanza 8) is to destabilize, to allow a reassessment of the values of the speaker, who may or may not be a superstitious Christian who buys religious kitsch. It is likely that Josephi uses ironic distance here; she does not usually legitimize a traditionally ordered universe by endorsing the middle-class culture Hutcheon calls a 'homogeneous monolith' (2002: 12). The voice of the final stanza is more typical of Josephi's liminal speakers, who reflect on possible (or impossible) courses of action:

> … we could not
> reshape a wooden frame on a clear, cold
> December night to make it close.
> Not tonight, nor the next two nights.
> I thanked him. The room would be warm enough.
> (Lines 65-69)

The "we" here is clearly defined as the speaker and the attractive man who has come to help her (unsuccessfully) to fix the window of her hotel room. Failure to keep out the cold December air can be read both syntagmatically (the window frame is warped) and paradigmatically: it is impossible to isolate oneself from the changing world outside which touches us whether we like it or not. In this final stanza, the "wooden frame" paradigm resolves in a second paradigm, the speaker's inability to find closure, and the whole poem reveals an unsuccessful search for answers to social inequities, which even the most powerful religious texts cannot bridge. Because of the problems it raises with regard to social re-production, the poem will be further elaborated in the next chapter, "Joy and Rebirth".

The previous analysis of Harwood's "Iris" drew attention to the conceptual and linguistic frameworks which allowed the poet to foreground inclusion and safety for believers (Christians, "ark" builders). The boat "Iris" took on a symbolic value beyond its capacity to safely transport the poet and her family on a Sunday outing, an added value confirmed by borrowings from Biblical narratives and structures. Harwood filled an assigned role and place by supporting certain established relationships, values and forms of production. Indeed Genesis, from which Harwood quotes, has enormous

force, taking us 'from the virtual to the actual, from the structure to its actualization' (Deleuze 2004: 180). A similar sliding in "Iris" emphasized differentiation; the 'chosen' people were affirmed and called upon to rejoice in the promise of everlasting life. "Iris" is deeply rooted in Christian epistemology, which poses and solves the issues raised within it according to its own system. Harwood's use of the familiar voice of authority to serve her own cause is quite subversive. Nevertheless, traditional faith is affirmed and the journey always returns to its beginning / 'Beginning'.

By contrast, Josephi foregrounds 'rootlessness': travel allows her speakers to interrogate 'certainties' rather than affirm them; dislocation is often privileged over repetition; 'reflections' do not necessarily serve the past, but rather recognize and celebrate the presence and process of representation itself. Posters and advertising clichés satisfying fickle tastes pervade human memory, objects take on fleeting significance, words and visual texts are adopted and adapted as paradigms for the speaker's capacity and desire to escape the 'rootedness' and continuity affirmed by Harwood. In Josephi's poem about travel and virtual travel, words are active entities with lives of their own; they create a fantasy world in which humans might play:

A Reflection of Yellow Posters

Summer breezes and laughter,
I consider these words aloud
the lives they live and lead to

climbing staircases adorned with stone garlands
to dance waltzes in crimson shoulderless dresses
in halls resplendent, or hear the music in a park
of sculptured hedges, fountains and statues.

The three-quarter beat follows me into a room
Where scrambling, unscrambling a handkerchief,
I watch the wind lightly lifting the blinds. 10
Or life might turn the other way,
and I walk through fields, through long grass,
my dog nosing the ground or chasing the swallows
and think of summer and rain, sons and daughters,
the cake I would bake, the meat I would cook.

This longing for perseverance, I know,
will always be a dream

like having trees grown from seed
or grasping someone's hand firmly with love.

I slowly sip my cappuccino 20
Shake the icing sugar off my pastry,
And consider instead the milky blue
Sunlight streaming through the windows
The reflections of bright yellow posters
In the glass, the brown plane-tree leaves
Still firmly attached to the tree,
Offsetting a blueish-gray slate roof,

run my finger along the serrated edge
of the pastry. I could be anywhere,
listening to movement, picking out a theme 30
making up a prelude out of laughter
and summer breezes.
(FNP 237 – 238)

Here, Josephi works with different meanings of "reflection". First, the poem is a reflection on words and their evocation of times past, the 1920s perhaps. Although nostalgic longing for a different, more intimate form of contact is voiced in line 19, the mood becomes more joyful when the speaker interacts with a representation. As in other poems by Josephi, the glass pane which reflects the posters, and in which the speaker is reflected, is both real and metaphorical. The sunny hue of the reflected posters brightens the speaker's world, freeing her from the nostalgic weight of her European past: autumnal "milky blue / sunlight" is caught in reflection in the café window and transformed by the vivid posters. As a paradigm, "reflections" (line 24) describes a transformative experience, the transportation of the speaker to a newly imagined place and time where *poiesis* can take place. Re-visioning allows her to reframe the previous "dream" and to select a new theme to suit her mood.

Josephi's speakers often occupy a liminal zone between melancholy and joy. They struggle to grasp elusive happiness by (re)producing optimistic, perhaps clichéd, words or images. Clearly, "serrated edge" (line 28) pertains to the feel and shape of the pastry, but if "serrated edge" is read as a paradigm, the protagonist's life choices come to the fore; she can press on the jagged "edges" or simply enjoy life's sweet pleasures. "I could be anywhere" (line 29), the speaker muses, "making up a prelude out of

laughter / and summer breezes" (lines 31–32). The mood is lifted; the sunny visual images allow a reframing that promotes the momentary joy of being a creative woman and frequent traveller.

In Josephi's "Homeland 2" (FNP 244), various representations shape the speaker's desire for travel, familiar poster images as well as abstract representations taken from poetry and philosophy:

> My room was covered with photos cut
> from airline calendars. I saw myself
> always arriving in, always leaving
> the beautiful spots of this earth,
> and *home* would be like trying to remember
> a word I once knew, in the past.
> Coming from the Rhine, it had to be rivers:
> the Amazon, the Mekong, the Nile. I drank in
> pictures of purple sunsets and nights of
> a brownish mauve, no clichés here, sat 10
> in the shade of temples, contemplated gates
> and golden domes, pulled at the threads
> of their history, wondering about my own,
> slowly tiring of the clear sky above.
> (Lines 1-14)

The unrhymed poem begins with a description of home from the child's point of view: "home" was a word to which no apparent nostalgia was attached. Later, the notion of permanency was simply left behind: "*home* would be like trying to remember / a word I once knew, in the past" (lines 5 – 6). Of interest here is the paradigmatic sliding between personal space and words; it recurs frequently in Josephi's work. Similarly, time slides back and forth, from present to past to future. The octet illustrates how speculations on the past and present interact to inform the speaker's future. Here, the use of the conditional, "would be", confirms that this reflection, distanced in time from the original experience or idea, is imagined. An earlier reflection is also confirmed: "I saw myself …" (line 2).

"Home" (the Rhineland) and "rivers" form a metonymical relationship in the journey narrative: "Coming from the Rhine, it had to be rivers: / the Amazon, the Mekong, the Nile" (lines 7 – 8). Continuity and contiguity are suggested in the synecdoche: one takes one's (idea of) home with one. Two discourses interact in the poem to suggest a reality that seems

uncertain unless one invokes other narratives, pilgrim tales or the legend of Ahasver, the lover doomed to wander forever.[75] Once, in the childhood bedroom, exotic texts provided a landscape in which the girl "drank in" foreign cultures (line 8), "sat" (10), "contemplated" (11) and "pulled at the threads / of their history" (lines 12 – 13). The lexical set connotes inactivity, and contrasts the speaker's immobility with her nomadic desire, with the last group suggesting her growing impatience and need to discover and deconstruct what lay behind the images. The mixed metaphor (poster/weaving) in "pulled at the threads" (line 12), although somewhat clichéd, allows 'history' to be read as a paradigm, and a contrast between personal and supposedly impersonal worlds can be made. Confinement to one bedroom in which the girl "contemplated" the airline calendar pictures "cut" from their contexts, is opposed to her future life as a (real) traveler with little time to stay in one place. The reflection on a reflection paradigm familiar from "Yellow Posters" is repeated here: "saw myself / always arriving in, always leaving" (lines 2 – 3).

Towards the end of the poem, two more verbs in the present continuous form, "wondering" (with its echo of "wandering") and "tiring" form a parallel that reinforces the sense of restlessness and dissatisfaction on the speaker's part. A loose parallel formed by the two noun groups describing times of day, "nights of / a brownish mauve" (lines 9 – 10) and "clear sky above" (line 14), confirm this connection, with the speaker longing to replace the "cliché" of the "clear sky" with the more interesting colours of the night. A double intertextual reference links the "brownish" nights with Josephi's own poem, "Nietzsche's Last Train Ride" (FNP 205 – 206), and through this work to *Ecce Homo*. Indeed, Josephi's Nietzsche poem contains direct quotations from the philosopher's work. Thus the landscape of "Homeland 2" is rendered more complex along with the point of view, so that it is difficult to know whether the poet is relating the truth about the speaker's cultural experience or producing yet another textual representation (reflection) of a journey narrative, which, like the previously discussed "Ithaca", derives meaning from the series of representations preceding it.

[75] Josephi thus contests traditional 'survival' narratives. In these tales, the heroic European explorer always returns 'home' (see Pratt 87).

Josephi's mix of personal recount, references to the visual media and Nietzschean poetry and philosophy creates a tension between seducing (bringing close) and distancing the reader, whom Josephi has already warned from the first line of the "Homeland" cycle: "This is a poem not an autobiography" (Part I, FNP 243).

Josephi's reflective speakers make no overt attempts to effect positive change in the world that they observe beyond the window. In the aforementioned "Arrival", the speaker gradually accepts difference, but no indication is given that revolutionary action will follow understanding. The (warped) "wooden frame" can be read as a paradigm, and the emphatic "could not" suggests the speaker's powerlessness to effect change. (Belated) reaction is privileged over (timely) action, and the lost hope and nostalgic longing evoked earlier in the poem could be ironic or Romantic: "where my hopes / for a lavish arrival were as senseless / as a longing for chestnuts to flower in December" (lines 23 - 25).[76] The dactylic rhythm in line 25 echoes the elegiac form and, combined with the familiar signifier "longing", the speaker's Romantic attachment to Paris as a paradise lost is confirmed. Towards the end of the poem, "longing" recurs: "our greatest need / the longing for light, the desire for peace" (lines 57-58). Here, the possessive "our" introduces a general projection of social needs. Kristeva's suggestion, that the longing for a 'we' is symptomatic of a fragile culture under rapid change (2008: 140), is pertinent to "Arrival", where the speaker struggles to construct a sense of belonging to protect her from perceived personal danger. Ironic references to existing cultural, political and religious traditions underline the detachment and distance Kristeva describes (141).

As the speaker of "Arrival" reflects on travel and the ambiguous nature of belonging, the reader is left uncertain whether the second instance of "longing" is ironic. The line and the stanza end with the signifier "peace", which is rhythmically stressed. Pleasure can be derived from a familiar, 'Utopian' closure, even when it is understood that human society's propensity for violence is unlikely to change (Eagleton 1986: 179). Predictably, however, Josephi follows her universalizing statement by a

[76] Pratt describes Paris's potential as a paradise, a 'bulging cornucopia, a place of endless, exotic variety and plenty' (1992: 192). Josephi presents and contests the Utopic view.

reflective question: "What else have I not said in this poem?" The simple query leads us to expect a genuine response: the speaker reflects on her immediate desires, "trust in mankind" and the "good-looking young man" (line 62). The automatic privileging of "man" furthers the confrontation with a hierarchy in which the female is subordinated to the other, or perhaps the Other iconized in the "talisman" from Notre Dame.

Socio-cultural consumption, discussed in the chapter "Joy and Desire", appears in a form Baudrillard might call a 'caricatural' resurrection of a vanished paradise (1970: 147). In "Joy and Desire", the "longing" to be elsewhere in time and place is elaborated in line with Tuan's 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' living: the 'authentic' individual relies on actions rather than mementoes to support a solid sense of identity and, by contrast, in the lives of those caught up in 'inauthentic' experience, the missing stability is provided by 'cultural relics' (1977: 201). In "Arrival", the construction of joy is revealed as problematic: the speaker attempts to negotiate a path between outdated cultural beliefs and practices, and a new way of being which is responsible, although not easy and joyful. Attracted to Paris by the expectation that nothing changes there, she is confronted with the truth that everything must change, even her belief in established cultural icons. Read as a paradigmatic space, the Paris hotel window marks a threshold. Inside, the speaker settles for living with an acceptable degree of discomfort: "The room would be warm enough" (line 69). Ultimately, she must accept her previous construction of joy as a sign of nostalgic "longing". Even the Arab's gift of wine, while affirmed as a small revolutionary act, is ironic: the woman is probably forbidden to drink alcohol. Obvious solutions are rejected in "Arrival", and "wooden frame" might best be read as a paradigm for society's many faulty constructions and representations. The social reproduction of knowledge, the representation of self and other, must expand to include a broad understanding of difference: meanwhile, one can observe with gratitude the small joys of social interaction that bridge cultural distance. By contrast, joy in the poetry of Yeats and Harwood is often produced through the confident affirmation of hierarchies and belief

systems. Difference and repetition are further explored in the following chapter, “Joy and Rebirth”.

The Production of Joy

Joy and Rebirth

This chapter deals with poems in which Yeats and Harwood recycle the structures and metaphors of particular 'grand narratives' to represent rebirth as an ongoing process. How do these poems produce joy? And for whom? Following Braidotti (2006), I point out that 'allegedly universal ideas' are based on familiar 'tales' (83). Such 'tales' may be flawed because they privilege the rights and 'truths' of certain groups and individuals over others: they are, however, effective in acknowledging pain, loss, mourning and nostalgic yearning, and they open a process whereby suffering can become an expression of the 'affirmative power of Life' (84). Braidotti argues against 'heroic' thinking, and suggests that people today need to detach themselves humbly from 'familiar and cherished forms of identity' (2006: 83). Yet her metaphor of 'the quest' (for a new way to conceptualize global ethics) is appropriated from a very old story.

My professional experience with young adults influences my view, which aligns somewhat with David Tacey's, that a new generation is changing the focus from 'politics' to 'spirituality' in its desire to 'shift present unhappiness into future happiness' (71). Tacey argues against organized religion, which rejects the 'heart' of faith that would 'keep its forms supple and full of life' (34). Religion, he writes, builds defenses against ideas that threaten to disrupt it, and fails to 'revitalize' its creative core. Yet poets such as Yeats see such disruptions as 'blows for freedom and as advances of the human spirit' (35). While I cannot ignore Yeats's political ambitions and affiliations, I agree with Tacey that 'revitalization' is a key concern today. How do we, as Braidotti asks, 'mobilize' affectivity and compensate for the pain of loss at a time of rapid change? (2006: 83) My detailed analyses of poems by Yeats

and Harwood focus on the passionate language they use, and on their repetitions of and divergences from familiar narratives. Joy might, at least, be produced in poetry.

