# Modernism's Novel Subject: Interrogating the Inner Life in Conrad, Ford and Joyce

by

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### Introduction

## Modernism's Novel Subject

He appealed to all sides at once—to the side turned perpetually to the light of day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge...[The] incident [was] as completely devoid of importance as the flooding of an ant-heap, and yet the mystery of his attitude got hold of me as though he had been an individual in the forefront of his kind, as if the obscure truth involved were momentous enough to affect mankind's conception of itself. . . . (67-8)

—Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim

With the publication of Lord Jim in 1900, Joseph Conrad crystallized a growing skepticism of objectivity and an emerging belief that literature had to examine, represent and account for the individual's subjective experience. While the realist novelists of the nineteenth century had assumed that their characters' inner lives were consistent with their external appearances, Conrad believed that people have a second "side" that was separate from and even contradictory to its objective counterpart. As he explored Marlow's struggle to understand the different perspectives on Jim's actions, Conrad thus felt like he was confronting the "darkness" that hadn't been illuminated, the depths that hadn't been sounded, the "obscure" and unknowable "side of us" that seemed to hold the key to our "conception of [ourselves]." But since he began his "momentous" endeavor in the very moment that he critiqued his realist predecessors, Conrad carried literature past its previous mimetic limits only to wonder whether it could represent anything at all. And because he defined this "myster[ious]" inner life by the very fact that its "darkness" was "perpetual," Conrad opened a new subjective field only to admit that Marlow could see nothing but its "edge."

In the next twenty years, Ford Madox Ford and James Joyce became interested in the inner life that Conrad had portrayed as inscrutable, unfathomable and above all private. But once they began to interrogate this new form of subjectivity, these novelists started to resemble torturers whose increasingly excruciating methods fail to reveal the truth because they have captured a mailman rather than an enemy spy. Even when they examined their characters so meticulously that they could describe their most intimate feelings and depict their most fleeting sensory experiences, they found that inner life became all the more "obscure." Although they reduced the number of events in their novels so that they could fully explore their subjective consequences, they amassed such large heaps of thoughts and interpretations that they stopped believing that there were any stable foundations of knowledge. And while they talked relentlessly about experiences and impressions that seemed to share some fundamental property, they continued to restate Marlow's desperate plea, "Are not our lives too short for that full utterance which through all our stammerings is of course our only and abiding intention?" (163). Amidst these persistent conflicts between intelligibility and obscurity, these novelists often felt that their "light[s]" were too "fearful" and "ashy" to understand a "darkness" that had existed long before them. But though they believed that the "truth" of inner life was "obscure" to begin with, I will argue that their representation of subjectivity was formally interdependent with their fragmentation of the subject. As I describe how Conrad, Ford and Joyce repudiated realism by extending the mimetic ambitions on which it was based, I will explain why their "momentous" endeavor could never fulfill its stated aims. And as I show how they intensified the tensions between

representation and fragmentation, I will claim they helped turn the centered subject of the nineteenth century into the irrational, unknowable and all-important subject of the twentieth. But before I begin to examine the ways in which they interrogated inner life, I must first point out that their "Subject" was a distinctively "Novel" one.<sup>1</sup>

When I announced my ambition to describe "Modernism's Novel Subject," I punned on so many meanings of these words that I gestured towards a number of possible arguments without specifying which one I would make. As if the term "Modernism" were not already vague enough, I left it intentionally unclear whether the "Novel Subject" was a *content* included within the texts I am considering or a *form* that was developed to depict the workings of human consciousness. By now I have begun to explain that Conrad, Ford and Joyce created a Novel Subject in both of these senses. But as I show how they used inner life as both a theme *in* their works and the style *of* their writing, I will argue that they were not really examining preexisting forms of interiority, but rather developing novel ways of perceiving, knowing and being. For while they insisted that they were simply trying to depict a subject that

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> While the meanings of the terms "representation" and "fragmentation" may seem vague at this moment, they will become very clear as I show how they function in the modernist interrogation of subjectivity. But due to a "fear" that I might "somehow get unplugged" from what D.A. Miller has called the "power station (the academy, the specialization) [which] enables [me] to speak," I will sketch a quick definition of these key mechanisms (vii). In most senses, representation and fragmentation are opposites: while the one establishes meanings, the other obscures them; while the former assembles data into expressible forms, the latter disintegrates bodies of information. At the same time, however, each of these practices owes its existence to the other, for just as representation could not continue if it were to produce a comprehensive truth, fragmentation would cease if it were to destroy all meanings. Because Conrad, Ford and Joyce defined subjectivity by the fact that it had been absent from and unthinkable to realism's objective mimesis, their work provides a privileged example of representation and fragmentation at work. By showing how these authors pitted the represented features of consciousness against the unrepresentable fragments of darkness that promise "to affect mankind's conception of itself," I will characterize processes that are at once irreconcilable and indissoluble. As I describe how they collected data for their theory of subjectivity, I will claim that they enabled the task of representation by postponing its completion, laboring over inscrutable scraps or fragmenting their discourse just before the moment in which it could fully depict inner life. And as I explain how a perfect representation would put an end to the practice of representation itself, I will show how their project was always an ever-refining approximation and establish why the discursive "lives" of their texts were always "too short," as Marlow laments, for a "full utterance."

had already been fragmented by a dehumanizing culture, Michel Foucault has claimed persuasively that such a division between knowledge and power is untenable. By analyzing a number of discourses that seem to gather objective information about individuals and populations, Foucault has demonstrated "that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Discipline and Punish 27). As he has described how practices such as the confession and the examination exercise power on both the person who records her observations and the person who recounts what she feels she already knows, Foucault has maintained "that power and knowledge directly imply one another" and even that "power produces knowledge" (Discipline and Punish 27). And as he has shown how "field[s]" ranging from science to sexuality have developed indissolubly with "power relations," Foucault has in turn claimed that "the individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him" are effects of a power that "produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Discipline and Punish 194). Because I will draw on Foucault to argue that the interdependent processes of representation and fragmentation constituted the Novel Subject as a field of power-knowledge, I must therefore extract one last meaning from my pun of a title. While I have said that the Novel Subject is at once the content of books, a form for depicting inner life and a way of thinking and being, I must now recall Foucault's insight that the subject who is "tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" is also "subject to someone else by control and dependence" ("The Subject and Power" 781). But before I can show how Conrad, Ford and Joyce taught their readers a method of (self)-inquiry that made

them "subjects to" a new form of power, I must clarify one last point about Foucault's theory of power-knowledge.

Now that I have begun to examine Modernism's Novel Subject in all of its different aspects, I am finally in a position to extend what Foucault calls his "history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" ("The Subject and Power" 777). But as I bring his work into the domain of modernist fiction and deploy his theories on a set of literary techniques, I must acknowledge that my account of subjectivity is similar to his analysis of sexuality. Just as Foucault argues that "our culture" has defined sex as a "fragment of darkness" that contains a "deeply buried truth about [itself]," I have already begun to explain how Conrad, Ford and Joyce conceive of inner life as a "dark" and "obscure truth" at the heart of "mankind's conception of itself" (History of Sexuality 69). And just as Foucault claims that "modern societies...[have] dedicated themselves to speaking of [sex] ad *infinitum* while [simultaneously] exploiting it as *the* secret," I have already begun to describe how these novelists represented subjectivity "ad infinitum" at the same time as they insisted on its inscrutability (History of Sexuality 35). Because even the narrator of Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1915) and the protagonist of Joyce's *A Portrait* of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) direct their interrogation of inner life towards their experience with sexuality, it may therefore appear that my account folds back into Foucault's. But while I admit that it may occasionally seem like I have refashioned his analysis of sexuality as a "History of [Subjectivity]," I will show how my Subject is a Novel one—both in the sense that it is new and in the sense that it is distinctively literary. Even though this subject shares several features with its sexual

counterpart (darkness, obscurity), I will demonstrate that this is because the power which is exercised in each field of knowledge "categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity" and gives him a way to "turn [him]self into a subject" ("The Subject and Power" 781, 778). By explaining how literary modernism constituted a new form of inner life through the interdependent formal processes of representation and fragmentation, I will thus argue that novels put these new mechanisms in the service of "mark[ing]" and "categoriz[ing]" the subject. And by examining the ways in which modernist novelists used their specifically literary techniques to address the specifically literary problem of narrating a character, I will show how they deployed tropes like darkness and obscurity as parts of an entirely new strategy.