Josephi draws freely from familiar 'tales', but recycling usually serves an ironic purpose in her poetry. In "My Heraldic Animal Speaks", for example, Josephi appropriates from Saint Francis, both including herself as the speaker – the textual and literal 'bed'/bed – and distancing herself from the "metaphysics" of existing cultural objects, to which she alludes in "Cutting Up Heidegger". Focus is brought to the way parody works to interrogate familiar texts and to allow for the creation of new 'bodies' of text. Thus 'rebirth' is better understood in the cultural context elaborated in "Joy and Text". In the final section of this chapter, however, the analysis of two poems by Josephi elucidates similarities and differences between her treatment of the rebirth theme and that of Yeats and Harwood.

Central to this chapter, indeed to the whole project, is poetry's role to ensure that new beginnings continue to be brought to the fore so that hope and joy might, at least momentarily, replace human anguish. Birth forms part of the process of biological regeneration: rebirth may be understood as the result of asexual reproduction, and a metaphorical connection is easily made between the two processes. My critical approach relies on Ricoeur's understanding of the capacity of metaphorical language to 'sketch' the processes of life, while letting the 'energies' of reference and meaning unfold beyond the limitations of the original referential field (1998: 354). Poetry as a language of feeling promotes the possibility of participating in multiple worlds and evolving truths (Ricoeur 2003: 290).

I use psychoanalysis as a tool to open up the transformational possibilities of the poetry under study, taking up Kristeva's idea that poetry exerts a healing power that in some ways exceeds that of psychoanalysis (1989: 82). Poetry has the capacity to overturn loss and melancholia, creating a re-flowering within 'the economy of a resurrection' (160). Thematic matter and elements of poetic composition, Kristeva contends, promote the transformation of woe into lyrical song, offered to humankind as 'a temporary salvation' (170). Kristeva, like Lacan, conceptualizes the

role of language along Freudian lines as the reinstatement of the object that is absent, lacking and constantly desired, be it mother, beloved, or death itself. Is not metaphor, Lacan asks, 'an effect of positive meaning, that is, a certain passage from the subject to the meaning of the desire?' (1977: 258) At the level of language, a rebirth takes place as the other is incorporated into meaning: 'in man and through man *it* speaks (*ça parle*) (and) his nature is woven by effects in which is to be found the structure of language, of which he becomes the material' (284).

Unlike the 'language' of other species, Lacan claims, human language allows an intersubjective fusion of self and other: both are continually reinvested with a 'new reality' (1977: 85). Indeed, language is a body that traps all the corporeal images which 'capture' the subject (87). For Kristeva, this new body allows for an 'assimilation' of lost pieces into a new existence, a new poem. Interpretations may 'pile up or differ', but even uninformed readers can be caught up in the new rhythms and associations as the poem becomes the site of an inspired triumph over the fundamental melancholia deriving from loss (1989: 158).

In agreement with Kristeva that art can act as a powerful intervention, Gabriele Schwab takes up Nietzsche's idea that artists are '"productive, to the extent that they actually alter and transform'" (2001: 160). The product, in this case the literary 'object', Schwab argues, allows for a merging of cultural and psychic, inner and outer worlds. Some texts, Schwab contends, embed distancing devices such as self-reflexivity to 'induce' an abstract, distant and reflective reception: others use a variety of strategies to 'guide' readers' responses, to draw them into the world of the text and 'to generate a strong psychic cathexis' (162). Yeats and Harwood, I argue, draw readers into their poetic worlds, where the acceptance of loss and its transformation to joy appear possible.

What gives poetry its 'drawing' power? Derrida (1995) suggests that the poem is different from normal speech because it invites readers to remember it: one would like to learn it by heart (291), to hold it, keep it and understand it (293). Indeed, poetry 'teaches us the heart' (295). Derrida does not mean 'the heart' as a physical object, nor as an object of European

philosophy, nor for that matter as the 'heart' of the Scriptures. Poems escape all bodies and boundaries, and attach themselves 'to any word at all, to the thing, living or not' (299). In other words, poets as creators are free to follow their hearts, to play with variations as musicians might do. Working with the musical paradigm, Gadamer claims that the poem both continues to respond to the shattered echoes of the past, and to go beyond to create its own 'mythopoetic incantation' (1992: 89).

Because it embeds affect, contrast, synthesis and change in an ongoing productive process, poetry continually re-enacts its potential to produce joy (Goodchild 1996: 39). Thus joy and rebirth might be expressed as parts of a propagation process, in which poets bring positive immanent and transcendent relationships to the fore. Certain selections of content and form provide assurance of continued propagation. Thematic selections, for example, may reassure readers that the earth and its species will survive: through engagement in the process Gadamer calls 'continual reacquisition' poets affirm the survival of language as well. For this purpose, all oral and religious traditions once required that texts be memorized, and for some writers (and readers) specific religious vocabulary still transmits 'an eschatological atmosphere' and exerts political and social influence (1992: 88). This is certainly the case for Yeats.

Wendy Brown investigates loss and melancholia from a political perspective and contends that it is futile to attach to a particular ideal when it is failing, to live 'burdened' by attachment to the lost object, rather than to seize the 'possibilities for radical change in the present' (in Eng & Kajanzian eds. 2002: 458 - 459). Judith Butler (1997) questions the kinds of influence texts exert on people's lives. Weaving together Althusser's theory of 'interpellation', psychoanalysis, and Foucault's model that substitutes the body for the psyche, Butler develops the theory that people yield to the call of the text, to its metaphors and analogies, because they have a 'narcissistic attachment' to their continuing existence (113). She wonders if there is a way to resist or reverse signification, to rebel against the law that monopolizes the subject's identity in this persistent economy of attachment (1997: 130). This chapter examines how poetry might work, sometimes

against the law and often within it, to change or to affirm the way in which readers feel about their 'continuing existence'.

Yeats's poetry, writes Seamus Heaney, 'rebels at limit' and 'outstrips' the lived conditions of the day even as it observes them: for humans to bring about 'the most radiant conditions for themselves to inhabit', poetry needs to be 'transformative' and not merely a 'printout of the given circumstances of its time and place' (1993: 17). Heaney is about to introduce Yeats's "The Man and the Echo", a poem written 'in extremis' as the speaker faces death (19). The poem is cited in "Joy and Travel". Yeats's poetry, I argue, works to elicit both a political and a personal response in the face of loss: Harwood's concerns are usually more immediate. Both poets call for a continual re-structuring, a re-birthing, in response to human experience, social and political needs and cultural propagation. This chapter takes up the key arguments of "Joy and Text" and further elaborates how certain poems provide dynamic spaces of change, in which the melancholia of separation is overcome in the language of joy and rebirth.

Yeats at the tomb

In "A General Introduction for my Work" Yeats credits Lady Gregory with singling out Shri Purohit Swami as the man who might know "'the secrets of the ages'" (MW 384). During 1931, as Yeats worked collaboratively with the Indian monk, scholar and philosopher to translate the sacred Vedic writings for publication in English, he refined his earlier understandings of how joy might be produced. Yeats and the Swami corresponded frequently between 1931 and 1939, and a close relationship developed between them (McKay 16 – 33). According to Roslyn MacKay, Yeats found the collaboration enormously productive and drew increasingly on the Upanishads to write poems about rebirth into a state of bliss (149). From the western perspective, peace could only be attained at the cost of warfare or death, but Yeats began to understand how he could use Vedic content to write poetry that would promote joyous detachment over fear.

That Yeats appropriated material from the Upanishads is not surprising. The texts were familiar to his Golden Dawn circle and there was a prevalent

if mistaken belief in Ireland that, as the Celtic language was once widely spoken, it must have originated from an ancient source such as Sanskrit (Matthews, Caitlin & Matthews, John 1994). The Silk Road to northern India was thought to have furthered communication between east and west, and the wisdom of Indian religious thought was widely acknowledged. A century earlier, quasi-religious sects such as the *Illuminati* had spread throughout Germany. One of the associates of the influential poet Goethe, August Wilhelm Schlegel, believed that Sanskrit works challenged the Greek classics in power and passion. Henry Hatfield points out that another friend, the scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt, studied Sanskrit along with Greek (205). Goethe, whose ongoing collaboration with the philosophers Schiller and Schelling had provided impetus for the legendary Jena Romantic movement, privileged Indian resurrection mysteries over traditional Christian narratives in meditative, erotic works such as the "West-östliche Divan" cycle (Hatfield 223). Here, Goethe suggested that men in their old age experienced a mysterious and intense longing as they prepared to die and be reborn. Goethe's new inscription of sensuality, the aesthetic sense and rationality was acknowledged by Yeats as exceptional in, for example, "William Blake and the Imagination" (MW 352), "The Celtic Element in Literature" (MW 370) and "Per Amica Silentia Lunae" (MW 414) where Yeats compares Indian and Christian ways of dealing with desire, disappointment and defeat. Further, in the aforementioned "A General Introduction for my Work" (1937), Yeats quotes the Upanishads and makes comparisons between Celtic legends, images of 'Persian fire-worship' and the myths of Olympus (MW 380-381).

Through myth, the Romantics sought to trace the poet's Orphic journey through space and time to a source in the womb of nature. The mythic journey, described by the German poet Hölderlin as passing through the forge of the 'holy fire', resulted in imaginative poetry that imparted little about the actual faiths of Greece and Asia and much more about the poet-prophet's 'ecstatic merger' with the other (Rigby 181). Heroic encounters were always of interest to Yeats.[77] He states in "The Celtic Element in

[77] Ramazani sees Yeats's Asian interests as much deeper than mere Orientalism: Yeats understands

Literature" (1897) that literature 'dwindles to a mere chronicle of circumstance, or passionless phantasies, … unless it is constantly flooded with the passions and beliefs of ancient times'; Celtic legends open 'a more abundant fountain than any in Europe' (MW 376). Yeats, his interest already fueled by diverse literary and human sources, incorporated his encounters with Shri Purohit Swami into certain poems in *A Full Moon in March*. Published in 1935, this collection contained the "Supernatural Songs" cycle, built around a series of conflicts and resolutions. In previous rebirth narratives Yeats had drawn on Swedenborg, whose visions had influenced Blake (see "Swedenborg, Mediums, Desolate Places", in George Yeats ed.). Yet Yeats found many seminal works, including Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, too melancholic, and he continued to search for narratives in which tragedy was transformed into joy.

Through the rebirth process Yeats elucidates in *A Vision*, man's knowledge and desires are brought into balance, if only temporarily. The *Daimon* (she) possesses 'the dark of the mind'; a man's passion makes the *Daimon*'s power 'luminous' so that she creates 'a very personal form of heroism or of poetry' (MW 429). A similar change process supposedly takes place at every level; one tendency waxes as the other wanes. The Christian era is 'primary', that is, 'looking beyond itself to a transcendent power' and 'levelling, unifying, feminine, humane, peace its means and end': this 'feminine' era was nevertheless born from the chaotic 'body' of the east in an evolving antithetical process (MW 440). The same process affects not only human relationships, but also language, which need not be limited by historical 'truth'.

For Yeats, it seemed possible that the seminal texts of different cultures (St Patrick's Confessions, the Upanishads, Platonism) shared the same 'floating debris' of ideas and, when compared, could reveal unlikely linguistic borrowings ("A General Introduction for my Work", MW 382). Prior to the extensive use of language, tree and ascendancy symbols were common to eastern and western tribal cultures. Important tribal rituals centred on burial were reintroduced into the Golden Dawn and other hermetic sects

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colonization and uses poetry rich in paradox, irony and metaphor to articulate the 'productive' tensions and 'ambiguities' of 'cultural in-betweenness' (2001: 6).

with the intention to extend life in real and metaphorical terms. Yeats completed the Golden Dawn examinations and rose to its highest rank. Members of similar secret sects studied processes such as alchemy, meditated on certain symbols and studied esoteric works unavailable to the wider public in the belief that the human mind, body and spirit could attain balance and perfection on earth. In " A General Introduction for my Work", Yeats states that he wants Europeans to find 'something attractive' in a Druidic Christ, who combines elements of Dante's notion of the Unity of Being as the perfect body, Blake's concept of the imagination and the Self of the Upanishads, 'flowing, concrete, phenomenal' (MW 384). Such a presence would change from age to age and be immanent rather than transcendent.

The Mundaka Upanishad describes rebirth through a series of sexual metaphors: sage meets spirit, phallus penetrates vaginal opening, and good and evil are annulled in an infinite unity of being (Mackay 95). In Yeats's later poems, achieving oneness in the throes of fiery passion represents preparation for rebirth into the opposite state, the endless white silence reached in the twelfth and last of Yeats's "Supernatural Songs", *Meru*. Reproduction in Yeats's "Supernatural Songs", published in *A Full Moon in March* 1935, can be understood literally as the transmission of a strong genetic line and metaphysically as the transfer of important knowledge. The first of the songs, "*Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn*" (MW 149) provides a vehicle for Yeats's incorporation of eclectic elements into a cohesive whole. Echoing Blake's vision of twin souls entwined in death and the Celtic *Liebestod* allegory, "*Ribh at the Tomb"* assumes certain knowledge. The listener "need not speak" of the Baile and Aillinn narrative, which was popular at the time, having been printed in several versions during the Irish Revival period. Indeed, Yeats wrote the preface to Lady Gregory's "Cuchulain" published in 1902, which gave a brief outline of the Baile and Aillinn story as part of a saga of ongoing dynastic conflict. Yeats claims that O'Curry, the well-known folk tale collector and poet, appropriated Lady Gregory's Baile and Aillinn narrative: "The apple tree of high Aillinn, / The yew of Baile of little land, / Though they are put into lays, / Rough people

do not understand" (in Gregory 2001: 351). Gregory's "Cuchulain" alludes to an important family line and O'Curry's poem highlights the deeper meaning behind the familiar tale, which might be understood only by the refined and subtle mind. The ground had been prepared for Yeats's rewriting of the rebirth narrative.

Yeats based his first "Baile and Aillinn" on Kennedy's version of the lovers' rebirth in the flames of passion. The 1903 poem ends with the cutting of writing tablets from the apple and the yew trees, which sprout from the lovers' graves. Kennedy's story continues: the bards bring a tablet from each tree to the king, but these spring together and cannot be parted (Alspach, Russell 407). Crucially, Yeats's first "Baile and Aillinn" provides commentary and contextualization in italicized verses. Yet an opening allows the insertion of new layers of meaning into the tale previously thought closed: the concluding lines allude to the legend as the genesis of "All the love stories" (line 197) recorded in Irish folk tales. Yeats's poem ends: "*never yet / Has lover lived, but longed to wive / Like them that are no more alive*" (lines 205 - 207). The combination of archaic verb and perfect rhyme *wive-alive* emphasizes the importance of the female partner, and overturns an established association between the archetypal feminine principle and death.