While Conrad, Ford and Joyce thought that they were on a "momentous" search for the fundamental properties of human consciousness, I will therefore argue that they constituted a new field of power-knowledge in the years leading up to the Great War. In Chapter One, I will show how modernism displaced realism by intensifying its ambition to represent existence as precisely as possible. By considering the ways in which the two genres struggle against one another in *Lord Jim*, I will claim that modernism began to interrogate subjectivity with the same processes of representation and fragmentation that it used to confront realism. After describing how these interdependent mechanisms started to construct the Novel Subject, I will explain why modernism developed substitute figures that can sustain its mimetic tensions in the guise of metaphysical problems. In Chapter Two, I will show how *The Good Soldier* consolidated a deep subjective field that is separate from

and even contradictory its objective counterpart. As I tie Ford's anecdote about (re)naming the novel to Dowell's attempt to reconcile these two fields, I will describe what happened when both author and narrator found that there were no stable foundations of knowledge and no intrinsic relationships between representations and referents. By demonstrating how Dowell intensifies the interrogation of subjectivity as he tries to narrate the other characters' experiences, I will argue that he forces the reader to engage with his own "obscure" impressions in order to understand the story he has pieced together. In Chapter Three, I will explain how A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man reconfigured the interrogation of subjectivity to show the mental processes that its predecessors tried to *name* or *define*. While I will describe how Stephen deploys the mechanisms of representation and fragmentation when he tries to understand his own inner life, I will argue that his attempt to discover an artistic interiority is really an endeavor to *produce* an artistic *language*. As I show how the third-person narration recasts subjectivity as a discourse in dialogue with other genres of speech, I will claim that *Portrait* makes the Novel Subject even more specifically novelistic. And as I demonstrate that Stephen's search for a language resolves into the very text of the novel, I will conclude that the interrogation of subjectivity makes power-knowledge into a *style*.

## Chapter I

# "Bringing To Light": Representation and Fragmentation in *Lord Jim*

### The Failure of Objective Representation

In many respects, Lord Jim (1900) is a sprawling addendum to an obscure court case. For while "all the sailors in the port" attend the inquiry into the Patna incident expecting "some essential disclosure as to the strength, the power, the horror, of human emotions," Marlow recognizes that their hopes will be frustrated and begins to assemble his own narrative about Jim (41). Realizing that the events were "beyond the competency of a court of inquiry," he crafts his addendum to illuminate the "human emotions" that the trial leaves obscure, to reclaim the evidence it strikes from the record (67). Thus, when Marlow supplants the omniscient narrator who cannot depict his protagonist and adjourns the court that cannot determine the truth, he responds to the failures of objective representation and crystallizes a struggle in what Fredric Jameson calls the "ideology of form" (84). According to Jameson, every text contains "a number of discontinuous and heterogeneous formal processes" that have developed to accommodate particular social conditions (84). Whether or not they have become clearly defined genres, these historically responsive "processes" establish an ideology of form because they have "sedimented content in their own right [and] ideological messages of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest content of the works" (84). In the first four chapters of Lord Jim, the "sedimented content" of realism is articulated by an omniscient narrator and manifested in a court of inquiry, yet it fails "to reproduce itself [and] not only encourages a search for those substitute textual formations that occur in its wake, but more particularly alerts us to [changes in] the historical ground" (133). At the risk of Jameson's disapproval, I will bracket the "historical ground" of this shift in order to examine the failure of realism and the "substitute formations" of modernism. In so doing, I will show how an addendum to a court case relies on a critique of objective representation, and more importantly, how the modernist interrogation of subjectivity emerges through realism's disintegration.

Without approaching the brazen parody of *The Secret Agent* (1907), that "Simple Tale of the XIX Century" in which Conrad mocks literary realism head-on, Lord Jim begins with an omniscient narrator who rests on uneasy footing until his position collapses entirely. But while the realism that is simply scorned in the later novel remains a "heterogeneous formal process" in Lord Jim, it cannot complete its objective representations and thereby fails to reproduce itself. If the power of an omniscient narrator stems from, well, his omniscience, the narrator undermines himself with the emblematic opening sentence, "He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders..." (1). After vacillating in his attempt to represent even this easily quantifiable datum, he soon loses control over the narrative progression he had begun to develop, jumping forward through Jim's stops as a water-clerk and on to his time in Patusan before retreating to describe his upbringing, his stint on the "training ship," his first voyages and finally his fateful service on the *Patna* (5). As unsettling as these uncertainties and deviations are, it is just when the narrator closes in on Jim's decisive choice that he relinquishes his omniscience altogether, omitting the moment

that Marlow at the very least gets Jim to describe in the past tense of "I had jumped...It seems" (81). Because the omniscient narrator crafts ambiguous descriptions, fragments linear time and effaces the novel's central event, he fails to reproduce his genre and gives way to the old salt. And although Marlow accepts similar challenges and limitations when he recounts his tale, although he too attempts to represent as much as he can with the linguistic tools available to him, he is able to do so because he relinquishes the goal of objectivity. In so doing, it is important to add, Marlow can reclaim the shortcomings of his omniscient counterpart by affirming his uniquely limited perspective: of the above examples, for instance, Marlow might have intentionally used vague description to couple Jim's imposing height to his obscured deficiencies ("under six feet"), or he might have momentarily concealed the *Patna* incident (as he continually does) to emphasize its interpretation and reception. But while the modernist interrogation of subjectivity thus emerges through a generic conflict with realism in the ideology of form, it is when the "ideological messages" of the disintegrating genre manifest themselves in the trial that this transition is most significant.

At the beginning of *Adam Bede*'s (1859) second book, "the story pauses a little" and George Eliot begins a meditation on realism, saying that she hopes "to give no more than a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in [her] mind" (175). Although she goes on to admit that her "mirror is doubtless defective," she then insists that she feels "as much bound to tell [the reader], as precisely as [she] can, what [its] reflection is, as if [she] were in the witness-box narrating [her] experience on oath" (175). Just when she seems to acknowledge the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Tony Jackson examines this passage in the third chapter of *The Subject of Modernism*.

limits of realism, Eliot likens her work to a factual testimony given "on oath," suggesting that she writes "as precisely...as if [she] were in the witness box" and by extension that her mirror's "outlines will [only] sometimes be disturbed" (175, emphasis added). Much as Eliot uses the court as both a model for realism and an apogee of the truth to which it aspires, the trial scene of Lord Jim is the climactic clash in the novel's ideology of form, the moment in which realism's "sedimented content" reveals itself most fully and fails most acutely. If we follow Eliot's reference to Plato and imagine as he does that by "turning a mirror round and round—you would soon enough make the sun and the heavens, and the earth and yourself," if we pretend for a moment that an objective representation "thrice removed from truth" could at the very least "make" a perfect image of its object, it becomes clear in this scene that Lord Jim's realism fails even on its own terms (Plato 16, 17). By forcing Jim into a struggle to "tell honestly" what it regards as "the truth of this experience," the court obscures his reflection, making him extract "the" objective "truth" about the Patna from his subjective "experience" and then convey this information in "honest" speech (21). And as it assembles "facts" through compromises between truth, experience and language, the court ceases to be the apogee of objectivity that Eliot imagines, and even stops working as the mirror she admits to be "defective:" for by the trial's end, the realism of *Lord Jim* is not a mirror of any sort, but rather a murky reflecting pool.

Just as the omniscient narrator depicts events inaccurately or misses them entirely, the court falls short of objectivity in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

On the one hand, Jim's "illustration" that the *Patna* went over whatever it was as easy

as a snake crawling over a stick" is deemed "good [because] the questions were aiming at facts" (21). By endorsing the metaphor Jim uses to elucidate his indistinct experience on deck, the court suggests that facts are distinguished less by their veracity than by the type of discourse used to convey them. Because *Lord Jim* thereby shows that legal discourse arises through the qualitative manipulation of experience, because it implies that it presents a distorted image of existence, Marlow later suppresses the pronouncement of the sentence, hearing "only the fragments of official language ... 'The Court...Gustav So-and-so master...native of Germany...James Soand-so...mate...certificates cancelled" (116, ellipses in original). On the other hand, Jim finds that while his voice "rang startling in his own ears," the "questions that extorted his answers seemed to shape themselves in anguish and pain within his breast,—came to him poignant and silent like the terrible questioning of one's consciousness" (21). In order satisfy the "authorities" with his "good" "illustration[s]," Jim has to repress the excruciating workings of his mind, in which their "questions" engender the "anguish and pain" of "the terrible questioning of one's consciousness." But because the interrogation only "seemed" so horrible, because it is only "like" his internal "questioning," it is clear that Jim himself produces the inner pain that he later represses, intensifying the objective questions to form their subjective counterparts. When the "question to the point cut[s] short his speech like a pang of pain," when the court forces Jim to the curt answer "Yes, I did," it therefore stifles the subjective meanings being generated by its previous questions, halting the discursive production that might reveal his experience (23). By showing how Jim is rewarded for altering his experience, by showing how he is prevented

from expressing its intensity, and by showing, in a word, how he uses language to both intensify and attenuate the relationship between experience and truth, Conrad suggests that objective representation assembles facts through a series of compromises. But while he thus undermines a realism that pretends to expose truth when it really produces qualitatively and quantitatively deficient facts, it turns out that this is almost beside the point for Conrad. For even after realism has failed to reproduce itself, it is definitively discredited by modernism's "substitute formation," which explains the failure of realism by articulating its own theory of subjectivity.