Joyous (re)birth is reflected not only in the content, but also in the structure and tropes of "*Ribh at the Tomb"* (Dunseath, T.K. 1961). Yeats further teases out the metaphysics of the famous lovers' miraculous union and immortal joy. Sacred places and indeed language itself evoked powerful rituals of eternal renewal for Yeats, and the new title foregrounds the magical site of intercourse and interaction. The narrative element of the yew and apple tablets is absent, suggested instead in vibrant things: the lovers themselves, the forest, and the radiant book. Yeats builds the poem carefully over twenty-seven lines, the number suggesting the moment before the beginning of a new two thousand year cycle, the twenty-eighth 'gyre'. Since ten is considered to be a magical number of completion, a partial closure is suggested in the tenth line of the final stanza (line 26), but the eleventh and final line eschews a simple response to an earlier question:

"With open book you ask me what I do" (line 2); "therein / I turn the pages of my holy book" (lines 26-27). Yeats believed that spiritual intercourse released what humans perceived as incandescence: 'the phantoms are stung to a keener delight from a concord between their luminous pure vehicle and our strong senses' ("Per Amica Silentia Lunae" MW 420). Thus "therein" refers spatially to the lovers' circle of light, by which the sensual monk can read and meditate. In so doing, he shares the metaphysical embrace in a 'vision' more powerful than book learning.

The opening to spiritual transformation through the monk's vision "Made aquiline" is established in lines 22-24. Like the eagle, the monk stares into the light, but the brilliance is interrupted, "broken by the leaves". His transient experience falls short of the lovers' complete embrace, whose fruitfulness is suggested in a metaphor borrowed from the original Celtic legend: the "juncture of the apple and the yew" (line 8). In seven lines of blank verse, Yeats's central stanza describes the perfected achievement of love and the consequent rebirth:

> Transfigured to pure substance what had once
> Been bone and sinew; when such bodies join
> There is no touching here, nor touching there,
> Nor straining joy, but whole is joined to whole;
> For the intercourse of angels is a light
> Where for its moment both seem lost, consumed.
> (Lines 11-16)

The conjunction of the physical spaces "here" and "there" in "whole joined to whole" contrasts markedly with the deliberately odd "straining joy" (line 14). Emphasis falls on "strain" in the adjective "straining", which connotes excessive effort and pulling in opposite directions; human sex is constituted as a brief resolution to the conflict that plagues the living. Unlike the supernatural love of Baile and Aillinn celebrated under the sacred "leaf and twig" (line 7), human pleasure does not endure. Part of the earthly realm of "bone and sinew" (line 12), it hints at death and melancholy rather than joyous rebirth.

As in the earlier poem "Solomon and the Witch", the emotive language of "*Ribh at the Tomb"* asks "listeners" to engage in silent dialogue with the

narrator and the texts he 'revives', to enter the supernatural world of the poem through the imagination as though it were still to hold true. The monk's authority and his ownership of the story, "my tale", are emphasized: Rhib's version should be marked, digested and carried "afar" by his faithful listeners (line 3). The circular structure of the poem, the importance of reading the holy book, and the narrator's parallel vision mark the significance of Ribh's story. Its passionate content contrasts markedly with Biblical narratives, where acts of the flesh cause tragedy and separation from God (see 2 Corinthians 5: 6). Only death brings humankind into the presence and judgment of the Other. Crucially, Baile and Aillinn defy death in their endless intercourse.

In "*Ribh at the Tomb",* Yeats incorporates Swedenborgian narrative elements: angelic beings are not separate from each other like humans; everything in their realm is shimmering, changing, joyful and ageless, for angels reveal 'their right appearance' in the heavenly light (in Yeats, G. ed. 39). But the tight structure of "*Rhib at the Tomb*" reveals a new focus: 'By investing all possible states of Baile and Aillinn (physical selves, legendary creations, and angelic creators) with words eliciting the generative act, Yeats has provided the rationale which enables him to merge the three modes of the lovers' experience into one' (Dunseath 409). Language allows the joy of creation to be shared by both spirits and bodies. By reading the book and recording the vision, Ribh enters into the communion of "pure substance" enjoyed by the legendary lovers, and is reborn through 'his' tale.

Dramatic movement from darkness into light echoes the dreamlike, transcendent experience of Jacob's divine encounter (Genesis 28: 10-15). In "*Ribh at the Tomb",* "pure substance" is synonymous with radiance, but for Rhib the light is "somewhat broken by the leaves" (line 25). Dunseath interprets the broken light as a metaphor suggesting the creative mind's inability to see directly into creation: to do so would require pure subjectivity and the absence of logical perception, of book knowledge and most importantly of language. The synecdoche "leaves" serves then as a rich paradigm, suggesting the pages of the numerous books already written about the lovers. From the monk's viewpoint, the leaves/"leaves" partially

block the purified light of the embrace and therefore mar his full participation. Nevertheless, the space of interference between earth and heaven promotes the rewriting of key narratives, such as the 'Tree of Temptation' story. The whole Ribh poem may be read as a reinstatement of more promising rebirth myths, productive of transcendent and immanent joys.

Language through its power to re-present is able to revive joys that are no longer experienced, and Rhib's "holy book" remains behind as a testimony to the miraculous experience. An earthier interpretation of "*Ribh at the Tomb"* might draw, however, on similarities between Ribh and other Yeatsian characters like the hermit of "The Wild Old Wicked Man" (1938). Unable to engage in sexual acts, he is still able to achieve ecstasy in the fulfilment of imaginative fantasies.[78] Yeats around the age of seventy became attracted to twenty-seven year old Margot Ruddock, the 'crazed' poet and dancer discussed in the chapter "Joy and Madness", and took up the Tantric path to divinity at a time when he felt his own potency dwindling. Like Yeats, the monkish speaker of "*Ribh at the Tomb"* takes on the important role of narrating the supernatural sexual experience.

Through Rhib and within the space of the poem, Yeats is able to inscribe his lasting conviction that rebirth is possible through the achievement of unity of being: in this state, sexual unity fuels spiritual knowledge and creative production in an eternally joyous cycle. Indeed, into the dramatic encounter between the living monk and the ghosts may be read parallels between life and art, man and mask. Yeats had suggested the theme earlier in "Per Amica Silentia Lunae" (MW 410-422), which describes the relationship between the human, Daemon and spirits of the dead as the problematic attraction of opposites. Great work is born from the inner struggle between human and Daemon, who 'feed the hunger in one another's hearts' (414). When all human desires are fulfilled in the artist, the resulting work is 'hollow' (410), but the Daemon seeking its opposite brings 'all the man most lacks, and it may be dreads' (414). For 'the man', death is the dreaded other, while the dead yearn to use the energy of the

[78] According to Joseph Hassett, Dr Norman Haire performed the Steinach operation on Yeats in 1934. Yeats's sexual desire increased, but his impotence probably remained (2010: 169).

living to rekindle their passion and thus repeat the process of rebirth (420). They mould event and circumstance to suit that opportunity, in the case of Baile and Aillinn, each year on the anniversary of their deaths. A Yeatsian version of the Trinity in this instance might represent the artwork, the "holy book", as the 'child' born of the ecstatic, supernatural union, for words used by the right artist could not only reinstate that which was lost but also exceed the previous limitations of language.

In "Supernatural Songs" III, *Rhib in Ecstasy* (MW 149-150), the "broken" light metaphor of "*Rhib at the Tomb"* is clearly paralleled with language: ecstatic Rhib can only attempt to describe his strange experience in "broken sentences". Listeners have to use their own imaginations in order to fill the gaps. Nevertheless, as Mackay contends (104), Yeats draws on the Upanishads here to voice through Rhib a brief experience of profane completion: "My soul had found / All happiness in its own cause or ground. / Godhead on Godhead in sexual spasm begot / Godhead" ("*Ribh in Ecstasy"*, lines 3-6). Repetition, full rhymes, and an increasingly accented rhythm recreate mounting orgasmic tension, followed by release (dénouement). Amorous cries beneath the holy circle of light contrast strongly with "the common round" of daily language and earthly duties. The eight lines of "*Rhib in Ecstasy"* suggest in a tantalizing manner the superhuman existence beyond, which exceeds the human drama, here, now, below. Fittingly, the next poem in the cycle is entitled "There" and each of the four lines inscribes absence as stasis: the eternal "quiet" beyond the present time in the snow caves of the highest peaks constitutes the locus of a very different joy.

Productive and exciting, transformational narratives are the kind of writing for which humans long: many western narratives written during the Christian period are unable to fulfill people's desire for analogies which inspire passion even as they 'evade(s) the intellect' ("Per Amica Silentia Lunae" MW 415). In the first "Baile and Aillinn" (1903), Yeats is careful to establish in line 13 that the time is concurrent with the birth of Christ: Yeats's re-writing aims to breathe new life into tired stories of mystic marriage and dynastic generation. The familiar Biblical story of the Annunciation (Luke 1: 26-38), for example, gives no indication of Mary's

emotional and physical experiences during the miraculous impregnation. It is merely stated that she receives news of her conception, which is compared with the unusual pregnancy of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. For emotional impact, it would be necessary to turn from the Bible to a sculpture or a painting; Yeats preferred William Blake's paintings and poems and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's art (MW 356). In Rossetti's radical Annunciation (*Ecce Ancilla Domini*), Mary recoils in terror from the angel.

Yeats's sonnet "Leda and the Swan" (MW 112) is full of drama. Using the third person narrative voice, Yeats reframes the well-known classical myth so that the female actor and her transformative role in the birthing of a new era become the subject. Leda, seized by the overpowering lover, feels initial terror rather than joy, yet there is an opening to the *mysterium tremendum* at the moment of chance, when the questioning mind is stilled and the body is rendered helpless. The final lines of the octet record this brief pause in the space of a breath: "And how can body, laid in that white rush, / But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?" The dramatic hiatus between confrontation and resolution constitutes the supreme moment of Leda's rebirth, yet in a typical Yeatsian move, what is felt is posed as a question rather than stated as a given. It seems that the "strange heart beating" is that of the mighty swan, but it could belong to Leda or the reader. Yeats's poem has qualities that Schwab describes as 'transformational': it generates 'an enhanced emotional and cognitive resonance' and asks readers to 'extend (their) self-boundaries' (2001: 168). As a 'resonating object' (Schwab 169), "Leda and the Swan" recuperates traces of the past and shares them with readers, compelled through the visceral impact of Yeats's language to imagine the "strange" encounter and experience the sensation of powerlessness mixed with potency felt in the body.

Opening the store of dreams and allegories to new writings, Yeats calls up a power that can change the course of history.[79] He suggests in his essay "William Blake and the Imagination" that allegory, and to an even

[79] In Joseph Hassett's reading of "Leda", Yeats links Maud Gonne's 'penchant for violence' and her 'unnatural beauty' with the 'divine violence' that caused the birth of Helen and the destruction of Troy (2010: 93).

greater extent symbolism, provide the language by which the soul in a trance or while asleep communicates directly with the divine (MW 352-353). The most powerful stories induce a strong *frisson* in which pleasure is tinged with fear in the reader's imagination, and such is the case in "Leda and the Swan". As observers of the violence through Yeats's eyes, we inevitably become complicit with it. The description of the brutal rape calls forth an unwanted erotic response and at the same time empathy, while the mind registers the many foundational narratives in which tragic sacrifice brings about systemic rebirth. Leda is no ordinary victim. In Yeats's own 'system', profane perfection is reached at phase 15, where the gyre pauses briefly before moving on again. Yeats suggests that, at the crucial turning point, rupture might bring hope and even rapture: "Did she put on his knowledge with his power …?" The verb "put on" usually connotes the physical act of changing clothes: here the "put(ting) on" is metaphorical, and the tension between action and abstraction reveals the chance that Leda's being is changed intellectually and spiritually as much as physically. The last stanza indicates that Yeats is looking back in time: the rape is a familiar, necessary intervention.

Yeats successfully inscribes his own belief that 'passionate language', as he calls it, has the same power as a strong painting to effect rebirth. It incorporates suffering, brutality and even death, and transforms these human experiences within the joyous work. In *A Vision* Book V, "Dove or Swan", Yeats claims that he rejects 'Roman magnificence, with its glorification of physical power' in favour of early Byzantium, where artists could turn 'a murderous madness in the mob' into 'a lovely flexible presence like that of a perfect human body' (MW 441). Certainly in "Leda and the Swan" the 'body' of the poem 'remembers' (to use Kristeva's metaphor) the myth of impregnation, and permits an intimate interrogation of the suffering-ecstasy binary. Such a poem brings about an 'attunement' in the reader and facilitates a dynamic, transformational encounter, a 'temporary fusion of cultural and psychic processes' (Schwab 173).

Yeats's later poetry influenced by Upanishadic teaching is, as previously stated, more contemplative. Promoting the inner quest to resolve

the struggle between mind and body, it establishes the joy of continual rebirth. At this stage of his life, Yeats expressed concern that poetry had been used and misused for political purposes.[80] A tone of regret permeates "The Apparitions" (CP 178); yet the poet also suggests that, with age, "strength" and joy increase to allow detachment from the vicissitudes of life and defiance before death. Vanquishing nightmarish fears, age brings a sense of fullness: man's "empty heart is full at length". As the jaunty rhythm of "The Apparitions" suggests, the end allows an optimistic glimpse of the future. Indeed, "Night" is personified as the feminine Other, to whom the "empty heart" responds as it goes joyously towards its final embrace.

The conclusion of "Lapis Lazuli" (MW 154), published earlier in *New Poems*, shows a similar resistance to death: "Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes, / Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay." The lines sing themselves joyfully. The repetition of "eyes" and the stress on the diphthong of the final adjective "gay", combine to create an increasingly light, uplifting tone. The descriptor "ancient" might elsewhere suggest the passage of time and imminent death, but here it may be read in terms of resistance to death: the addition of "glittering" serves to enhance the eyes' vitality. Since "glittering" is often used to describe gold and precious stones, here perhaps the so-called 'philosopher's stone' lapis lazuli, attention is drawn to the timeless value of the secrets the eyes hold and reflect. Thus the metaphor relating the sense of sight to inner knowledge seems less clichéd than might be expected. Indeed, in his notes published with Lady Gregory's "Cuchulain", Yeats refers to the time prior to the age of humanism when people could still laugh at their fate, the gods and the heavens were of central importance, and imagination was 'all in all'. Yeats concludes that poetry holds and reflects like a wizard's gemstone this ancient 'habit of mind' (2001: 353). Laughter in the face of massive change, even death, is the resilient "strength" referred to in "The Apparitions".

Joy is attained, as Mackay shows in her comparison of Yeats's work and the Taittireeya Upanishad, in a state of quiet attention (137). Resigned

[80] Chaudhry contends that Yeats targeted his audiences carefully from the beginning. Any power lost through the democratic process, Yeats felt, could be regained through culture (2001: 14). It seems Yeats's sense of his own influence began to haunt him.

detachment is promoted in Yeats's later philosophical works, but his poems, as Foster states in the second volume of his comprehensive biography, are usually embedded in the dramatic life of the times. The Irish revolution and civil war, Yeats's supernatural investigations at the time of World War 1, even lyrics written just before his death, all bear the stamp of the poet's wide range of social and political concerns. Yeats exerts influence and performs for his public with an eye kept firmly on the future and how he will be 'reborn' in the memories of new generations. Nevertheless, his 'intellectual omnivorousness' means that preoccupations with real life are sifted through his poetic imagination: he adopts a 'multiplicity of voices from other spheres' to achieve his creative purpose (Foster 2003: xxi-xxii).