Although the realist mirror begins to crack when it distorts Jim's reflection, it only shatters because its "account[s] of men and things" disregard an entire field of existence. For just after the court accepts an embellished metaphor as a "good" "illustration," it loses all credibility when Jim laments to himself that "They wanted facts. Facts! They demanded facts from [me], as if facts could explain anything!" (21). And as he questions the explanatory power of "account[s]" that are based solely on "facts," Jim begins to illuminate the subjectivity they leave out:

The facts those men were so eager to know had been visible, tangible, open to the senses, occupying their place in space and time, requiring for their existence a fourteen-hundred-ton steamer and twenty-seven minutes by the watch; they made a whole that had features, shades of expression, a complicated aspect that could be remembered by the eye, and something else besides, something invisible, a directing spirit of perdition that dwelt within, like a malevolent soul in a detestable body. (22-23)

At first, Jim insists that the facts of the *Patna* incident "had been" true in the way the authorities construe the term. Adhering to the scientific laws of "space and time," taking place on "a fourteen-hundred ton steamer" at a precisely measured moment "twenty-seven minutes by the watch," the facts had indisputably met the requirements of "existence." Supported by their scientific authenticity, they had possessed many "shades of expression" yet remained "open to the senses," emanating "a complicated aspect that could be remembered by the eye," at once a "feature" of particular importance and an overarching quality that reasserts the unification of a "whole." At the same time, however, Jim maintains that the facts had transpired along with "something else besides," "something" that was not "visible [and] tangible," but rather "invisible," "something" that was not "open to the senses," but rather closed off "within" "like a malevolent soul in a detestable body." Just as it is initially unclear what this "something else" could be, it is syntactically ambiguous just how it is connected to its scientifically and perceptually verifiable counterparts: while it seems completely opposed to and removed from the "whole," it is also the final term in the sequence that constitutes it, the "directing spirit" that creates it and ensures its completion. Although I will show with greater detail in the next section that this "something else" is the subjective experience that is struck from the record of objective truth, it is enough to note for now that the facts which the court assumes to be "visible, tangible [and] open" only constitute a "whole" when they are combined with the "invisible," "malevolent soul" that "direct[s]" them. With this conclusion in hand, I can now illustrate how the realism in Lord Jim cannot depict a "whole" whose "directing spirit" is subjective, and therefore how it collapses when the modernist interrogation of subjectivity begins.

At the moment when Jim reveals the importance of his subjective "spirit," the realism that had already failed to reproduce itself succumbs completely. For as the court examines Jim's "open" actions and ignores the subjective impressions that informed them, its murky reflecting pool withers to become a mere puddle, its objective representation a simplification of the "whole." Striking "a hammer on an iron box, were the object to find out what's inside," as Marlow puts it, the court does not seek "the fundamental why," but the "superficial how," not the "directing spirit" that "dwel[ls] within" the facts, but the "features" that distinguish their surfaces (41). Pronouncing a verdict that reveals its very lack of knowledge, convicting Jim "in utter disregard of [his] plain duty" when he had really failed to act due to his agonizingly high regard for his duty, it thus shows that objective representation is not only distorted, but also misleading and incomplete. However, because the court fails definitively only once the "visible, tangible [and] open" has been contrasted to "something else," objective representation disintegrates fully only once subjective representation has begun. After resting uneasily beside each other for the first three chapters, realism and modernism erupt into open opposition when Jim severs the truth and experience that had been fused into facts, when he creates two fields of existence where there had seemed to be one. As the generic conflict coincides with the crisis of objectivity and subjectivity, the dust settles, and realism lies vanquished while modernism stands victorious. But because the collapse of realism is interdependent with the emergence of modernism, it eludes Jameson's opposition of "generic

structure" to "substitute formation" and demands a revised approach to the ideology of form.

By showing how Marlow deals the deathblow to realism and heralds the ascendance of modernism, I have amended Jameson's argument that Lord Jim contains "a shift between two distinct cultural spaces, that of 'high' culture and that of mass culture" (195). Just as I have uncovered a generic shift that Jameson disregards, I will linger on its formal peculiarities in a way that both deploys and modifies his methods. Up to this point, I have illustrated how Lord Jim is driven by a struggle in the ideology of the form, a conflict between two "heterogeneous formal processes" with "sedimented content in their own right" (84). If Jameson acknowledged this shift, he would show how realism emerges "as an imaginary 'solution' to [a] real contradiction," supplements its initial "ideological messages" in a process of "sedimentation," and fails "to reproduce itself" when the "sedimented" ideology of its form no longer accommodates historical conditions (105, 126, 133). Using a "permutational scheme or *combinatoire*" to examine realism's failure, he would then "reestablish the series that should have generated [its] missing term," compare this ideal series to the "substitute formation" that disrupts it, and use the difference between genre and "substitute" to illuminate both the old and the new "historical ground[s]" (124, 133). By exposing how realism develops and disintegrates in relation to history, Jameson would thus figure Lord Jim as a "symbolic act that must reunite or harmonize heterogeneous narrative paradigms," as a discourse that must passively accommodate generic struggles and the historical conflicts they represent (130). And because he would establish a passive relationship

between a text and the history that determines its "objective, a priori conditions of possibility," he would use a *combinatoire* that could only calculate historical change through the difference between "structural norm and textual deviation" (132).

Assuming that texts always attempt to resolve historical contradictions, assuming that literary development is driven by extrinsic historical change, and assuming that generic struggles are only caused by and indicative of historical differences, he would misinterpret the transition from realism to modernism in *Lord Jim* even after he had fashioned the very tools that can analyze it. I have therefore postponed historical conclusions not merely as a methodological convenience, but as a methodological imperative, for it is because I have isolated and scrutinized *Lord Jim*'s formal struggle that I will be able to elucidate the peculiar effects that Jameson might overlook. And as I prolong the formal analysis that might later illuminate the "historical ground," I will show how the relationship between realism and modernism departs from the strict oppositions of Jameson's brand of political interpretation.

After deploying Jameson's approach to the ideology of form at the beginning of this chapter, I have thus been forced to refine its hermeneutic practices at the culmination of *Lord Jim*'s first generic struggle. Capricious as I may seem, I have modified the position that was able to figure realism's disintegration in isolation precisely because it is unable to understand it in relation to modernism's emergence. After following Jameson to the point where he would insist that realism develops to accommodate historical forces and fails to reproduce itself when these "a priori conditions of possibility" disappear, I paused, disregarded history for a moment, and then realized that something else occurs during this transition. In this sense, I should

have been more precise when I said that the collapse of realism coincides with the emergence of modernism, because I was not following Jameson's suggestion that these genres respond to historical change like relay runners passing the baton of literary representation. For while I agree with him that they emerge from and respond to distinct historical conditions, while I agree with him that the transition from one to the other marks a clear historical turning point, I insist that the dissolution of the one is formally interdependent with the creation of the other. Although it reaches the finish line exhausted, to continue the metaphor of the relay runner, realism only passes the baton of representation when another runner snatches it, when modernism intervenes in its attempts to represent reality. In my reading of Lord Jim, realism does not fail to reproduce itself solely because its "historical ground" has disappeared, but also because modernism shows that it is distorted, misleading and incomplete. By the same token, modernism does not accommodate a new "historical ground" as if previous genres did not exist, but begins to interrogate subjectivity precisely because realism had overlooked it. Exposing realism's shortcomings by taking up its ambition to represent as much of existence as possible, therefore, modernism relates to history by pursuing the old genre's goals with new techniques. With this intervention, it proves that literary genres are active interlocutors with one another and not passive respondents to history, that they do not only accommodate historical shifts, but also incite formal changes. And to return to the hermeneutic problem with which I began, it eludes the opposition of "structural norm and textual deviation" so essential to Jameson's *combinatoire*, which cannot figure realism and modernism when they share a common goal, and cannot illuminate two distinct "historical ground[s]" when

the collapse of one genre and the emergence of another occur in such interdependent simultaneity. Because I have postponed the historical conclusions that Jameson is so quick to pronounce, I have realized that the disintegration of realism and the formation of modernism are not independent responses to successive historical grounds. And because I have found that the formal interactions between these genres influence and even determine their historical functions, I will be able to modify Jameson's approach to make a different sort of argument. For the rest of this chapter, I will therefore build on my claim that realism collapses with modernism's emergence to reveal precisely how modernism interrogates the subjectivity that realism had overlooked. And as I show how its representation of subjectivity is interdependent with its fragmentation of the subject, I will explain what happens when modernism solves one mimetic problem only to create another.

#### The Interrogation of Subjectivity

While I have attributed realism's ultimate collapse to the modernist interrogation of subjectivity, I do not discount the genre's attempts to reconcile depictions of the individual with accounts of the social whole. But as hard as realism tries to include inner life in its murky reflecting pool, it conflates subjective experience with objective existence and maintains that thoughts develop predictably from actions. When Eliot claims in *Adam Bede* to expose "some trait of gentle goodness in the faulty people who sit at the same hearth [as her]," she thus assumes that interiority is composed of nothing more than the concealed aspects of exteriority (179). And as she describes how "an excellent matron, who could never in her best days have been handsome, [still] had a packet of yellow love-letters in a private

drawer, and sweet children [who] showered kisses on her sallow cheeks," Eliot does not address the qualitative features of the woman's experiences, but merely reveals the love that permeates her private life yet remains indiscernible in her "sallow" public appearance (178). Just as Lord Jim begins with an omniscient narrator, Marlow draws on Eliot's inferential strategies when he first sees the officers of the *Patna*, singling Jim out from the three whose repulsive countenances are consistent with their disreputable actions. Looking Jim over, he even recalls Eliot's veneration of "faulty people," insisting, "I knew his appearance; he came from the right place; he was one of us. He stood there for all the parentage of his kind, for men and women by no means clever or amusing, but whose very existence is based upon honest faith, and upon the instinct of courage" (32). But in order to explain why an "upstanding, broadshouldered youth" would cast in his lot with a captain who resembles "a trained baby elephant walking on hind legs" or a chief engineer with "an air of jaunty imbecility," Marlow has to open a second field of inquiry (30). Discarding the notion that thoughts and the decisions they inform arise predictably from a stable reality, abandoning the illusion that subjective experience is qualitatively consistent with objective existence, he determines that Jim's inner life is not explained by its "visible, tangible [and] open" features, but rather that it is separate from and even contradictory to them. Realizing that realism fails to represent reality as precisely and completely as it claims, Marlow does not just fine-tune its strategies, but reconfigures them entirely, splitting the singular existence it envisions into two distinct fields. Because the objective field of Jim's "appearance" and "parentage" clearly did not give him an "instinct of courage," Marlow looks to the subjective one and determines

that Jim was compelled to jump by "some infernal alloy in his metal," some "weakness that may lie hidden...repressed or maybe ignored more than half a lifetime" (34, 32). As his descriptions evoke Jim's recognition of a "directing spirit of perdition that dwelt within, like a malevolent soul in a detestable body," Marlow begins to weave together an approach to the subjective field and even a theory of subjectivity (23). This section is a record of his attempt.<sup>2</sup>

When Marlow turns to subjectivity, he repudiates the realism that could not represent Jim by intensifying the ambitions on which it was based. This may be a difficult point, but it is a crucial one, for just as realism's collapse coincides with modernism's emergence, the beginning of subjective representation is interdependent with the disintegration of its objective counterpart. On a most basic level, the former

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Although the interrogation I describe here was specifically literary, it was also part of a broad epistemic shift in which literature, visual art and the social sciences tried to examine, represent and account for the individual's subjective experience. Just as Conrad's work is often compared to that of the French painters who had started to explore subjective impressions more than twenty years before, it also shares concerns with two philosophical texts that were published in the same year as Lord Jim, Sigmund Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams and Edmund Husserl's Logical Investigations. While T.J. Clark explores a crucial affinity between French Impressionism and early psychoanalysis in "Freud's Cézanne," the painter's three versions of Les Grandes baigneuses were not the only works of art that resounded with Freud's project around the turn of the century. Indeed, Clark could almost as easily be writing of Conrad when he claims that Cézanne was "Freudian in the way of Freud in 1895" because he "materialize[d] the play of phantasy" in his bathers' figures and combined "an internal sense of what being in the body feels like into our picture of how another body looks" (116, 111, 110). For much as both psychoanalyst and painter tried to explain subjective experience in reference to anatomical form before stumbling upon "the first improvised forms of contrary imagining," the novelist used objective representation until he realized that he needed its subjective counterpart to depict the "internal" experience of what the "body feels like" (116). While Conrad's path from subjective materialism to new forms of representation resembled Freud and Cézanne's, his definitions of objectivity and subjectivity evoked Husserl's. Just as Husserl used the phenomenological epoché to "parenthesize...the whole natural world which is continually 'there for us,' 'on hand,' and which will always remain there...as an actuality even if we choose to parenthesize it," Conrad understood an objective event as one that occupies a "place in space and time" independent of its divergent subjective perspectives (Husserl 65, Lord Jim 22). And in the same way that Husserl examined "what we find immanently within [consciousness]" to prove that it has "a being of its own which in its own absolute essence, is not touched by the phenomenological exclusion," Conrad and the novelists who followed him sought "some essential disclosure as to the strength, the power, the horror, of human emotions" (Husserl 66, Lord Jim 41). Despite the differences between philosophical and literary discourses, Husserl and Conrad both aspired to reconfigure the terms of nineteenth century inquiry so that they might circumvent the "superficial how" of objective existence and examine the "fundamental why" of subjective experience (41).

responds to the failures of the latter, seeking the "fundamental why" of the Patna incident because the court had ignored it for the "superficial how." But while Marlow thus deals the deathblow to realism, he only does so by opening a subjective field that carries the genre past its previous mimetic limits, by developing "a faithful account of men and things" that takes Eliot's aspirations beyond her wildest dreams. Sharing her determination to depict events "precisely" "as they have mirrored themselves in [her] mind," he breaks realism's mirror not because he rejects the ideal of perfect representation, but rather because he attempts to realize it more fully. Because he reconfigures realism beyond recognition in the very moment that he brings its ambitions to their fullest manifestation, the genre he embodies arises through interdependent acts of fragmentation and representation. At the same time as it shatters the illusion that objective representations are precise or complete, modernism examines subjectivity to craft the most rigorous, comprehensive depictions possible. And in order to show that the court cannot understand its evidence, it not only questions the witness, but attempts to understand the most obscure motivations for and perspectives on his actions. Rewarding the attention to form that has intensified since historical conclusions have been postponed, Lord Jim's generic conflict thus reveals its most important consequence. For just as modernism displaces realism through interdependent acts of representation and fragmentation, it interrogates subjectivity by intensifying the tensions between these mechanisms.

While Jim maintains that the *Patna* incident included "visible...features" and "something invisible," and while Marlow himself suggests that Jim "looked as genuine as sovereign" yet had some undetectable "infernal alloy in his metal," it is

not until the two dine in the Malabar House that Marlow solidifies these divisions between objectivity and subjectivity (34). But just as he repudiates realism by intensifying its search for the ideal mirror, Marlow simultaneously fragments and represents the subjective field when he establishes its definition:

These were issues beyond the competency of a court of inquiry: it was a subtle and momentous quarrel as to the true essence of life, and did not want a judge. He wanted an ally, a helper, an accomplice. I felt the risk I ran of being circumvented, blinded, decoyed, bullied, perhaps, into taking a definite part in a dispute impossible of decision if one had to be fair to all the phantoms in possession—to the reputable that had its claims and to the disreputable that had its exigencies. I can't explain to you who haven't seen him and who hear his words only at second hand the mixed nature of my feelings. It seemed to me I was being made to comprehend the Inconceivable—and I know of nothing to compare with the discomfort of such a sensation. I was made to look at the convention that lurks in all truth and on the essential sincerity of falsehood. He appealed to all sides at once—to the side turned perpetually to the light of day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge. He swayed me. I own to it, I own up. The occasion was obscure, insignificant—what you will: a lost youngster, one in a million—but then he was one of us; an incident as completely devoid of importance as the flooding of an ant-heap, and yet the mystery of his attitude got hold of me as though he had been an individual in the forefront of his

kind, as if the obscure truth involved were momentous enough to affect mankind's conception of itself. . . . (67-8)

Adjourning the court by confronting the "issues" that were "beyond [its] competency," Marlow insists that Jim and the rest of "us" have an external "side turned perpetually to the light of day," and another "side" "which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness." Because he likens the second "side" to the unperceivable "hemisphere of the moon," because he divides it from its "light" counterpart based on its "perpetual darkness," he suggests that the fundamental feature of subjectivity is its incomprehensibility. In this sense, he defines it with the same processes of representation and fragmentation he uses to smash the realist mirror, positing an independent field and questioning our ability to understand it, intensifying mimetic ambitions and renouncing them with ever-greater resolve. As he begins a "subtle and momentous quarrel as to the true essence of life," Marlow thus finds that the "essence" of subjectivity is so "true" precisely because it internalizes existence in ways that are "Inconceivable" to others. And when he considers a field that "lurks at the bottom of every thought, sentiment, sensation," he not only insists on its "perpetual darkness" and compares it to "the other hemisphere of the moon," but even calls it "the Irrational" itself (88).