In the poem "An Acre of Grass" (*New Poems* 1938) Yeats represents his body and his body of work as indivisible: both are to be reborn. The noun "frenzy" and the verb "remake" in the third and fourth stanzas describe the creative energy and the work Yeats sees he is yet to do to join Shakespeare, Blake and Michelangelo in literary history. That the noun "frenzy" is repeated emphasizes its significance. Eternal rebirth for Yeats means constantly refining one's body of work so that it is remembered among the canon of unforgettable texts. Yet ego is superseded in the end: joy is distilled from passionate detachment, the freedom from distractions, the absence of desire and the mute acceptance of the truth that change is inevitable.

Yeats's last poems such as "The Gyres" (MW 152), affirm that humans enjoy their greatest creativity when the gyres are about to turn. The appropriate attitude to relentless change is described at the end of the first stanza: "We that look on but laugh in tragic joy". Constant tension and resolution further the artistic process until in the end there is only one response: "'Rejoice'" (line 16). "What matter" is repeated four times, finally as an exclamation: "What matter!" (line 18) and the whole structure of "The Gyres" serves to subvert stories based on linear time. The artist must "disinter" possibilities so that the new cycle is constructed upon the strongest elements of the old: "From marble of a broken sepulchre / Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl, / or any rich, dark nothing" (lines 20-22).

For Yeats, the transformational process put in motion by art and artist is both real and metaphorical. He explains in a letter to Ethel Mannin (11.12. 1936) that he dreads being stymied and misrepresented by government; he needs the freedom to drive whatever political change, even revolution, he believes necessary to create a positive future (MW 470). In the same letter, however, he praises the detached wisdom of Shri Purohit Swami and the capacity for constant self-scrutiny that he (Yeats) as a poet and politician strives to emulate.

In "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (*Last Poems* MW 180 – 181), Yeats shows how "masterful images" allow the transformation of banal events and street language into an enchanting and memorable "dream". Finally with old age comes the realization that "those things that they were emblems of" constitute the archaeological stratum from which the evolving future emerges:

> Those masterful images because complete
> Grew in pure mind but out of what began?
> A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
> Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
> Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
> Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone
> I must lie down where all the ladders start
> In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.
> (Part III, lines 33 - 40)

The verb "must" suggests the urgent obligations and limitations of old age. Before death, Yeats reflects on his Jacob-like ascent as a writer and statesman, but his greatest desire is not for more public accolades, but for love. As in the aforementioned "Politics", the heart triumphs over the head as the poet prepares for rebirth.

Lazarus!

In this section, I contend in line with Harold Bloom that 'strong' poets reinstate catastrophe and restore the potential of the abyss: their poems should be read as studies of birth or rebirth rather than death (1982: 17). Bloom draws on texts by Freud, Pascal, Kirkegaard, Dostoevsky, Schopenhauer, the Gnostics and the Kabbalists to describe the first 'great

trope' of the shattering, when darkness was overpowered by light (64). Bloom cites Blake and Yeats as among those 'creationists' who re-inscribe the sacred texts in which the beginning appears as a double paradigm: a 'perpetual war of light against light' and a form of writing so powerful and concentrated that it shatters that which precedes it. In this act of substitution, the original pattern yields to a more chaotic one, which nevertheless remains a pattern (Bloom 1984: 41).

Yeats's *A Vision* conceptualizes struggle in a similar way, and many of Yeats's poems suggest that the artist must shatter and renew to participate in the rebirth of the world. Yet for Bloom Yeats's 'syncretic' system defies common expectations: 'who could have prophesied that Yeats would range himself with the Apollonian against the Dionysian?' (1970: 310). Bloom obviously finds it odd that Yeats strove continually to produce an ordered system from the lived chaos he so often claimed as the inspiration for his poetry. Indeed, Yeats himself describes all 'mechanical theory' as obsolete and his own system as 'harsh geometry' and 'incomplete' ("A General Introduction for my Work", MW 384). Bloom concedes that Yeats's cyclic impulse always oscillates between objectivity and subjectivity, which are interdependent rather than opposed. Thus, like Jung, the poet exerts a 'therapeutic' role because he seeks to inscribe a 'restoration' of humankind to its 'unfallen' state (Bloom 1970: 220).

The same claim can be made for Harwood. Harwood's poems about rebirth are less politically driven than those of Yeats, but they reveal a similar desire to interrogate and challenge dominant beliefs and to put forward alternatives which are more likely to promote joy. Delight in resurgence is a theme used often by Australian writers, who have a well-developed capacity to conceptualize how spirit rises continually up from the earth: more importantly, they 'make new' old stories and traditions so that faith is continually refreshed (Tacey 2003: 162). And society needs this restorative vision. In the words of Berry, the western world has been caught 'between stories' and it needs to learn new and more hopeful narratives in order to live in peace and happiness (in Suzuki, David 1997: 9). It is vital then that the great stories, which lie 'against time' in an endless

string of substitutions and reinventions, should be rewritten (Bloom 1984: 112).

Affirmed by Harwood as her 'favourite critic' (Digby ed. 1996: 49), Bloom claims that most writings, including Freud's, reinscribe in some form the absence-presence paradox familiar from the Kabbalah (1984: 43). In Harwood's work, joy is produced when the subject retains mastery over the world (word) she (re)creates. Using the right language allows presence to be privileged over absence, and hope to be rewritten from separation in an ongoing creative process of deconstruction and reinvention. Thus reproduction takes on a double significance in Harwood's construction of a new and optimistic vision. Playing the language game with the God of language entails a creative engagement in the rewriting process, so that we are constantly delighted by music "never heard before" ("A Sermon", line 57). Harwood entreats her audience in "A Sermon" (1994) to participate actively in the creative world: "show the murmurers Aaron's blossoming rod" (CP 509, line 53). In Harwood's new stories, gender poses no limitations: the female is an active partner and she plays an equally creative role in the language game.

The choice to write under masculine pseudonyms is one way that poets such as Harwood claim 'the power we (women) are denied at birth' (Atherton 67). This is by no means Harwood's only strategy, but masculine voices and characters do often recur within her oeuvre: one such character is Kröte, whose poems first appeared under the pseudonym Geyer. Atherton notes the rhyming of Kröte with Goethe, the author of *Faust,* but does not state that the pseudonym under which the Kröte poems were written (Geyer) signifies 'vulture' in German. In the literatures of many cultures, the eater of entrails represents an essential link in the chain of transmutation that ensures the final triumph over death (Chevalier & Gheerbrandt 1982: 994). Harwood no doubt bore this metaphoric attribute in mind when choosing the pseudonym Geyer. Like the vulture, the poet confronts and feeds from death, internalizing and liberating its vital forces to produce lively offspring.

Death, mourning and redemption in the form of salvation and renewal

inform the content of all major epics, and are often the subject of Harwood's poems which 'intertextualise' the myth of Orpheus (Atherton 75 – 76). Recalling a discussion with Vincent Buckley on the challenges of being a poet, Harwood explains the significance of the Orpheus narrative: 'If you are to be a poet you must … accept your own death, before you can praise the world and make some answer to the powers that will grind you small' (1980: 254). Harwood's article reveals her curiosity about the 'continuity of human experience' (252), the human capacity to start again (253) and the 'thrilling' gift of language: 'We have our language and our laughter to set against existential chaos' (254).

Not surprisingly, the possibility that life might continue after the death of the physical body is the theme of many poems by Harwood, including "Lazarus" (1943, CP 75), which begins with a calling:

Lazarus!

He does not hear,
And bound so fast he could not stir.
Among the darkness, without sound,
The crooked worm shall find a place,
Assault and violate his peace.
Among the darkness he shall find
The sounds that once escaped his ear:
The soundless voices of the field
That Chiron, the wise healer, heard 10
Who taught Patroclus, and he held
The knowledge of the healing root
Until the jealous god defiled
The brightness of the envied shield
Which Hera's limping, ugly son
For silver-footed Thetis wrought.

The slender might of springing grass
Shall leave the dead in bitterness
To see the lilies being born,
Until the sad unbidden guest 20
Departing leaves his bones to learn
The knowledge that all men must have,
The metaphysics of the grave.

"Lazarus" parallels the continuity of natural cycles and seasons with the recycling and embellishment of familiar stories, and it introduces key

metaphors that recur throughout the poet's oeuvre. Yeats's "rich, dark nothing" paradigm ("The Gyres") is echoed in "Lazarus": Harwood returns three times to the signifier "Among the darkness" (lines 3, 7 and 23). The opposition of darkness and light, so pervasive throughout the Old Testament and indeed through western culture, is taken up and subverted by Harwood in a celebratory discourse that Strauss describes as the poet's 'revealed religion of night': the darkness full of spiritual power remains 'the true sphere of Christianity' (1996: 127). Lawson, on the other hand, cites Harwood's sense of 'a necessary silence and a darkness at the edges of all verbal language': the poet's work calls up this darkness beyond the human senses and describes a way of knowing the earth 'as a system shared with many species living through their own language systems' (Lawson 1991: 19). In "Lazarus", there is evidence of both potentialities.

Absence of language is the theme of "The Second Life of Lazarus" (CP 12), published in *Poems* 1963. And silence allows the void to be filled with possibilities drawn from myth, memory and imagination, which continue to inspire and reveal as they are reworked (Ricoeur 2003: 379). "Lazarus" also begins with an absence and a call to action, indicated by an exclamation mark. There is no apparent verbal response and what occurs "among the darkness" can only be imagined. Indeed, even the Biblical author never quotes the speech of the risen Lazarus (see John 11). Most western readers would recognize the first invocation as Biblical, but several strategies put in place by Harwood destabilize any sense of absolute certainty: the reader must speculate as to the identity and authority of the speaker who controls the point(s) of view. There are few grammatical indicators, for example, so the metaphorical 'as if' is hidden. An abrupt shift from second to third person problematizes the status of the relationship between subject and object. The cry is followed by a space, indicating the absence of verbal response, and ruptures in tense draw our interest to shifts away from the original Biblical narrative.

Attention is brought instead to the new description of Lazarus's body at rest, with which Harwood marks a departure from the familiar story. Use of the future tense allows possibility rather than finality to be brought to the

fore. In lines 5-8, the third person subject shifts from Lazarus to the worm and back to Lazarus so that human and "worm" appear to share the same cycle and the same physical and linguistic environment. Indeed, the worm appears to instigate the process towards new life. The attribution of "crooked" to describe an actual worm (line 5) seems unusual, although "crooked" might describe the worm's larval form. A tense change lends weight to reading "crooked worm" as a paradigm, open to multiple interpretations. Because the "worm" metaphor holds the key to an expanded elaboration of "Lazarus", several possibilities will be investigated here.

In the Book of Job, Chapters 17-25, the worm is mentioned on several occasions as Job pleads with an intransigent God to avoid further suffering. The worm is his mother and sister: '(bitter men) lie down alike in the dust, and worms cover them' (Job: 21: 26). The worm feeds on sinners, who should be remembered no more (Job 24: 19-20). In God's eyes, man is a maggot, and any man's son a worm: he must search for 'ore in the darkness and the shadow of death' (Job 28: 3). Sincerely repentant, Job acknowledges his worm-like origin in the earth and is richly rewarded and 'accepted' by God as a servant (42: 8). He lives for another hundred and forty years and dies 'full of days' (Job, 42: 17). The worm metaphor reveals a paradox: unless humankind accepts the inevitability of its own sin and death, it can neither live well nor inherit eternal life.

The "crooked worm" paradigm appears in Dylan Thomas's "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower" (1934), which is powered by the same libidinal vitality as Harwood's "Lazarus". In his analysis, Ralph Maud claims that at the time of composition Thomas was reading Blake's "The Sick Rose", in which the energy that drives youth and passion inevitably brings on destruction in nature and decrepitude in the individual. While William Tindall contends that Thomas was drawing on Marvell's "Coy Mistress", he also claims that the worm metaphor suggests the explosive force which propels life constantly onward from 'womb' to 'worm': the two terms are interchangeable (49). Eros and Thanatos are inextricably linked and together form a doubly powerful force (52).

Through Nietzsche's/Zarathustra's interrogation of the Book of Job, he realizes that the task of human beings is to appropriate the word/Word in acts of productive violation (*Ecce Homo*, 2004: 50-51). The parasitic worm of humility consuming the human heart must be destroyed if joy and abundance are to flourish. Finally, Blake's wilful Gwendolen wraps an allegory around the Winding Worm ("Jerusalem" 85: 1) and there are indications in "Lazarus" that Gwen Harwood plays the language game to synthesize several myths as she assembles her own foundational narrative.

Poets such as Blake, writes Thomas Altizer, suggest that humankind's separation from God is final and it must continue to suffer in alienation (177). Harwood's stories affirm the healing of differences through the transformative process. The significance of Harwood's gender to her more optimistic reconstructions is taken up later, but concepts similar to those she suggests are not uncommon. They are central to paganism and Tao thought, wherein the 'female mystery' and 'the root from which grew heaven and earth' form the primary force of the universe (Lao Tzu 5). In his notes to the translation of Lao Tzu, Legge draws attention to similarities between the Tao and Plato's Eternal Ideas in the Divine Mind: the worn becomes new, the empty full and the crooked straight (19). Bloom elucidates a similar paradox: throughout the history of metaphor, the one equates to its opposite so that concealment or absence constitute revelation in the same way that darkness implies light (1984: 65). Harwood's "crooked worm" paradigm may be read in this productive way.

The rebirth story is opened up as Harwood introduces a second and earlier, Greco-Roman rebirth myth, which parallels cosmic and artistic creation. The tense changes as the narrative focus shifts to the story of Chiron, the immortal twice-wounded healer. Like Orpheus, Chiron entered the underworld, where he learned about medicine and the fine arts, to sacrifice himself later as a substitute for the suffering Prometheus. Rather than emphasize Chiron's pain, Harwood brings understanding and interpretation to the fore. Nature, the "voices of the field", spoke in an intelligible way to the heroes of antiquity. Thus Chiron could prolong life because he held "the knowledge of the healing root" (line 12).

From a structural perspective, the positioning of Chiron's heroic journey at the poem's centre accomplishes two purposes. First, we focus on Chiron and, through his narrative, on the status of the artist and her responsibility to listen, preserve, create and heal. Second, the classical paradigm allows the representational function of poetry itself to be brought to the fore (Schaeffer 248). "Lazarus" returns to and closes with a new version of the Biblical story, its end position adding importance and highlighting changes to the accepted version. Indeed, the final stanza marks a new beginning, in which Harwood combines aspects of the classical model with Christian belief and her own invention. It provides a reflection on previous narratives and suggests an alternative, which promotes joy and eternal renewal.

Attention shifts to the things of the earth, which constantly shoot up and renew themselves (lines 17-19). Since plant growth cannot be heard, it must be assumed that "the lilies being born" is a paradigm, aligned with Biblical and Blakean metaphors of innocence and eternal life. An unusual lexical choice, the adjective "slender" successfully connotes the arrow-like thrusting of the grass spikes. Indeed, the parallels "slender might" and "springing grass" facilitate a positive seasonal association with youth and vigour, which contrasts markedly with the "bitterness" attributed to the dead. Shooting is a visible sign of the silently flourishing world of nature, and the Romantics, among others, saw how plant growth might provide a metaphor for metaphorical truth (Ricoeur 2003: 294-295).