Because Marlow discovers that subjective impressions "lur[k] in all truth and on the essential sincerity of falsehood," because he determines that they inform "tru[e]" assertions and "sincer[e]" delusions alike, he suggests that the "mystery of [Jim's] attitude" seemed "momentous enough to affect mankind's conception of itself." But while he is "swayed" by the realization that Jim's "reputable" regard for

his duty "had its claims" just as his "disreputable" leap "had its exigencies," Marlow is "made to look" at "obscure" motives that he can only see by "a fearful ashy light falling at times on [their] edge." In this sense, he represents Jim's subjectivity "as though he had been an individual in the forefront of his kind," yet acknowledges that the *Patna* incident will remain "as completely devoid of importance as the flooding of an ant-heap" because his insights will only fragment a subjective field that is "Inconceivable" by its very definition. Examining an "alloy" that is only "infernal" because it lays "repressed or maybe ignored more than half a lifetime," scrutinizing a "directing spirit" that only exists as "something else" because it is "invisible," Marlow represents the "edge" of Jim's subjectivity in a discourse that makes it all the more obscure. Much as Jim "hesitate[s] at times in his speech" before the court because he feels "like a creature that [finds] itself imprisoned within an enclosure of high stakes [and] dashes round and round, distracted in the night, trying to find a weak spot," Marlow declares that he "can't explain [his knowledge] to you who haven't seen [Jim] and who hear his words only at second hand" (23). In his desire to represent a field that is defined by its incomprehensibility, Marlow "dashes round and round" its "edge[s]" and crafts a fragmented version that he "can't explain." When he exposes the subjective "phantoms" that make his account "fair," he questions whether one person can make a "definite" judgment of another and renders the "dispute" over Jim's actions "impossible of decision." But like the alchemist who fills a laboratory with equipment in his search for the elixir of life, Marlow develops a sophisticated formal apparatus as his addendum to the case postpones the verdict indefinitely.

When Jim "hesitate[s]...in his speech" during the trial, he decides that "only a meticulous precision of statement would bring out the true horror behind the appalling face of things" (22). Just as Jim becomes more determined "to go on talking for truth's sake" when he senses that he has "dash[ed] round" the "true horror" of the Patna incident, Marlow continues to assemble and recount his narrative with "meticulous precision" when he realizes that he "can't explain" Jim's subjectivity (23). But while the old salt could just as easily be describing himself when he claims that the youngster "could no more stop telling [his story] than he could have stopped living by the mere exertion of his will," he is also aware of the problems that face their unrelenting will to discourse (73). Even after he has spent hours "talking for truth's sake," Marlow transcends both hesitation and inexplicability with the lament, "Are not our lives too short for that full utterance which through all our stammerings is of course our only and abiding intention? I have given up expecting those last words, whose ring, if they could only be pronounced, would shake both heaven and earth" (163). With his insistence that he and Jim must go on "living" through a discourse that can never "pronounce" its "full utterance," Marlow condenses modernism's fundamental discursive tensions into an emphatic form. For while the genre's "only and abiding intention" is to depict the subjectivity that promises to "shake both heaven and earth," it does so in a way that makes inner life all the more "[un]pronounce[able]." As it explores a field that is defined by its incomprehensibility, modernism produces a discourse of subjectivity that "give[s] up expecting the last words," a succession of "stammerings" that "distinguish the truth, but even when taken together, do not suffice to name it" (Barthes, S/Z 62).

Intensifying the search for the ideal mirror while repudiating its existing manifestations, modernism thus reflects the features that "distinguish" subjectivity yet finds that they do not form a complete image of its "Irrational" workings. Because modernism sustains itself through processes that can never fulfill their stated aims, because it can "no more stop" the mechanisms of representation and fragmentation "than [it] could [stop] living by the mere exertion of [its] will," it continually delays the "last words" that would not only "suffice to name" subjectivity, but also to cease its discourse. And as it "brings into being an insufficient half truth [that is] powerless to name itself," modernism "thicken[s] the enigma" of subjectivity by engulfing it conflicting discourses (Barthes, S/Z 62).

Although modernism can never really "name" the field that is "Inconceivable" by its own terms, it sometimes yields to the temptations of closure: after all, *Heart of Darkness* reaches its climax when Marlow watches Kurtz "live his life again...during that supreme moment of complete knowledge" in which he "pronounce[s]" his famous "last words," "The horror! The horror!" (105). But in *Lord Jim* and the novels that take up its interrogation of subjectivity with the greatest intensity, "there is never time to say [the] last word," never a "supreme moment of complete knowledge" in which their relentless "stammerings" can finally "affect mankind's conception of itself" (163). For whereas the Marlow who "penetrate[s] deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness" is drawn through the "quiet" by a "man [who] present[s] himself as a voice," the old salt who listens to Jim finds that the youngster's words are "shot through with shared thoughts, points of view [and] alien value judgments" in what Mikhail Bakhtin calls a "dialogically agitated and tension-

filled environment" (Heart of Darkness 52, 70; "Discourse in the Novel" 276). From the moment that Marlow solicits and recounts the insane engineer's claim that he is being tormented by "millions of pink toads" whose "claws" and "ugly mouths" were "worse than seeing a ship sink," he tries to craft the ideal mirror of Jim by assembling as many reflections as he can (39). Just as he can "no more stop" the "stammerings" that "distinguish" subjectivity "than he could [instantaneously] sto[p] living," Marlow cannot help but gather the "points of view [and] alien value judgments" of everyone he encounters, from Captain Brierly and his "grey-headed mate" to Chester and "the notorious Robinson" to Messrs. Eggström & Blake, Gentleman Brown and countless others (43, 117). When he claims in the "packet" that concludes the novel to have "fitted the pieces together [so that] there [are] enough of them to make an intelligible picture," he thus refers unwittingly to the methods through which he has constructed the entire narrative (245, 249). And because each of these "pieces" introduces the linguistic patterns enforced by its milieu and appropriate to its immediate context, they saturate Lord Jim with the "multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social beliefs systems" that Bakhtin calls "heteroglossia" (288). Even though Marlow is "insufficient" to his self-appointed task and "powerless to name" subjectivity, he continuously inscribes an excess of "verbal-ideological and social" perspectives on the "directing spirit." If Bakhtin pictured Marlow's interrogation of subjectivity "in the form of a ray of light," he would thus figure the "play of colors and light on the facets of the image...as the spectral dispersion of the ray-word, not within the object itself...but rather...in an atmosphere filled with the alien words...through which the ray passes on its way to the object" (277). Although *Heart of Darkness* "can be

defined" like any novel "as a diversity of social speech types...and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized," *Lord Jim* and the texts it heralds deploy these "speech types" and "voices" with more radical force (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 262). For as these novels repudiate realism by intensifying its ambitions, they not only reflect subjectivity as it "mirror[s] [itself] in [their author's] mind[s]," but also how it appears from their characters' "points of view." And as they "distinguish" subjectivity but "do not suffice to name it," they deploy heteroglossia to "thicken the enigma" with a carefully orchestrated pandemonium that represents and fragments inner life from every possible direction. But while I will return in the next chapter to the "stammerings" that can never articulate a "full utterance" and the heteroglossia that disperse the "ray-word," I must now examine the mechanisms that sustain the vexed interrogation of subjectivity.

### **Modernism's Generic Self-Representation**

Although modernism emerges through interdependent acts of representation and fragmentation, it must also conceal its formal conflicts. While it displaces realism and interrogates subjectivity by creating as many problems as it solves, it therefore "acts *as if* there [are] no problem[s] [and] prestructures those who write as [modernists] as not having to worry about such considerations" (Jackson 65).

Obscuring its discursive tensions in an array of substitute figures, modernism pretends that the subjectivity it depicts has already been fragmented and acts *as if* the field it illuminates has always been dark. And in order to consolidate these mechanisms into the sort of elaborate facade that Tony Jackson calls a "generic self-representation," modernism draws on and contributes to the philosophical and

aesthetic discourse of Literary Impressionism (Jackson 65). Critics have contested this term to the point at which a 1968 "Symposium in Literary Impressionism" recommended "dropping [it]...from the literary vocabulary," yet they have always agreed that Conrad's "Preface" to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897) is a definitive statement of its ambitions (Matz quoting Symposium 14). But as they have gone so far as to read the "Preface" as a "representative text" for the "general situation of early modernism," scholars like Michael Levenson and Jesse Matz have inscribed a dense camouflage on the genre's surface (Levenson 2). In order to demonstrate how Lord Jim recasts its mimetic problems as metaphysical ones and pretends that the subjectivity it represents is already fragmented, I will therefore examine both the "Preface" and the "sedimented layers of previous interpretations...through which [critics have attempted] to confront and interpret" it (Jameson ix-x). And as I read Matz's Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics as both a window into and a part of modernism's self-representation, I will show how the genre conceals and sustains its interrogation of subjectivity.<sup>3</sup>

Because modernism arises as a genre and functions as ideology through the use of two conflicting processes, it is most effective precisely when it is most problematic. When *Lord Jim* exposes the interdependence of representation and fragmentation with the tropes of light and darkness, it intensifies them to a point at which they are in danger of disintegration. Rather than attenuating the mimetic

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> By admitting that "we never really confront a text…in all its freshness as a thing-in-itself," by assuming that "texts come before us as the always-already-read," and by analyzing the "Preface" in its actual context beneath "sedimented layers" of literary criticism, I draw once again on *The Political Unconscious* (ix). But while I deploy Jameson's method of "metacommentary" on Matz's recent study, I do not use it as he would to expose "the structural limitations of [Matz's] interpretive codes," but rather to reveal the specific contents of Matz's interpretation (x).

contradictions that drive its emergence, the novel sustains them in the guise of metaphysical problems. And in order to support these substitute figures, *Lord Jim* acts *as if* it is the sort of "art" that the "Preface" discusses in its opening lines:

Art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind

of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colors, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of mater and in the facts of life, what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential—their one illuminating and convincing quality—the very truth of their existence. (vii) With its claim that art can only "render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe" by depicting its invisible counterpart, the "Preface" insists that subjective impressions are the "enduring and essential" foundations of perception, thought and action. And as it calls for an art that identifies the "one illuminating and convincing quality" in a disjointed collection of "forms," "colors," "light" and "shadows," it suggests a method through which literature could interrogate these impressions. When it builds on this notion to assert that art must strive "before all, to make you see," the "Preface" obscures literature's linguistic dimensions by privileging the author's visual faculties (ix). Emphasizing perception and downplaying representation, the "Preface" argues that the author "finds the terms of his appeal" after he has "descend[ed] within himself," that he translates his experiences into language *after* he has proved "deserving and fortunate" in the "lonely [perceptual] region of stress and strife" (viii). While the "Preface" thus establishes a substitute vocabulary that rearticulates modernism's mimetic problems in metaphysical terms, it also articulates philosophical assumptions that make it seem *as if* the subjectivity that modernism constructs is an inherent and unchanging structure. Deploying its metaphysical vocabulary in the assertion that "the very truth of [our] existence" is a "gift and not an acquisition," the "Preface" naturalizes subjectivity so that it appears to have already been "underlying" external existence (viii). Turning to the purportedly inherent "part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom," it promises to illuminate the field that has always been dark and cultivate a "solidarity...which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity" (viii). By maintaining mimetic problems in the guise of metaphysical ones and making the emerging subjectivity seem like a natural structure, the "Preface" supports modernism's generic self-representation. But while the manifesto itself provides *Lord Jim* with the discursive materials for its facade, the critics who have read it as modernism's "representative text" have helped it do so even more effectively.

As the scholars and doctrinaires of Literary Impressionism have canonized the "Preface," they have embellished and solidified modernism's self-representation. And because each of their deposits has fossilized around the original discourse, I will continue to examine Literary Impressionism by excavating the "sedimented reading habits and categories" through which it has been understood (Jameson x). Whereas the *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates that the "see[ing]" that is so important in the "Preface" has long been considered both a visual experience of "external objects and their movements" and a mental perception of "an immaterial object [or] a quality," Jesse Matz embodies a discourse that has continually refined this double meaning. While Conrad is as vague as he is memorable when he proclaims his determination

"to make you see," Matz is more precise when he argues that the Impression "mediates opposite perceptual moments...mak[ing] surfaces show depths, mak[ing] fragments suggest wholes, and devot[ing] itself to the undoing of such distinctions" (1). By exalting the "keen eye" that "seizes on the essential" in order to unite "sensuous object" with "rational concept," he augments Conrad's substitute vocabulary with the scholarly terminology it lacked (142). And by explaining what the artist does in the once-ambiguous "region of stress and strife," he reinforces the notion that Impressions are formed before their linguistic equivalents. Although he admits that the author's Impression "prints in a foreign language" and reveals "the limitations of our figures for aesthetic perception," he acknowledges mimetic conflicts only to uphold a division "between reality and writing" (11, 10). As he suggests that language is one of several obstacles to the interrogation of subjectivity rather the source of its fundamental tension, Matz improves the camouflage that attributes the problems produced by representation and fragmentation to the perceptual acts that precede them. While he thus allows Marlow to insist that he has trouble seeing Jim's "perpetual darkness" even when it is his own "fearful ashy light" that cloaks it in such obscurity, he also bolsters the notion that the subjectivity modernism creates is fragmented to begin with. Although the development of literature, philosophy and criticism in the last hundred years has made it all but impossible to claim that subjectivity is inherent or fixed, Matz reads the "Preface's" determination to reveal natural human similarities as an attempt to reconcile preexisting social divisions. In an age with less faith in a "part of [the] being which is not dependent on wisdom," he establishes a second line of defense behind which the

effort to "see[k] strict fidelity to the visible universe in order to encourage human solidarity" can at the very least alleviate socially inflicted fragmentation (138). And as he argues that Impressionism is "a force for reintegration" that "militates against...capitalism's diminishments of sense," he replenishes the discursive reserves that disguise modernism's acts of fragmentation as encounters with an already-fragmented subject (149). While Matz examines the "Preface" and other aesthetic manifestos with the precision and originality to "reconfigure Impressionism's cultural history," he therefore remains bound by the "sedimented reading habits" that make him part of a generic self-representation (2). Although he wrote his study more than a century after Conrad did *Lord Jim*, it is precisely because I have considered the "Preface" alongside such a recent addition to and product of Literary Impressionism that I will be able to show how the novel deploys this aesthetic and philosophical discourse.

From the moment that Jim first sees Marlow and thinks that he "looks at me as though he could see somebody or something past my shoulder," *Lord Jim* acts *as if* its interrogation of subjectivity depends on the metaphysical *see*ing described by the "Preface" (24). For just as Jim draws on Literary Impressionism in his feeling that Marlow reveals the "enduring and essential" elements within his external "forms," the old salt figures his attempt to understand the youngster as a struggle within the "lonely [perceptual] region of stress and strife." When Marlow admits that Jim "became known as a rolling stone" to "the common mind," he prefigures Matz's regard for the "keen eye" as he "strain[s] [his] mental eyesight" to perceive an object whose "shade of difference was [actually] so delicate that it was impossible" to

condense into such a dramatic or definitive judgment (142). Deploying the substitute vocabulary in which *see*ing is visual and "mental" but not linguistic, Marlow acts *as if* it is his "eyesight" and not his voice that must be "deserving and fortunate" if it is to "seize on the essential" features of Jim's actions. Figuring his attempt to understand Jim in metaphysical terms rather than mimetic ones, Marlow attributes the problems created by his form of representation to the difficulty of *see*ing, remarking at one point that when "the growl of thunder increased...[to] a culminating crash," the "darkness leaped back...and [Jim] vanished before [his] eyes as utterly as though he had been blown to atoms" (129). Although some parts of Jim "vanis[h]" precisely because Marlow sees others under a "fearful ashy light," although the "darkness" that surrounds him can only "lea[p] back" after it has been fragmented into groupings of distinct "atoms," *Lord Jim* therefore casts the problems created by its form of representation as problems based in metaphysical acts of perception.

As Lord Jim sustains its discursive tensions in the guise of metaphysical conflicts, it deploys Literary Impressionism's distinction "between reality and writing" to further camouflage its contradictory formal mechanisms. Just as Matz insists that impressions are formed before their linguistic equivalents and reveal "the limitations of our figures for aesthetic perception," Marlow tells his listeners that his first encounter with Jim "happened in much less time than it takes to tell, since I am trying to interpret for you in slow speech the instantaneous effect of visual impressions" (35). With this aside, Lord Jim divides "slow speech" from "instantaneous... impressions" and ties itself more firmly to the self-representation that supports this distinction. Even though it admits that Marlow has confronted

problems in his attempt to assemble and recount a narrative about Jim, the novel does not acknowledge that these are inherent to mimesis, but instead suggests that they have arisen from his personal failure to "interpret" experiences and "find the terms of his appeal." And as it makes the "instantaneous...impression" a potential source of the conflicts that actually emerge during mimesis, Lord Jim acts as if it has not altered inner life by depicting it. Drawing on the assumption that subjectivity is a "gift and not an acquisition," the novel pretends to describe an unchanging natural structure in the hopes of establishing a "solidarity...which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity." Much as it continually refers to its efforts as a "subtle momentous quarrel as to the [singular] true essence of life," Lord Jim suggests that its young protagonist is "an individual in the forefront of his kind" who reveals the universal features of this "true essence." Even when the text admits that it only seemed "as if" Jim's "obscure truth" could "affect mankind's conception of itself," even when it acknowledges that it only acted "as though" Jim had been a representative figure, it gestures towards its role in the construction of inner life only to insist that the "Inconceivable" subjectivity it interrogates had been fragmented to begin with. Just after Marlow has written the letters of recommendation that give Jim a "clean slate," Lord Jim retreats to Matz's second line of defense with the lament, "A clean slate, did he say? As if the initial word of each our destiny were not graven in imperishable characters upon the face of a rock" (134). Although Marlow uses his own "word[s]" to send Jim off as a "rolling stone" and represent him after his rolling has ceased, the novel obscures the ways in which the youngster's life has unfolded in relation to discourse to make it seem instead that his "destiny" was predetermined by

"imperishable characters" inscribed in "rock." Leaving it unclear whether the individual's biological inheritance, social milieu or something else altogether composes their "initial word[s]," the novel establishes a sight upon which a variety of substitute figures can take root. But while *Lord Jim* uses Literary Impressionism to act *as if* it is a "force for reintegrat[ing]" subjectivity that is already fragmented, it also deploys its self-representation to intensify the problems it conceals.