At the time of writing, Harwood was a young poet with recent convent training, and it is to be expected that she would inscribe theological reflections on the 'truths' of death and salvation. The seasonal allusions of "Lazarus" allow comparisons to be made with the "green" language associated with Hildegard von Bingen, who used the term *viriditus* ("greening spirit") to describe the spiritual presence she observed in nature (Hayden 1996: 77). Bergson's concept of *élan vital* also comes to mind: life continually creates, multiplies and unfolds, life 'as it is actualised in its organic form, and life in its virtual potentiality' (see Mullarkey, John 1999: 81). Harwood's verse brings established metaphors to the fore in such a way that vitality supplants morbidity and joy overcomes "bitterness". For

this reversal to take place, the familiar paradox or riddle underpinning the human condition must be stated and subverted. It is supposedly only in death that humans learn the significance of life: the "knowledge that all men must have, / The metaphysics of the grave" (lines 20-21). Since "Lazarus" ends here, it must be assumed that either the fundamental paradox has been resolved in existing texts, or that the paradox is to remain open to interpretation. In either case, auto-reflection, literature reflecting on itself, and the role of the poet to represent, appear vital to the hermeneutic purpose of the text.

The pattern of stresses in the penultimate line suggests a problematic issue in the constitution of knowledge in western creation narratives: "know-"; "men"; "have". In the Chiron narrative, the dead hero learns the fine arts underground before his rebirth. Biblical versions of the rebirth story have a different focus: although body and soul form one entity, the dead body is left behind in the earth but the living soul is raised (James 2: 26, Ecclesiastes 3: 19-21). The Lazarus narrative (John 11) is important for several reasons: it occurs after the marriage at Canaan and the attempted stoning of Jesus for claiming he was God (His response is often quoted in debates between literalist and Gnostic interpreters of the Bible). It suggests a close personal relationship between Jesus and Mary, a friend or relative of Lazarus. Jesus raises a man from the dead and says that resurrection is possible for all believers. Finally, the raising of Lazarus foreshadows Christ's death and resurrection.

Harwood's juxtaposition and reworking of the resurrection myth and the Biblical 'truth' promote comparisons between immanent and transcendent beliefs and bring the content of core texts into question. Listening, obeying and following the commandments are familiar elements of Christian practice. But, as Trigg contends, Harwood's familiarity with religious imagery and its 'grand narratives' is balanced by her 'refusal to adopt them in a straightforward manner' (1994: 108). Harwood's preference for old ghost stories is well known (Strauss, in Digby ed. 51). Indeed, Harwood later collaborated with Larry Sitsky on the opera "The Golem" and explained: 'In Talmudic legend Adam is called golem, meaning

body without soul, for the first twelve hours of his existence' (in Sellick ed. 11). Harwood goes on to claim that the 'golem' state allows the new being to see the future. A 'ghoulish' reading of the poem "Lazarus" highlights the man's resurrection in a different form and echoes even older legends of the living dead: pronouncing the name of the deceased caused the body to return to life. Such a reading might appear trivial and it departs from other familiar myths in which rebirth is a spiritual experience. Nevertheless, Harwood often speculates about the real possibility of resurrection. In Christian rituals of transubstantiation, the bread and wine are Christ's actual body and not merely symbols of His presence: it is possible that humans too can exist 'beyond the body'. While a literal reading of "Lazarus" may seem at odds with Harwood's attempts to establish the ground and allow the tenor to show through the fabric of the poem, "Lazarus" allows for reflection on the historical origins of Christianity.

The invocation at the beginning of "Lazarus" emphasizes the role of the narrator and the mimetic possibilities of poetry to perpetuate the process of rebirth. In this light, the rupture of the body's "peace" can be read as the productive shattering of silence, which allows a new creative process to begin: the progressive cycle from 'womb' to 'worm' that Tindall reads in Blake (49) might be extended to include 'word'. Lazarus's resurrection can thus be read as a paradigm for renewal through the re-inscription of a body of text. Yeats makes a similar case in "*Rhib at the Tomb*" and "When You are Old".

Death itself is regenerative, a paradox still remembered in Christian interment and resurrection liturgy and rituals (see Ezekiel 36 and 37). Altizer's exegesis of Blake emphasizes this convergence of flesh and spirit, which becomes 'an immediate actualization of the eschatological promise of Jesus' (xv). Intense self-examination allows for the old self to be effaced as the new, inner being is born. To inscribe the regenerative process, Harwood summons Lazarus, and previous rebirth narratives, in the ringing imperative. Schwartz suggests that Harwood writes in 'the space between two deaths', the first biological and the second a symbolic death which 'erases the subject from language' (234): yet death is 'inextricably intertwined' with

love, and a 'resurrection' takes place in the speaker's memory and dreams (235). In "Lazarus", by writing or re-membering, Harwood dispels erasure and claims her right to name anew, to bring ancient stories back to life.

To demonstrate that Lazarus, Chiron and the shadows of other heroes are "raised" from the past and that language is at the core of renewal, the vocabulary and syntax of the poem are encoded with references to previous texts. Lexical and structural choices made to describe the shield of Achilles, for example, are deliberately archaic: "Which Hera's limping, ugly son / For silver-footed Thetis wrought" (lines 15-16). Harwood appropriates the description from Homer's *The Iliad*, Book 18. The shield in question provides contrasting representations of peaceful life and bloody battle, so that the warriors must confront the extent of their losses. Indeed, the shield is 'like an extended simile', writes Stephen Scully: it invites the audience to consider the creative work against the larger story (2003: 29).[81] Thus Harwood summons the great force of representation itself, and she returns to this theme throughout her career (Trigg 1994: 64). In Harwood's textual spaces, however, the "bitterness" of the human condition is acknowledged and transcended: absence is turned to presence, pain to joy. Time is suspended in the language game and death is deferred, at least from the point of view of the poem.

The woman's word

Ways of knowing come to the fore in "Lazarus": he is to "find / the sounds" (lines 5-6), and "leave his bones to learn" (line 21). The "metaphysics of the grave" and "knowledge that all men must have" are parallels, and in line with many foundational narratives, female presences are absent here, unless we remember that the hero Chiron learned from women and that the poet's voice is feminine. Irigaray aptly describes the shadowy absence as 'a kind of resistance to the already-existing light ... forming a screen for the dazzling and blinding collusion of Father-son. A reminder that man comes from the earth-mother, and that at each step a shadow walks by his side' (1991:

[81] In "The Shield of Achilles", for example, W. H. Auden imagines Thetis looking over the armorer's shoulder. Expecting to find traditional representations ("vines and olive trees", "ritual pieties") she sees the brutal truth: "They marched away enduring a belief / Whose logic brought them, somewhere else, to grief." (*Selected Poems* 1976: 454-455).

188). The young poet inscribes this absence in "Lazarus", and with it the need for rewriting. In Deleuze's elaboration of the myth of Ariadne and her *topos*, Ariadne affirms that the labyrinth will always wind back to its beginning: she repeats the essential message of regeneration (Deleuze 2006: 178). The conclusion of Harwood's "Lazarus" is sufficiently open to suggest that the poet plays the language game in her own joyfully productive way, spinning the thread like Nietzsche's Ariadne to repeat the essence of old narratives while making them the object of her own (re)productive web. Within the frames of masculine epistemologies, Harwood brings to light the striking absence in canonical and Biblical texts of the woman and *her* way of knowing. The new view from the grave frees the narrative from silence/obscurity for publication, open discussion and re-reading, so that the feminine voice often omitted from recorded discourses can be heard.

In this light, Harwood's 'veiling' of Lazarus may be read metaphorically. Derrida's comment that female writers must still wear the veil (*voile*) of prudishness reveals one possible interpretation. In his own 'worm' narrative, Derrida (1998) reflects on Cixous's story "*Savoir*" and foregrounds a way of being which defies gender. Biblical discourses, which silence the woman's voice and will, have long informed western public opinion and the law. Men, supposedly made in the image of God, are not required to wear the veil: in the myth often reproduced by so-called authorities, woman is made to serve man and is expected to remain hidden (Cixous & Derrida 1998: 72-73). Derrida criticizes Freud, because he privileges and perpetuates the dominant masculine metaphor within the fields of psychiatry and writing, indeed in the world in general (1967: 338). A true 'resurrection' would entail a complete rupture, an un-veiling of the way in which knowledge has been constituted in the past to limit the power of women (Cixous & Derrida 81).

It is likely that Harwood inscribes "the knowledge that all men must have" with considerable irony. Throughout "Lazarus" rings the voice of the woman poet, who issues the command to rise, while writing firmly within non-inclusive discourses. Knowledge, constructed and gendered as secret and privileged, is often the theme of Harwood's work, and it is not difficult

to understand why: her father was a Mason and women were not given access to secret Masonic rituals; she spent time in a convent, and it was impossible to enjoy an intimate relationship with her beloved friend, church minister Peter Bennie. By calling up other bodies, her own body and the body of other texts, the woman addresses "'the forbidden expression of her femininity'" (Nye, in Boyne 1990: 161). In "Lazarus", Harwood not only enters into and becomes part of the body of knowledge and its written representation, but by making certain lexical choices she underlines her interest in the interaction between gender and will, and states her intention to actively construct knowledge and power. And Harwood has a feminine understanding of the 'mystery' of resurrection that 'comes only with prior descent into the flesh': motherhood especially is almost 'a religiously sanctioned obligation to serve one's time with the flesh and the world' (Strauss 1996: 151).

As Strauss affirms, Harwood is able to inscribe and celebrate, with considerable audacity, her particular way of knowing the world. That is, her understanding allows an opening to a desirable 'both ... and' scenario, in which direct knowledge acquired through the flesh is valued along with book knowledge. Close Bible study informs Harwood's insistence on the importance of repetition and continuity: generations pass and the earth endures (Ecclesiastes 1: 4-9). Through the third person narrative of the veiled Lazarus, however, Harwood interrogates what it means to be informed. A rewriting of loss, death and uncertainty, and a reinterpretation of knowledge and the libidinal drive towards genetic continuity, expand the definition of re-birth through the female poet's word/Word. And voices like Harwood's are important. They are needed to address an increasingly secular society, which questions the role of language to affirm and to celebrate continuity (Gadamer 1992).

Continuity is affirmed each time the right words are reread or reworked. Poetry can exert an 'illocutionary force' that captures the 'ecstatic moment' when language moves outside of itself, as it were (Ricoeur 2003: 294). Writers who choose to reproduce "self-defeating parables", Harwood writes in "Tetragrammaton" (1987), forget the joys of generation: "while you live /

you are part of earth. / Accept. Affirm. Rejoice." (Part IV, CP 439, lines 22-24). The content of the 1943 poem "Lazarus" affirms that, prior to the political centralization of the Church, knowledge was still fluid. Christian Gnostics were expressing beliefs closer to Greek, Hindu and Buddhist traditions, and adepts had to remain silent about their induction by death ritual into the "mystery" (Pagels 1990: 62-63; 148). Earlier still, Sabbath rites celebrated land regeneration. These messages are central to "Lazarus" and to other poems that explore responsibility, which comes with humankind's "gift" of the word. How words are used to establish communication with family, friends and readers is juxtaposed against more problematic concerns, such as what the power of the word means in relationships with institutions, nature and the Other.

Many of Harwood's poems repeat the rebirth theme: poems are spaces in which death is reinscribed as part of life, and suffering as the other face of joy. The powerful nexus of words and presence is inscribed in poems written to subvert narratives that do not promote joy, particularly from the woman's perspective. Challenging certain Biblical stories in the voice of the ecstatic female visionary, Harwood proves that even the most unlikely textual material can become productive of joy. In the Bible, for example, women are often alone, despite or because of their success in negotiating with the Law (Bloom & Rosenberg 314-315): the discriminatory view was not, however, accepted by the aforementioned 'heretical' Gnostics. In the familiar Freudian discourse, women's ways of knowing and feeling were in general absent, yet Lacan's research on the passionate writings of female saints provided evidence that certain women knew and experienced their *jouissance* through God. Among these women was the sixteenth century Spanish saint, Teresa of Avila, who influenced Harwood's early thinking (Harwood 1990: 67; 170). Teresa was acknowledged in her time as a visionary as well as a practical community leader, and it is not surprising that the young poet acknowledged her as a strong role model. A theme to which she returned many times, particularly in her earlier work, is Teresa's fearless and passionate desire to experience the pain of death as a means of knowing the living Christ *para siempre, siempre, siempre* (for always,

always, always).

In order to know the joy of Christ, Harwood wrote, it was necessary to feel what He experienced prior to crucifixion and resurrection: agony, temptation and the 'dark night of the soul, the purifying darkness' (SS 25). The poet's early affinity with Saint Teresa is taken up by Norman Talbot in his discussion of Harwood's visionary poems, in which he hears the 'voices' of the intellectual, the philosopher and 'the self-forgetful virgin'. A poet less sceptical than Harwood, states Talbot, might have produced more Saint Teresa poems and fewer based on Wittgenstein: nevertheless, 'the analogies between the two forms of vision are honourably celebrated' (47). This view lends itself to a consideration of the way in which Harwood writes absence, presence, 'truths' and questions in order to reframe important narratives. Frequently, as Lawson points out in her discussion of Harwood's "Alla Siciliana" and "At the Water's Edge", 'the human capacity to suffer and change' is seen as the cost of human sovereignty in the natural world (1991: 11). Yet in Harwood's work, suffering and change are not ends in themselves, but rather opportunities to explore and enjoy otherness and to rewrite tired parables into songs of joy.

The theme of sharing the "cup" of Christ features in Harwood's 'Eucharistic' poems, where speakers undergo personal trials fundamental to the experience of joy, release and rebirth. In "My Tongue is My Own" (CP 90), written in 1960 when few female voices were to be heard in Australia, Harwood subverts the old Christian dogma stating that women suffer through childbirth because of their original sin. Here, the woman has privileged insights into the story of reproduction, which she tells in her own, authoritative "Tongue": "This I will do, but now …" (line 16). Harwood presents 'before and after' scenarios, and the subversion of the accepted narrative is left to float until later in the poem. A complete change of register between the first and the second parts mars "My Tongue is My Own". It is nonetheless germane to this project, because it foreshadows other, more significant works.

In paradigmatic terms, suffering and release represent different stages in 'polishing the stone'; grief is refined and reborn as a sparkling gem of joy,

the metaphorical "jewel" (line 14) at the heart of Harwood's poem. Taking the Freudian concept of death as the (denied) desire, which leaves all other desires in its wake, Harwood speculates how the exceptional wordsmith might use the force of language to bring life and joy into the silent void. If the timing is right, the word can reverse history, an act to which the Genesis narrative testifies. Like Christ's shout from the cross and Sheba's impassioned cry in Yeats's "Solomon and the Witch", the woman's scream in "My Tongue" proves powerful enough to break the language barrier.[82] Harwood usually inscribes first and subverts later in a complicitously critical move. According to Hutcheon, poets who use this strategy have influenced the postmoderns, who tend to underline and undermine notions of the represented subject (2002: 37). Harwood inscribes the return to pre-linguistic origins as a cogent paradigm, for humans are returned to the pre-lapsarian state of blessedness banished in literatures of the Fall. Indeed, the mysterious withdrawal of God/the gods is voiced as a potential source of joy in the writer's powerful "Tongue".

Written in the imaginary realm between present and future, "My Tongue is My Own" foregrounds the power to summon things into being, or as Lacan might put it, to prove an intimate relationship with the Other by naming Him. "My Tongue" begins with the typical left-branching syntax of a psalm, with the repeated "I'll call" serving to highlight the generative form of this structure. The pronouncement "in death's shears, I'll call" (line 2) sets up the key expectation around which the poem is built: that the speaker has the right and the will to call in whatever language proves necessary to summon "no matter whom" to her side (line 3). The paradigm "shears" denotes the removal of fleece, and the speaker's *apostropos* becomes clear: no meek, sacrificial lamb, she will defy death and resist going to the slaughter unknown. The rhyme of "no matter whom" with "riddling doom" (line 5), however, reinforces a mood of uncertainty, "riddling" being further qualified in temporal terms in the second stanza: "as flesh puts off its mask of power / … / waiting the mystery of rebirth" (lines 6 and 8). In line seven,

[82] Hoddinott states that Harwood loathed being called a poetess, which to her implied judgment by a different standard. Instead, 'her work is deeply involved with trying to convey what women really are' (78).

"falls" suggests both physical collapse and the original fall from grace, a subject which is taken up later in the poem.

At the poem's nadir, joy is triumphantly produced from sorrow; the familiar absence or withdrawal is subverted and presence is established in defiance of death. Intent is voiced with Biblical zeal: "I'll call the name I do not speak. / This I will do" (lines 15-16), with the future tense used twice to promote deferral over denial. The second part of the poem provides a strong contrast with the first, and accordingly there is a syntactic rupture in the middle of line sixteen, where the tense changes abruptly: "… now I walk / with my young children" (lines 16-17). The "now" is stressed semantically, and foregrounded to shift the view to the present moment which the speaker shares with her young family. Having once drunk from the "bitter" cup of a future fashioned from received narratives of the past, the speaker now claims her freedom. The discourse of death and transcendence is rewritten to accommodate a life-affirming balance between the spirit and the body, which experiences life with "thoughtless joy". From this perspective, the speaker shares a joyous pilgrimage with her children through the countryside, where "a Christ / of bloom is lifted on each stalk" (lines 17-18). Here, Christ is linked paradigmatically with nature and "lifted" is used in contrast with "falls", which occurs earlier in the poem. The gaze is centred between heaven and earth and directed towards the presence of family and flowers, connoting innocence and protection. Christ's resurrection and the gift of life that abounds in all living things are celebrated as eternally loving and joyous.

In a letter written early in 1944 to Tony Riddell, Harwood states that society's real enemy is that it has "forgotten what 'to be happy' means" (2001: 25). At this stage in Harwood's life, there was "only one happiness worth having … 'to pierce time and take hold of Eternity'". The poet is quoting Riddell's words from a previous letter, and she goes on to lament that society pays lip service to the Christian 'ethic' but ignores 'the whole world' of the spirit. Joy is the product of personal engagement in the passion of the redeeming Christ: 'the temptation in the wilderness, the agony in the garden, the bitter cross, the resurrection, the ascension, lived

over and over again by each Christian' (2001: 25). It is not surprising then that Eucharistic paradigms are used in "My Tongue" to suggest redemption through suffering, with the speaker voicing her participation in the process of continuity. Rather than 'close off' experience and condemn it to reiteration in narratives of suffering and death, Harwood chooses to write about an immanent rebirth.

Harwood's speaker in "My Tongue" is no passive object in an inevitable scenario: as a mother, she takes an active role in the regenerative process (lines 21-25). The position of "silent" at the beginning of line 22 emphasizes the contrast with the intent expressed in the first stanzas to shout her suffering to the universe: "I'll call … / … no matter whom". The mother's silence as she walks with her children challenges the 'truth' of death, suggested by the metaphor "chill wine"; a bitter future need not spoil the present joy on earth. Signifiers "husk" and "wafers" operate comparatively (dry and brittle) as well as contrapuntally. *Husk* is of course one of Yeats's four Principles, corresponding to Will (MW 548). Here, by connoting respectively death in nature and blessed rebirth (Eucharistic ritual), the two nouns reinforce the operating death-life binary, which the speaker momentarily controls by her own will: "my hand shall cup / its own dismantling husk" (lines 22-23). The verb "cup" (line 22) echoes the noun in line 20, "cup of sorrow", which in Christian liturgy refers to the cup of Communion wine members of the church body "share" (line 21) to remember and 'ingest' Christ's suffering. The main clause here, "I take"… (line 19) also suggests the Communion, but the parallel "I stare" finds a resolution "... beyond the sacrifice" (line 25). The speaker's new understanding directs her beyond pain to "this quickening land" (line 26). Winter (death) is past; she shares the "thoughtless joy" of spring and the promise of rebirth with the young ones who will succeed her. Her tongue is her own, and she chooses to walk in silence through the shared, Edenic landscape, "children and flowers on either hand" (line 27).

The jubilant ending of "My Tongue" allows the speaker to claim her place as woman, mother and creative visionary. It seems at first glance to be at odds with the poem's beginning, but it can be read as a promising

reversal of the Biblical discourse of crucifixion, which saw Jesus put to death with criminals "on either hand" in order to demonstrate His redemption of human sins. In "My Tongue", the woman's body is seen to 'remember' differently. The kind of text produced from this way of memorizing exceeds both the immediate and the established contexts (Threadgold 1997: 101). In this instance, Harwood's narrative subverts and usurps elements of the Biblical discourse and in her *langue*, her "Tongue", the woman is seen less as the means by which man fell and rather as the creative partner by whom he is redeemed, an idea suggested by Blake and Yeats. Indeed, for Blake the woman was the 'willing repository of male negation' and the 'high priestess' of sacrifice, dialectically open to her opposite role as saviour (Altizer 97). In Harwood's story, dialectical negation can be turned into affirmation, but there is no need for the woman to be continually reconstructed as the victim of hierarchical Law.

From the Lacanian viewpoint, lack (madness, guilt, silence, inner suffering) is transformed in "My Tongue" into abundance, which overflows through the *jouissance* of language, drawing together woman, children, faith and the natural world in a personal creation. In jubilation, Harwood's speaker turns to the 'thisness' of nature and contrasts its presence with the 'otherness' of the chaos beyond language. Powerful parallels suggest that in this natural world, her world, there exists the freedom to be at peace, to immerse oneself in contemplative silence, to accept the existing narratives or to fashion original creations (children, writing). Further, language is seen to have the power to induce change on a grand scale: the right language accepts and defers death and realizes the redemptive force of love in the present. Harwood affirms the late Romantic tradition of the German poets she so much admired, notably Hölderlin and Rilke, but her female voices joyously proclaim strength and conviction through the product of the poet's 'shaping will' as Nietzsche puts it (1968: 272). Parallels are drawn in the early poem "My Tongue is My Own" that recur in important later works, such as the "Carnal Knowledge" poems, which foreground the powerful nexus of woman, word and the production of joy.

In Freudian terms, the tongue represents a means of penetration and

the achievement of *jouissance* for the woman. The synecdoche has been recognized and used to evoke the erotic for centuries. Harwood also plays with the concept of language and 'mother tongue': her tongue is held to protect her children and freed to call up other people, events and possibilities. Giving voice changes the world forever, a potentiality discussed by Gadamer in terms of the parallels between tongue, speech and divine *Logos* (1992: 129). Blake draws similar parallels in "Jerusalem" (45: 31; 98: 17; 98: 29). Harwood wrote to Tony Riddell (8. 6. 1943) that Pentecost, the church celebration of the risen Christ's descent in tongues of flame, was 'the most mysterious feast in the whole year' and it filled her with 'wonder' (Harwood 1990: 151). While 'wonder' fuels "My Tongue", the tongue of the Bible speaks of justice or perversity (Proverbs 15: 4) and the word is so powerful that it summons life or death (Proverbs 18: 21).[83]

"My Tongue" allows a voicing of the woman's Word in invincible, passionate language. Foremost among several Biblical paradigms suggested here is the tongue as an instrument of power, a sign of the force wielded by the language user.[84] Woman is constructed as the subject rather than the object, the active 'owner' of her language game, suggested from the very beginning by the repetition of the personal pronoun of ownership. Once, Christ's scream was said to cause the curtain of the tabernacle to be torn apart; now the woman's voice will bring about monumental change and restoration. As in "Lazarus", gaps, shifts and partial parallels allow the emergence of a more promising rebirth story, in which the woman plays a pivotal creative role.

The division of "My Tongue is My Own" into two parts and two tenses, in line with the framework of binary parallels, suggests the familiar metaphor of the shattering (see also "The Old Wife's Tale", CP 16). When the time comes, the speaker will release a powerful howl and "cry such lightning down" (line 10) that her voice will rupture time and light, "all days' crystals".

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[83] For the account of the Pentecostal tongues of flame, see Acts 2: 3. Speaking in tongues is sometimes evidence of a baptism, but not everyone is given this gift (1 Corinthians 12: 30). The gift of tongues enables different peoples to gather and listen to the Word in languages they understand (Acts 2: 5-11). God's fiery tongue can purify sinners or annihilate them (Isaiah 30: 27-30).

[84] For Trigg, Harwood's greatest desire is to exercise control. Her poetry lets us feel 'the woman at the centre' of her own destiny (1994: 93).

Clearly, the light-shattering invocation of the name she "dare not speak" (lines 12-13) refers to the Biblical narrative of Christ's crucifixion (Matthew 27: 45), along with an earlier Greek myth about the departure of the gods from the earth, inscribed in another Harwood poem "Diotima" (CP 327-328). The quality of crystal to refract rather than reflect light also suggests qualities of the deceptive consciousness, Blake might call it the False Tongue, which allows humans to believe themselves akin to the creator.

Like Yeats, Harwood foregrounds the privileged role of the artist: to ensure that joy is produced from pain. As she suggests in "Diotima" (echoing the Freudian school) illusions, repetitions and representations soothe human suffering: "Let life imitate art. / A tenor sings "'like a dream'" (CP 327, lines 6-7). The use of similes and metaphors blurs the distinctions between fiction and real life, and pain is the gift, accepted and transformed by the poet's imagination. Indeed, the experience of real suffering and separation allows a momentary breakthrough, an understanding of the so-called mysteries of death and rebirth. The whole of "My Tongue" works to suggest that women understand birth and rebirth at a visceral level. The Biblical judgment, that women are doomed to eternal punishment for their sinful temptation of Adam, is revoked; their suffering during childbirth is ultimately productive of joy. They are the privileged sex, whose intimate experience allows them a personal revelation of the joy, mystery and wonder of regeneration.

Harwood returns often to bring different ways of understanding rebirth to the fore. Indeed, her own active struggle with the complexities of the language game appears in contrast to the gentler acceptance of life's processes and Christ's promise of eternal life promoted in a later poem "Resurrection" (CP 412-413). Here, Harwood compares her grandmother's simple Christian faith with the restless questioning of the speaker (she herself, perhaps) who does not "love / enough". Perplexing "riddles", such as the knowledge of that which can or cannot be named, are taken up also in "Songs of Eve" Part II (CP 489), which interrogates the silencing of women: "What of that other woman / the scriptures do not name?" (Lines 1-2) Here, joy overturns suffering to become the prize of a hard fought battle

against church dogma. Familiar narratives are not discarded, but the woman especially must write her own version of an old story: "… when she bears her children, / why should she suffer pain?" (Lines 7-8)

Rebirth became increasingly important among Harwood's themes because she felt an increasing sense of abandonment as the people she loved died (Strauss, in Digby ed. 60-62). To combat this, Harwood internalized otherness, the 'general otherness of other people's writing, and other people's art, the otherness of the dead, as it were' (73). Many of Harwood's poems parallel art, life, love and (re)birth in a way that privileges a particularly powerful way of feeling, knowing and using language to promote joy over fear. In this "dream", the shadows cast over human experience give it form and depth: "Autumnal shades / make substance possible" ("Oyster Cove Pastorals" Part III CP 306-309, lines 23-24). In "Oyster Cove Pastorals", Harwood's elegiac, parodic and philosophic voices intertwine. The speaker of Part 1, about to slaughter one of her farmyard "heroes", the roosters Hector, Achilles and Ajax, is assured of mastery over death in her personal hierarchy. The poet retains control too, because through language she decides the way in which death and rebirth are perceived and inscribed: "If by some chance I wrote / a fine immortal poem / it would have a mortal theme" (lines 7-9). In a typical Harwood manoeuvre, the Muse interrupts and transports her from the grisly task at hand to a joyful new beginning: "another place, another / morning" (Part 1, lines 15-16). Accordingly, Part II of the "Oyster Cove Pastorals" privileges beauty, love and renewal over sorrow.

By naming Part III "Evening: *'Et in Arcadia ego'*", Harwood acknowledges the pastoral tradition dating from Virgil's *Eclogues* along with a much contested *memento mori*. The phrase ("And in Arcadia I") most famously appears as the title of two pastoral paintings by Nicolas Poussin, also entitled "*Les bergers d'Arcadie*" (1627 and 1637): the paintings can only be understood if one knows the 'obscure mythologies' to which they refer (Eco 2006: 222). Harwood refuses to engage in lofty reflections on the "mystery" of the hereafter. Living, as she states in an interview, means to

be 'deeply rooted in the present' (Beston, John 87). Like Rilke,[85] one of the poets she most admired (Beston 84), Harwood perceives the futility of representing death as the opposite of life.[86] Water must always return to its essential way of being and, in a similarly unthinking way, creatures constantly move towards their rebirth into the whole of creation. Only humans suffer the consciousness of separation. Much of the "Pastorals" is therefore about pets, stray birds and animals which have gone unknowingly "to their everlasting rest". Distant echoes of past tragedies can be heard, but the last of the "Pastorals" does not end in mourning: "Here's wheat. The living must be fed" (Part III, line 30). The discourse of death so deeply embedded in the art, literature and psyche of Western Europe is recognized, and countered with "dreams" of renewal:

> If there were reason to give thanks
> I'd say, earth gathers in her children
> and all are equal, born again.
> new dreams fire upward in her thought –
> that's earth's religion: fowl to iris,
> cat to fresh catmint, lizard to grass,
> grass back to geese in a fresh start.
> (Part III, lines 14-20)

There are echoes here of the 'tremendous' force of rebirth that Nietzsche calls 'the joy of the circle', the thoughtless striving of simple forms to become complex and then to return to the earth's 'abundance' (1968: 550). Harwood, as she does from the beginning of her career in poems such as "Lazarus", elaborated earlier, celebrates the artist's role in the renewal cycle. In "Oyster Cove Pastorals" Part II, *High Noon*, the human presences act as "Instrument and interpreter" (line 13) who "'paint'" and "'sing'" to extol the natural surroundings. Thus the view towards Bruny Island is compared in a clichéd metaphor with a canvas. Struck by nature's sensuality, artist and poet allow the language game to be transcended, or at least deferred: "No need for language, the great mirror, / when the body's genius / lights us past logic into rapture" (lines 10-12). Here, "logic" and "genius" both belong

[85] See, for example, "*Herbst*" ("Autumn") and "*die achte Elegie*" ("Duino Elegy 8") in *Rainer Maria Rilke: gesammelte Gedichte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel-Verlag, 1962), 156 and 470.
[86] See also Harwood's "Death Has No Features of His Own" (CP 348).

to the set describing human intelligence, but the second exceeds the first. The repeated sibilance, the preposition of direction ("past"), and the soft Latinate ending of "rapture", combine to suggest that the "body's genius" directly experiences a joy which surpasses 'logical' language. Unlike powerful Sheba's cry in Yeats's "Solomon and the Witch", the artists' dialogue in Part II is gentle: "'How will you paint me this green air / and the distant fields' autumnal shimmer?' / – As you will sing a dream of leaves / through which the heavens fall like water" (lines 15-18). The object of the verb in the future tense ("will sing"), "a dream of leaves", signals a new and promising process of making meaning: in this narrative, "the heavens" fall rather than humans, and a permeable opening appears between heaven and earth.