While Lord Jim obscures the mechanisms that drive its interrogation of subjectivity by acting as if its mimetic conflicts are metaphysical ones, it also combines the processes of representation and fragmentation with their substitute figures in the tropes of light and darkness. Because it uses the very camouflage that hides its formal tensions to support an additional layer of contradiction, the novel intensifies its interrogation of subjectivity and thereby earns a double return on its discursive investment. When Marlow insists, "I don't pretend I understood [Jim]," he therefore articulates both conflict and resolution with the claim that "the views he let me have of himself were like those glimpses through the shifting rents in thick fog bits of vivid and vanishing detail, giving no connected idea of the general aspect of a country [and feeding] one's curiosity without satisfying it" (55). On the one hand, he openly deploys the mimetic apparatus that intensifies "curiosity" yet leaves its operator with "[un]satisfying" fragments, going "round and round" the "edge[s]" of subjectivity "giving no connected idea of [its] general aspect." On the other hand, he obscures this discursive conflict in self-representation, mapping Jim like the pure externality of a "country" and lamenting that he is not "deserving" enough to combine Jim's "vanishing detail[s]" into an Impressionistic whole. As it uses the

figures, Lord Jim thus conceals and intensifies the interdependence of representation and fragmentation. When Marlow describes how "the dim candle spluttered within the ball of glass" at the height of his pivotal dinner with Jim, for instance, he combines metaphorical and literal discourse in the image of "the dark night with the clear stars, whose distant glitter disposed in retreating planes lured the eye into the depths of a greater darkness" (93). Even as his account of the "dim candle...that was all I had to see [Jim] by" disguises the mimetic apparatus beneath the literal challenges of seeing, it also replicates the model of representation that "lure[s] the eye into the depths of a [more fragmented] darkness (93). And as it acts as if the problems that representation creates are inherent to the metaphysical struggle to see the referent, Lord Jim incites its discursive contradictions with the same facade that it uses to obscure them.

To return to the assertion with which I began, *Lord Jim* is a sprawling addendum to an obscure court case, a discourse that explores the events that were "beyond the competency of a court of inquiry" until the evidence it collects and the witnesses it questions make it impossible to "pronounce" the "last words" of the verdict. Beginning as realism fails to reproduce itself and modernism emerges, developing as one genre disintegrates and the other starts to take shape, the novel crystallizes a crisis of representation that surfaces at the turn of the twentieth century and intensifies in the years to follow. Because I have bracketed the historical interpretation that is at the heart of my project, I have been able to identify some of the generic interactions, formal mechanisms and substitute figures that I might have

otherwise overlooked. But as I have argued that the emergence of modernism is formally interdependent with the disintegration of realism, I have also gestured towards the conclusions that I have postponed. With the claim that modernism repudiates realism by intensifying its ambitions, I have thus suggested that the genre not only accommodates formal and historical conflicts, but also amplifies them. And with the insistence that modernism is driven by the simultaneous representation and fragmentation of subjectivity, I have admitted that it sutures formal and historical ruptures yet implied that it constitutes its own specific field of power-knowledge that is entirely its own. Because I have demonstrated that modernism arises and functions through the very dissonance of its two fundamental processes, I will now be able to show how *The Good Soldier* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* produce a Novel Subject that becomes all the more important as it is fragmented.

## Chapter II

# "The Saddest Story" or "A Tale of Passion"? The Many Sides of *The Good Soldier*

#### The Epistemological "Tangle"

When Ford Madox Ford looks back on *The Good Soldier* (1915) in his "Dedicatory Letter to Stella Ford" (1927), he depicts the novel as the realization of a vague but inexorable literary destiny. Although he admits that he had "made exhaustive studies into how words should be handled" by the time he began the book, Ford insists that he had never before tried to "extend [him]self" because he believed that he could not "write a novel by which [he] should care to stand before reaching the age of forty" (3). Since he felt destined to drift through a "purposeless and wayward life" as he waited to write his "best book," he maintains that the novel "hatch[ed] within [him]" until he finally "sat down" on his fortieth birthday "to show what [he] could do" (3, 5). But while he claims that *The Good Soldier* simply "resulted"—as if even its "intricate tangle of references" was preordained—Ford concludes that the book's title was determined by the pressures of the literary marketplace (3, 5). Because the novel was set to come out in the "darkest days of the war," Ford describes how his publisher "importuned [him] with letters and telegrams" contending that the original title of *The Saddest Story* "would at that date render the book unsaleable" (5). Although Ford portrays the novel as the inevitable culmination of his literary career, he thus goes on to acknowledge that he changed its title and then spent much of World War I yearning to rename—and by extension transform his apparently definitive work. And although he still regards *The Saddest Story* as the

"best title" for his "best book" (Saunders 419), he describes how he eventually "seized the reply form [to one of these telegrams] and wrote in hasty irony: 'Dear Lane, Why not *The Good Soldier*?'" (Ford, "Dedicatory Letter" 5).<sup>1</sup>

At first glance, the tale of the two titles seems rooted in the time-honored opposition between artistic freedom and socioeconomic constraint, between the ideal of a literary destiny and the realities of the capitalist marketplace. Because it contrasts the autonomous realm in which Ford composed the novel (one imagines it as the room in which he "sat down") with the real world in which he might be "engaged in other pursuits" or even marching "on parade," it seems to reflect less on the book itself and more on what E.M. Forster called the "outer life of telegrams and anger" (Ford, "Dedicatory Letter" 5; Forster 97). But as the anecdote dwells on the forces that circumscribed Ford's choices, it also gestures towards the formal tensions that made the two titles available in the first place. And as it describes an obsession with (re)titling that continued long after the book was published, it comes to suggest that the naming crisis was incited by the novel itself. Although it is hard to imagine two titles as different as The Saddest Story and The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion, the "Dedicatory Letter" demonstrates that the novel is at once an anguished account of "the saddest story," a lusty record of "a tale of passion" and a bitter eulogy to the narrator's best friend and "good soldier." But while it shows how Ford's "best book" could be presented as an uncompromising melodrama, a vulgar romance or an ironic social satire, the "Letter" also points out that the novel undermines these

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> While Max Saunders claims that "no such telegrams have survived," he cites a letter that "corroborates the gist of the story [yet] suggests that the irony was less hasty" (419). Although it was Ford's habit to embellish actual events until they turned into scintillating stories, this letter is a rare case in which the referent is more exciting than its representation, for Ford not only proposed *The Good Soldier* in the letter but also coined the sardonic title *The Roaring Joke*.

categorizations in the very moment that it makes them possible. For when the Ford of the "Letter" admires his incompatible but ultimately indissoluble "references and cross-references," he unintentionally suggests that the "book" is his "best" precisely because no single title can make sense of it. Even though he claims to prefer *The Saddest Story* to *The Good Soldier*, Ford thus acknowledges that each of these titles pulls out one of the novel's threads at the expense of its whole "intricate tangle." And even though he associates "the" superlative "story" with artistic freedom and "a" mere "tale" with socioeconomic constraint, he admits at some level that the naming crisis was a necessary response to the novel and a crucial part of his literary destiny.

Just before Ford published the first three-and-a-half chapters of his "best book" in the inaugural issue of *Blast*, he famously claimed that he was "a perfectly self-conscious writer [who knew] exactly how [he got his] effects" (Ford, "On Impressionism" 258). Even if he did know "exactly" how he would "get [his] effects" in his new novel, Ford would not be "perfectly self-conscious" when he unwittingly argued that *The Saddest Story*, *The Good Soldier* and *A Tale of Passion* were all suitable titles for a book that could ultimately have no title. But when he accepted the naming crisis as an inevitable stage in his literary destiny, Ford "[un]conscious[ly]" exposed a tension at the ambiguous, heterogeneous and all-important "heart" of his novel. For as he described a process of naming and renaming that continued long after his "best book" was published, Ford called attention to Dowell's repeated attempts to retitle *The Good Soldier* as "the saddest story" (9, 41, 80, 109). And as he realized that his "tangle of references" was too "intricate" for each of his titles, Ford uncovered an epistemological "tangle" that becomes all the more undecidable as

Dowell tries to understand its separate threads. With a few quick "word[s] about the title[s]," Ford therefore revealed a feedback loop that pits Dowell's old impressions against his new knowledge until it "raises uncertainty about the nature of truth and reality to the level of a structural principle" (Ford, "Dedicatory Letter" 5; Hynes 226). By completing Ford's gesture to the interdependent processes of representation and fragmentation that set this loop in motion, I will elucidate the formal dissonances and epistemological discontinuities that drive his "best book." As I turn to a novel that intensifies *Lord Jim*'s critique of objective representation, I will thus show how it consolidates a deep subjective field that is separate from and even contradictory to its "shallow" objective counterpart (9). And as I examine a textual world in which there are no stable foundations of knowledge and no intrinsic relationships between representations and referents, I will argue that *The Good Soldier* repositions meaning around a subjectivity that is irrational, unknowable and above all private.