Harwood's "dream" of renewal in "Oyster Cove Pastorals" includes multiple presences: "and all are equal, born again" (Part III, line 16). An earlier poem, "Oyster Cove" (CP 237), mourns the lost lives of "God's creatures" (line 8), specifically local Aborigines. Resonances of their 'dreamtime' songs can be heard in the dialogue between artist and poet in Part II. There are echoes too of the narrative of Noah and the flood that was sent to destroy the earth and its inhabitants, "'filled with violence'" and "'corrupted'" by the flesh (Genesis 6: 12-13). The "Oyster Cove Pastorals" deny neither the pleasures of the flesh nor the inevitability of death, which is invited into the speaker's intimate circle:

> … Come close,
> friends, lovers, night-fall visitors
> from earlier times. My body wears
> the light and substance of the dead.
> (Part III, lines 24-27)

It is the closeness of death that allows the artist and poet of Part II to celebrate the body, experienced here and now, as they joyfully "improvise" (Part II, line 14) an appropriate response to abundance and renewal.

Metaphor and the limitless reproduction of joy

In the context of rebirth, this section explores the potential for the oldest metaphors to be given purpose and life as they are reincorporated into new

poems. Ricoeur describes the capacity of 'the limitless metaphoricity of metaphor' to produce a surplus value that transcends *usure* or wearing away (1998: 336). Indeed, metaphor 'vivifies' language and 'introduces the spark of imagination' into the rendering of conceptual thought (358). According to Kristeva, language imbued with the artist's imagination effects a transference of meaning to the place of loss (death), so that the idealization survives: a miracle, a shattering, an illusion and an affirmation of the 'almightiness of temporary subjectivity' (1989: 103).[87] Kristeva is careful to indicate that she is referring neither to theological nor didactic texts, but rather to the repeated 'flaring-up' of 'dead' meaning in imaginative works (102). Paradigms which have brought contentment to many cultures over thousands of years continue to be recycled for new audiences. They remain relevant because meaning, particularly as it is constructed through the language of poetry, allows for constant expansion and a dynamic, changing vision of 'reality': 'The metaphorical field in its entirety is open to all the figures that play on the relations between the similar and dissimilar' (Ricoeur 1998: 348). Readers' personal ideas and experiences, for example, may or may not align with the author's: readers can interpret the same trope, indeed the same text, in a different way each time they read it (Derrida 2002: 18). And, since literature promises democracy, it is important that literature continues as a dynamic entity to be free and open to change (66).

With the limitless potential of metaphor and the metaphorizing process in mind, I again take up the discussion of Yeats's "High Talk" (MW 177). In my previous discussion in "Joy and Nature", I argued that Yeats opposes the ways in which human beings and non-humans approach death. Yeats reproduces the familiar mind – body tension between terror and elation that humans experience when they confront the ultimate battle for freedom. Joy as the product of an encounter with death seems almost incomprehensible, but the appropriation of a particular metaphor promotes release from familiar limiting beliefs:

> All metaphor, Malachi, stilts and all. A barnacle goose
> Far up in the stretches of night; night splits and the dawn

[87] Ahmed gives the example of 'investment' in nationhood when faced with loss or threat (2004: 12). The idea certainly applies to Yeats.

breaks loose;
I, through the terrible novelty of light, stalk on, stalk on;
Those great sea-horses bare their teeth and laugh at the dawn.
(Lines 11-14)

It was previously observed that the rhythmic rupture at this point in "High Talk" introduces a change in subject and viewpoint: the goose fearlessly soars to freedom and the human speaker is left behind to contemplate his last days. In a different reading of "High Talk", however, the human protagonist and the metaphorizing process can be paralleled. Both speaker and process (Yeats and his poetry) issue a challenge to finitude, with the overwhelming promise of renewal affirmed in the noun group "terrible novelty of light" (line 13). The poem may be read as a response to the Biblical Malachi, who prophesied: "'And the day which is coming shall burn them up … that will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings'" (Malachi 4: 1-2). Those who 'fear' God must write a 'book of remembrance' in order to be saved (Malachi 3: 16-18). By citing Malachi here, I am not suggesting that Yeats was a conventional Christian, but rather that he responded to a discourse in which the reproduction of the right language (remembrance) ensured survival for the select few.

While Harwood's tone is often ironic, she poses a legitimate challenge to the many Biblical texts that promote fear over joy: "Read the scriptures and weep", she writes in "Midwinter Rainbow" (1990, CP 470, line 14). The words of a God, who defies description and threatens to destroy anyone who does not believe in His indescribable presence, constitute a discourse of jealousy, terror and retribution. Yet this terrifying language contrasts with a different Biblical narrative of abundance and love, which 'unfolds across a whole range of forms' (Ricoeur, A&R ed. 118). Personal experience of love, Ricoeur claims, allows an expanded understanding of the metaphor 'God is love', and the 'language game' can be used to promote joy through 'the power of metaphorization that attaches to the expressions of love' (1998: 125). Particularly when it takes the form of a hymn of praise, Ricoeur adds, joyous acclamation exceeds the discourse of fear. In a comparable way, Harwood takes up the two discourses, fear and love, in the poem "Midwinter

Rainbow" and shows how the one exceeds the other to become perpetually productive of joy.

The title "Midwinter Rainbow" indicates the nuanced mood of the poem, dedicated to Harwood's great friend Vincent Buckley who has just died. The fond memory of a shared conversation about the properties of light supports the comparison of three modes of discourse – the conversational, the informational and the imaginative – to show how the human mind and heart move easily between them and make humorous connections: "You laughed once when I told you / the luminous space between / inner and outer rainbows / is called Alexander's Band" (lines 29 – 32). Loving conversations and shared humour are contrasted with God's discourse, as incomprehensible as His way of being: "The Immortal Signified / has deconstructed light. / Adonai Elohim, / I-am-that-I-am, / ineffable by name / and nature" (lines 1-4). Harwood is citing the familiar literary discourse of deconstruction with gentle irony, for in this instance the act of 'deconstructing' light produces a sign, the colourful rainbow that continues to be read as a promise of hope and joy.

If language users want to promote joy over anguish and fear, Harwood suggests, acceptance and faith must stretch beyond language, which can only attempt to echo the divine: "Some ancient presence writes / a soft-edged covenant / beyond interpretation / on the midwinter sky" (lines 36 – 39). Recurring sibilance, the adjective "soft-edged" to suggest the clouded horizon, and the diphthong that ends "sky", all combine to evoke a gentle, contemplative mood. Systems binding time, law and place lose definition, with "beyond interpretation" operating as a parallel to confirm the blurring of boundaries for world and word alike. As in "Mappings of the Plane", "aloft" is used to describe the place in which heavenly 'discourse' appears: the rainbow is a "sign / aloft for all to see" (6 – 7). Thus the "Midwinter Rainbow" serves as a metaphor for the timeless law in which God's abiding love for humans is made manifest. Yet Harwood brings the role of the writer as participating co-creator to the fore: "God, what a character! / Where could he set the rainbow / in that anterior age / when there was none to see it?" (lines 25 – 28). Without human intercession, love and

language, the "sign" might remain unknown, "beyond interpretation / on the midwinter sky." (lines 38 – 39) In this instance, Harwood foregrounds her role as the human presence, the 'reader' who conveys her hopeful interpretation of the visible "sign" to others who are prepared to participate in the process of making meaning.

Josephi's speaker in *The Squirrels* (FNP 262 – 264) battles alone, like Yeats's stilt-walker, to attain freedom from human struggle. Clichéd metaphors place the protagonist in a new poetic context, and "Red Riding Hood" finds a new voice to claim victory over fear and death. Nevertheless, the concepts "longing for light" and "desire for peace" seem to lose their stable meaning in Josephi's inscription of *Angst*. Various modes of discourse are combined in a recount of the speaker's liberating "dream", triggered by a play about fearless animals playing on a power line. As Harwood does in "Midwinter Rainbow", Josephi chooses a spatial determinant to suggest the speaker's elevation beyond the plane of daily concerns (and common language). She is "lifted up": "… She rose beyond / the setting sun, a light tinged with blood, / was Red Riding Hood again, twirled between / the wolves, unconcerned by their howling" (lines 52 – 55). Again, a familiar narrative is appropriated: the frightening Grimms' fairy tale is one text among many spanning the centuries in which humans must confront their terrors. The re-writing of the familiar feminine stereotype, however, denies the repetition of suffering and affirms a different possibility: women defy oppression.

Metaphor provides language with which to 'sketch' the processes of life, while allowing the 'energies' of reference and meaning to unfold beyond the limitations of the original referential field (Ricoeur 1998: 354). For many of Josephi's subjects, discourse is filtered through various institutional instruments, and exposure to an incessant stream of media texts and images sometimes limits the opportunities for imaginative 'unfoldings'. Indeed, self-reflective moments reveal the paradoxical alienation with which 'informed' humans must contend. In the previous chapter, "Arrival" (FNP 435 – 436) was examined as a site of anxious struggle, and the reasons soon become evident:

Don't be afraid, I dreamt
until the sun shone into my face.
Automatically I switched on the radio,
let in the world, the high-sea summit
off Malta, events in Germany and
Czechoslovakia, a by-election win
for the radical right in Paris's north
and, to round off the globe, riots in Manila
and a Labor win in Queensland, Australia.

Outside a body drifted in the Seine
under such a lovely sky, passers-by
crowded the bridge. I needed a new talisman,
a new protection for my arrivals, bought
a St Christopher medal in Notre Dame.
The prayer that night embraced our greatest need,
the longing for light, the desire for peace.
(Stanzas 7 and 8)

Earlier in the poem, the theft of the speaker's purse in the dark underground metro has fitted seamlessly into the chronicle of unhappy incidents typical of Paris in the 1990s, "a shadier age of migration" (line 23). Life without fear is only a dream (line 35) as the indifferent media voice lists news headlines from around the globe: a body in the Seine is observed impersonally, as though it had already become an item in an interminable, dire news broadcast.[88] Thus the speaker's need for "a new talisman" appears symptomatic of a culture dependent on visual tokens and tawdry souvenirs: "new" is repeated to suggest the ideology of avid consumption. Faith is up for sale.

The speaker/observer is positioned within the consumerist economy, so the evocation of hope, "The prayer that night", represents a shift in register. Here, the definite article shows no ownership: it is impossible to say whether the speaker prays before sleep, whether she hears the prayer on the radio, or visits Notre Dame for the evening service. In any event, the signifiers "talisman" and "prayer" represent the age-old need for signs of solace against ongoing confrontations with uncertainty and death. The language of yearning, however, belongs in a different context, perhaps with the "songs of the night", the dreams evoked earlier in the poem. Josephi does not

[88] Malouf asks, is happiness hard to attain today because the world appears 'too large, and the forces that govern our lives … too remote, too complex to grapple with?' (41)

appropriate the prayer structure as Harwood might in a poem written on a similar theme. Harwood chooses to adopt and adapt the forms, to synthesize, compare and rework major narratives in her poems about renewal. In so doing, she affirms the poet's role to promote nature's generative processes and to manifest rejoicing through the power of the word. And as Ricoeur (1974) contends, citing the cumulative, 'traumatizing' effects of Marxist, Freudian and Nietzschean discourses, it is necessary to assimilate apparent 'discordances' within a new consciousness (150), a consciousness that is liberating rather than limiting because it 'opens the horizon' towards a 'faith for a postreligious age' (440). Ferry disagrees with Ricoeur's assessment of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche, who he believes were fundamental in introducing the oppressed to 'a joyful, playful, unconstrained materialism (2002: 93). Nevertheless, Ferry continues, the temporary joy of unfettered freedom has been crushed by society's preoccupation with the multiple threats to its safety.[89] The 'consciousness' proposed by Ricoeur might find its best expression in the language of poetry, through which vengeance and resentment are overturned in a celebration of the love of creation and of dwelling on earth (1974: 466).

Harwood's "On Poetry" (CP 444) concludes with an allusion to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: the poet must 'wrestle' from common speech the right words to reach 'the life beyond our frozen / habits of thought, to show with love / much that can not be spoken of.' (Lines 124 – 126) Wittgenstein's tenet, that we must be silent when confronted with what cannot be said, is reversed here by Harwood: the poet chooses language that 'translates' the unsayable in a loving way and bridges the distance between that which can and cannot be known. With this transformational power in mind, Harwood wrote to Hoddinott about Goethe, who reinscribed 'For everything must fall into nothingness' as 'No living entity can fall into nothingness' ('*Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen'* CP 600). Indeed, Harwood chooses to echo the famous poet-scientist, who studied the refrangibility of light, by concluding the tragi-comedic confrontation with death of "Night and Dreams" Part II with a repetition of Goethe's dying

[89] Ahmed argues that media hype attaches us to particular structures in such a way that 'their demise is felt as a kind of living death' (2004: 12).

words: "more light. Such light, restoring, recomposing / many who dined here. Most of them are dead." With originality and daring, Harwood wrings laughter from the most unpromising scenarios, "restoring, recomposing" and recycling elements of her favourite poems in her original creations.

Throughout this thesis, the production of joy has been tested against the structures and discourses each poem reproduces and affirms, subverts or resists. Often poems by Harwood and Josephi promote joy alongside human qualities such as tolerance and good humour. Joy is opposed to fear and, particularly in the work of Yeats and Harwood, the joyous hero confronts suffering with equanimity in the knowledge that possibilities for redemption and renewal are always waiting, now and 'beyond'. The two poets intervene, as poets often have, to rewrite unpromising discourses and to affirm hope in times of uncertainty and suffering. Infusing speech with the language of the imagination, 'passionate' language as Yeats calls it, they reinscribe vivid memories and heartfelt stories in poems which exceed not only the 'logical' language of daily transactions, politics and scientific argument, but also the discourse of fear frequently promoted in canonical texts, law and political tracts. Indeed, thought takes a radically optimistic path when it opens up to the gift of language and shows anew what compassion and consolation might mean.

Detailed analyses of key poems have revealed the technical skill required by Yeats to synthesize and refine a body of work which consistently endorses or 'remembers' a particular social system and the writer's position within it. The authorial word imbued with imagination triumphs and endures even as the existing political system crumbles. To assert that the poetry of Yeats and Harwood is productive of joy is, to some degree, to promote the poets' mastery of the word within the hierarchies and forms each poet inscribes. Harwood's poetry originates in a land of easy victories, where the voices of the subjugated are rarely heard. Mood, thematic elements and syntax are combined to serve Harwood's optimistic purpose. Her poetry comes close to the 'joyous' model endorsed by Ricoeur, wherein the language of acceptance and gratitude affirms and continually repeats the

production of joy. Nevertheless, while Harwood often draws on the Biblical canon as a source of structure and metaphor, her body of work represents a personal *tour de force*, a complex imbrication of affirmation with ironic subversion. The few exceptions to the rule, such as the poems written in Timothy Kline's strident voice, are full of resentment rather than Harwood's trademark humour.[90] Successful poems that allow the voicing of human agency respond to a powerful societal need. And if, as Ricoeur maintains, humankind wants to rejoice, it must affirm a discourse that exceeds resentment: 'Consent must be joined to poetry' (1974: 466). Whether or not the three poets embed the 'spiritually inflected' messages of hope that McClure (2007) observes in contemporary 'postsecular' novels, they do illuminate the 'recipes for resistance' and the 'larger social possibilities on the horizon' (24), thus offering glimpses of optimism through the densely woven fabric of today's world.

[90] Cited in "Joy and Madness", the Kline poems were regarded by Harwood as so unsuccessful that she did not want them published in her collected edition.

CONCLUSION

> The angel said, "Who'll do the *writing*?
> How will you merchants of despair,
> angst, stress, neurosis, isolation
> and heartbreak captivate the nation?"
> — This is a thought experiment,
> I told him. Look, my heaven-sent
> friend, at the prospects for employment:
> outlets like liquor stores will rise
> where stacks of poems, of every size
> and kind, are sold for pure enjoyment …
> (Harwood "On Poetry" CP 401, lines 44-54)

By bringing together in this project the poems of Yeats, Harwood and Josephi, I have elucidated different processes through which joy, pleasure and *jouissance* are produced. An expansion of the number of possible readings of one poem, I argued, allows for multiple openings to joy. Throughout the thesis, I explored similarities and differences among the echoes and reverberations of narratives, metaphors and structures, either incorporated into the poems discussed and/or overturned by the poets, depending on their viewpoint, purpose and style. The essential production processes, appropriation and affirmation, appropriation and subversion, and problematization, compete in some instances within the same poem to further what Deleuze calls a 'rhizomatic' proliferation of joy. Familiar forms, such as the hymn of praise, for example, can be adopted or adapted to affirm the production of joy for a particular audience. The apparent affirmation might, however, yield to a subsequent subversion that adds complexity and texture, provides ironic distance or provokes an eruption of laughter.

Although hierarchies assumed to be productive of joy might be challenged within the poem, closer scrutiny is likely to reveal the emergence of joy within a new 'economy' of production. Barthes, Lacan, Kristeva, Deleuze and Palermo conceptualize *jouissance* differently as a revolutionary force, and it can be seen that certain poems under study challenge the boundaries that keep the subject in check. Poets are free to choose, repeat and/or overturn familiar structures and metaphors, along with the ideologies

underlying them, and, especially in their disruptive poems, the three poets concerned affirm that the celebration of otherness can be productive of joy. Ideally, the author and reader share the same point of view; otherwise, the poem's political message can threaten to impede the production of joy (Eagleton 1986: 179). Often the language of excess, however, enables imagination and ideology to flow together in an eruption of *jouissance* (Barthes 1973: 25). Even the disenfranchized reader can enter into the language game.

The disruptive voice of *jouissance* rings through those poems by Harwood that unsettle the familiar cosmic hierarchy and affirm the agency of the powerful female. Parody and irony are employed to destabilize established Biblical and Freudian structures, and by recycling Biblical metaphors in new contexts and voices, Harwood transforms fear into joy and perpetuates what Ricoeur calls the 'stream of beginnings' in which new meaning is continually generated (1998: 48). Paradigms, signifiers and structuring agents are often 'repurposed' by Harwood to celebrate the woman's power to wrest control of word and world in narratives that restore the goddess and promote renewal over finitude: "Old earth will give her yielding seed / to see my daughters fed" ("Songs of Eve"). Josephi, by contrast, draws attention to the problem inherent in intertextual appropriation, namely the simultaneous perpetuation of the power hierarchies underpinning the appropriated text. Free of the rhyming and rhythmic structures employed by Yeats and Harwood, Josephi's poems reveal a different construction of joy. Her poem "My Heraldic Animal Speaks" allows for the release of *jouissance* by privileging the text itself as the productive subject. The 'real' world takes on the status of the represented world, that is, as an assemblage of texts selected by the artist-observer to suit her purpose in the (re)construction of meaning.

Through a close examination of the structure, metaphor and vocabulary of certain nature poems, the construction of human and non-human interactions can be seen as uncomplicated and joyful, and the appropriative practices at the heart of representing nature as a voiceless cluster of entities are revealed. Yeats's reverencing of Coole Park as an enduring testimony to

human culture, for example, parallels the construction of his subjectivity as the elitist poet-companion of Lady Gregory. Josephi's poems, by contrast, overturn the 'truths' promoted by the Romantics, and emphasize the greed and ignorance behind human appropriations of nature. The 'joy of nature' is revealed to be nothing more than a construct that conceals the enduring and violent truths of human colonization. Harwood's poetry promotes an alternative presence, the independent, nurturing, feminine "I". Despite Harwood's use of familiar forms and clichéd paradigms in poems such as the "Pastorals", the structures, lexical features and metaphors of lamentation and praise are so closely imbricated that loss and absence are joyously transformed into a triumphant presence within the body of the poem. Thus familiar dualities (finitude/continuity, nature/culture, father/mother) are incorporated into a celebration of the simple truth that all life is precious.

My exploration of the processes by which Harwood and Josephi produce joy in poems about desire is supported by Lacan's notion of feminine *jouissance* and Kristeva's tenet that the poem provides a space in which presence emerges from absence. Harwood adopts multiple discourses and positions to joyously challenge masculine hierarchies and assert the power of the desiring female's word. Such poems continue to 'keep disrupting the apparent equilibrium' (Deleuze 2004: 250). While Harwood parodies Freudian narratives, and appropriates for her own purpose the form and language of the metaphysical and Romantic poets in poems such as "Night and Dreams", she also brings to the fore the possibilities of the 'bed' of text as a signifier of feminine pleasure and power, a potential taken up by Josephi. Josephi's reflexivity allows authenticity to be framed within the current text (the poem) in a mirroring process that replicates representation itself. Since interactions occur within the frame of reference, a poster, song, artefact or recorded tape, 'desire' is represented as a social construct which the female might initially strive to endorse, embrace, and ultimately abandon. From her net of dreamlike imaginings assembled from scraps of familiar cultural texts, the potent female escapes alone, rejoicing.

Defiant *jouissance* erupts through the 'delirious' voices of the 'mad' characters created by Yeats, Harwood and Josephi. Harwood's appropriation

of the daimonic presence, echoing the poetry of Yeats and Blake, furthers the production of joy through a process which turns pre-linguistic impressions into the paradoxical logic of the poem. Disrupting the authorized version of events, Harwood's 'ecstatic' poems reinscribe the process of repetition. Readings of certain poems by Yeats bring his authenticity and purpose into question, and reveal why a poet such as Harwood might wish to expose the gendered construction of 'madness'. The 'excessive' language of Yeats's "Crazy Jane" nevertheless successfully unsettles the dominant hierarchy by defying the logic of (Catholic) law. Madness is inscribed as a transformative liminal state, a fearless confrontation with death and a joyous resistance to established forms of authority.

The work of all three poets was seen to validate Foucault's conceptualization of 'madness' as a construct of the interested observer, although only Josephi gives voice to the 'madman' by embedding direct quotations ("Nietzsche's Last Trainride"). 'Madness' in the poems under study was often closely aligned with the creative force and the act of writing, which permits the statement of paradoxical truths with a freedom that is potentially productive of joy. As a corollary, the creation process enables political madness and warfare to be re-presented as joyous artistic performances, wherein peace and optimism are promoted over mindless turmoil and loss of life.

Imperialist cultural, political and economic practices came to the fore in my study of 'travel' poems. Josephi's questioning of the legitimization of power structures opens the way to dwelling more generously and honestly with others in the midst of fear and uncertainty. The absence of assured 'happy endings' in her poems allows for an expanded acknowledgement of the socio-cultural *savoirs* which celebrate difference. Harwood fetes the mythic imbrication of the sea journey with identity formation and the creation of text. By incorporating the Noah narrative, she furthers a rejoicing in the elasticity of time and space, while the statement of her own defiant presence as author and creator defies the exclusion of women as free and active agents: "Beyond habit, household, children, I am I" ("Iris").

Harwood's representation of the privileged social position of whites in Australia rubs against narratives of loss in poems about Tasmanian Aboriginal communities. "Night Flight", where Harwood's reflection on home and family provides a strong contrast with her representation of erasure, delivers the same visceral *frisson* as Yeats's "High Talk". In these two poems, Yeats and Harwood construct metaphorical frameworks to allow for courageous encounters with death. While neither poem is joyous in the traditional sense, transformative *jouissance* disrupts the relationship between victim and master to foreground free choice and human fortitude. Mythical echoes of the hero's journey in poetry by Harwood and Yeats are overturned in Josephi's 'frequent traveller' poems, which promote reflection on travel as a product and process. Distancing allows the observer to reflect on the imbrication of 'homeland' and the construction of 'iconic' destinations from remnants of cultural stereotypes and social privileges. The small acts of kindness offered by others encountered *en route* draw attention to the way in which humans unnecessarily affirm hierarchies that perpetuate their superiority over those who are different. Gratitude, humility and acceptance are put forward as more promising alternatives to the arrogance and indifference with which thoughtless travelers construct the world.

As Schwab argues, the strategic use of an entire 'arsenal of conventions' affects the way in which readers (re)structure their personal and cultural boundaries: an intersubjective exchange inevitably takes place between poet, poem and readers (166). Yeats and Harwood incorporate familiar narrative themes and forms in their celebrations of the reproductive potential of the word. In such poems, joy is reproduced within 'the economy of resurrection' (Kristeva 1989: 160). Yeats produces joy not only by affirming established myths, however, but also by carefully managing structure and metaphor to privilege openness over closure and joy over sorrow. Readers are seduced into voyeuristic encounters with (often disturbing) subject matter and persuaded to believe that the suffering subjects meet terror with *jouissance*. Yeats's powerful language interrogates and exceeds the dry discourse of existing accounts, while affrming his heroic point of view. To the tension inherent in any production

process, historical, social or linguistic, Yeats addresses two responses: "What matter!" and "Rejoice" ("The Gyres"). In parallel, he constructs his own identity:

> Grant me an old man's frenzy.
> Myself I must remake
> Till I am Timon and Lear
> Or that William Blake
> Who beat upon the wall
> Till truth obeyed his call;
> ("An Acre of Grass" lines 13-18)

Here, Yeats elides the transformational process of craftsmanship with identity creation and his idea of "truth" as a construct without which his poetic persona might collapse.

From the observation that Harwood typically recycled the myths of Orpheus and Faust to privilege renewal and redemption over mourning (Atherton 2006), I developed the argument that Harwood writes under the pseudonym Geyer to incorporate other narratives and paradigms, such as the mother's metamorphosis and the 'eternal feminine'. Deliberate shifts in subject and tense enable a continual 're-membering' of powerful stories, and by re-presenting "the knowledge that all men must have" ("Lazarus") Harwood joins her own voice to an established, gendered discourse. Familiar structures and content are reworked in poems that voice her feminine characters' victorious triumphs over heroic trials, and Harwood's women rejoice in the power to call new lives and narratives into being. Joy surges from Harwood's 'spring' poems, which privilege celebration over the nostalgic mourning associated with the European 'autumnal' lyric.

Harwood uses irony and humour to destabilize the power structures which undermine human freedoms. Her work is productive of multiple joys: its meticulous crafting delivers pleasure; her adroit language game ('spot the reference') is dazzling, and *jouissance* erupts from the most unlikely places. Josephi's direct engagement with uncertainty, by contrast, defies the authority of the writing subject (and the hierarchies behind the subject) firmly incorporated into the work of Yeats. Rejoicing is often heard when Josephi's independent female voices her triumph over the establishment. In

the production of revolutionary *jouissance*, Josephi arguably engages in what Kristeva calls a liberating 'structuring and de-structuring practice, a passage to the outer boundaries of the subject and society' (1984: 17). The source of recycling or re-structuring is often disclosed in Josephi's poems, and the gain in transparency means that joy must be differently constructed.

While certain poems by Josephi produce moments of *jouissance*, they are more likely to be 'discomforting'. Ideology comes to the fore and confronts us with the painful truth of human behaviours, informed by the inescapable social machine presenced in the text. The intention in similar poems seems to be to bring history, culture, psychology, taste, values and the identity formation of the reader herself into question (Barthes 1973: 25). It is an undeniably important intention. Josephi is particularly successful when she employs the light irony evident in "My Heraldic Animal Speaks". Seeking the production of joy in her 'discomforting' poems reveals what western writing owes, not only to traditional rhythms and forms, but also to the predominant narrative to which Lacan and Kristeva so often return: mourning and the process of its transformation into joy. Within this economy, many poems by Harwood and Yeats provide evidence of the full range of poetic 'alchemy', as Kristeva calls it, which effects 'psychic transformation(s)' within the limits of meaning and resurrection (1989: 101). And profound change remains an important theme in societies 'haunted' by globalization 'fables' and the multiple fears they seed (Ferry 2007: 17). While Josephi's poetry recognizes the power of fear and its outcome, the desire to escape, it also foregrounds the human capacities for creativity and openness to change. Freedom of body, mind and cultural practice are not taken for granted here, and the importance of compassion, inclusion and respect is continually brought into view. Josephi's accessible poems promote the appreciation of small pleasures, and readers may conclude like the speaker in "Arrival" that "the room (is) warm enough".

The text as a signifying practice and a *jouissance,* as Kristeva puts it, answers an expectation 'buried within the communital representation of practice' at a time when the gap between social practice and its representation by the dominant structure is widest (1984: 210). Each of the

three poets under study responds to this important expectation. Yeats's powerful message, that certain individuals will always act to check humankind's worst impulses and to restore optimism, still has force, whether or not readers agree with Yeats's political choices. Often promoted by Josephi and Harwood, the attitude of 'engaged retreat' presses back, as this thesis discloses, on relentless indifference, and allows glimpses of a more reflective society wherein acknowledgement, acceptance and respect for all beings are valued over separation. The medium of poetry offers the capacity to resist socially promulgated narratives of irremediable despair, and further investigation of poems as productive spaces of reflection and healing is warranted.

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