After announcing in the novel's first sentence that his "tale of passion" will somehow be the "saddest story [he has] ever heard," Dowell "sit[s] down to puzzle out what [he] know[s] of [his] sad affair" (9). But as he goes on to "imagine [him]self" "sit[ting]" beside the "fireplace of a country cottage, with a sympathetic soul opposite [him]...[and] sea sounds in the distance," Dowell seems more like an anguished Kafka figure hunched over a desk in a darkened room (15). Not Kafka himself, but a Kafka *figure*. For while the writer from Prague crossed out words, scribbled over lines and rewrote paragraphs until he achieved a specific effect, Dowell only "get[s] [his] effects" by reconsidering and revising his "tale" until it becomes a different "story" altogether:

We had known the Ashburnhams for nine seasons of the town of Nauheim with an extreme intimacy—or rather, with an acquaintanceship as loose and easy and yet as close as a good glove's with your hand. My wife and I knew Captain and Mrs. Ashburnham as well as it was possible to know anybody and yet, in another sense, we knew nothing at all about them. This is, I believe, a state of things only possible with English people of whom till today, when I sit down to puzzle out what I know of this sad affair, I knew nothing whatever. Six months ago I had never been to England and, certainly, I had never sounded the depths of an English heart. I had known the shallows. (9) When Dowell begins to describe his relationship with Florence, Leonora and Edward, he assumes that their "intimacy" was so "extreme" that even the reader would immediately know who "we" is, who "the Ashburnhams" are, and what Nauheim is like. While he initially writes from his old position in a "little four-square coterie," Dowell soon determines that his apparently "intima[te]" friendship was actually a distanced "acquaintanceship." But though he uses an abrupt dash and a forceful "rather" to suggest that the second clause is a substitute for the first, Dowell cannot definitively replace "intimacy" with distance. Just as he ominously prefigures the end of his "intimacy" with the opening formulation "had known," Dowell confuses distance with proximity when he likens the "acquaintanceship" to a glove that is somehow both "loose" and "close." And just as he unravels the opposition between "intimacy" and distance before he even articulates it, Dowell leaves his two clauses side by side in the realization that each represents a different perspective on his "nine

seasons" with Florence, Leonora and Edward. When he goes on to solidify the two

sides of his "four-square coterie" by exchanging his insistent "rather" for the more precise expression "in another sense," Dowell therefore suggests that "intimacy" and distance are figures for two specifically epistemological conditions (11). Replacing "we" with "my wife and I," rephrasing "the Ashburnhams" as "Captain and Mrs. Ashburnham" and rewriting his first sentence in epistemological terms, Dowell claims that he knew his friends "as well as it was possible" at the same time as he "knew nothing at all about them." After trying to represent his "nine seasons" in one way "rather" than in another, Dowell ends up fragmenting his experiences into two distinct fields. And though he maintains that this epistemological paradox would "only [be] possible with [the] English," Dowell concludes that he must "puzzle out" these two bodies of knowledge and two types of knowing if he is ever to reconcile the "shallows" of social intercourse with the "depths of [the human] heart."

As Dowell continues to discuss the nine years he spent with the Ashburnhams, he tries to unite the "shallows" that he knew "well" with the "depths" that he "knew nothing...about." But just as Ford could not group his "references and cross-references" under a single title, Dowell cannot condense his two bodies of knowledge into a single account. After he explains that his "seasons [at] the town of Nauheim" lasted "from July to September," for instance, Dowell invites the reader to follow him through the steps of a basic epistemological strategy (9). Using his knowledge of Nauheim's "shallows" to reveal the "depths of [his wife's] heart," Dowell claims, "you will gather from this statement that one of us had, as the saying is, a 'heart,' and, from the statement that my wife is dead, that she was the sufferer" (9-10). As he articulates his knowledge in the unequivocal "statement[s]" of the logician, Dowell

seems to lead his epistemological accomplice to an inference that connects "shallows" with "depths." But while he gains credibility from his rhetorical gestures, Dowell ends up showing how logical conventions and epistemological strategies break down when they are confronted by an object with as many meanings as his wife's "heart." Because he makes his inference by pretending that Florence's "heart" was a medical condition rather than a romantic passion, Dowell not only fails to illuminate its "depths," but also proves that his two types of knowing and two bodies of knowledge are separate and even contradictory. And when he keeps on using the same epistemological strategies to reconcile "shallows" and "depths," Dowell only reinforces the divergence between what he knew "well" and what he "knew nothing...about." Just as his first inference collapsed when the word "heart" took on both literal and metaphorical meanings, Dowell undermines himself when he tells the reader, "you will perceive therefore that our friendship has been a young-middle-aged affair, since we were all of us...what in England it is the custom to call 'quite good people'" (10). Because he deploys the language of the logician to explain the "depths" in reference to the "shallows," Dowell again seems to come to a conclusion, this time that he and Florence had a "young-middle-aged [friendship]" with some "quite good people." But since he can only really connect "shallows" with "depths" when the word "affair" refers less to his friendship and more to his wife's sexual relationship, Dowell shows that his "nine seasons" with the Ashburnhams produced two bodies of knowledge that are as irreconcilable as they are indissoluble. And as he continues to make inferences based on what "you would have said," what "you will probably expect" and what "you must also expect," Dowell positions himself around

an epistemological impasse that becomes all the more impenetrable as he attempts to break through it (14, 10).

Although Dowell eventually admits that there were two sides to his "foursquare coterie," he always insists that its "shallows" diverged from its "depths" through an improbable series of epistemological accidents. When he recalls how Miss Hurlbird implored him not to marry Florence, for example, he explains how he thought that the elderly aunt was worried about her niece's medical condition. And when he describes how Leonora cried out as she watched Florence touch Edward's hand at the castle of Marburg, he remembers how he convinced himself that the Catholic was merely defensive about her religious convictions. While there will soon be more to say about these two moments, it is enough to note for now that Dowell thinks he failed to "soun[d] the depths of [the] English heart" because he didn't listen for its pulse. This is, of course, quite true. But it is not "the whole truth." For as he explains how he widened the gulf between what he knew "well" and what he "knew nothing...about," Dowell gestures towards fundamental gaps between the "shallows" of social intercourse and the "depths" of inner life. And as he singles out particular moments in which he mistook Edward and Florence's sexual "affair" for a "youngmiddle-aged [friendship]," Dowell shows how his misapprehensions were owed in part to the shortcomings of objective representation. When he first attempts to describe the two "heart patients," for instance, Dowell relates Edward to "the Ashburnhams who accompanied Charles I to the scaffold" and associates Florence with the "Hurlbird[s] of Stamford, Connecticut...[who] are more old-fashioned than even the inhabitants of Cranford, England" (10). While he equips Edward with a

pedigree that links his name to a fixed set of familial traits, Dowell quickly acknowledges that "you would never have noticed" that the Captain was "descended" from the Ashburnhams of old (10). And while he places Florence in a lineage that is "more old-fashioned" than the fictional "inhabitants" of Elizabeth Gaskell's \*Cranford\*, Dowell goes on to show how his wife brazenly violates the novel's "mythologized image of essential 'Englishness.'" Because he recognizes that English names and "old-fashioned" reputations have nothing to do with "essential" characteristics, Dowell therefore finds that "shallows" are representations that have long since lost touch with their referents. But as he concludes his genealogical exploits with the claim that "there are more old English families [in Philadelphia] than...in any six English counties taken together," he cannot help but wonder whether there were ever any definite links between "shallows" and "depths" (10).

While Dowell keeps examining his misinterpretations as departures from an epistemological norm, he gradually suggests that there are no stable foundations of knowledge and no intrinsic relationships between representations and referents. After he shows how Edward and Florence failed to live up to their family names, he thus proclaims himself a "Dowell of Philadelphia" in the erroneous belief that the "shallows" of his reputation will be compatible with the "depths" of his "heart" (10). Because he thinks that Edward and Florence broke the otherwise-fixed bonds between present and past, Dowell explains that he "carr[ies] about with [him]—as if it were the only thing that invisibly anchored [him] to any spot upon the globe—the title deeds of [his] farm which once covered several blocks between Chestnut and Walnut Streets" (10). But as he boasts about some "title deeds" that only act "as if" they

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Martin Stannard elucidates this reference to Gaskell in a note on page 10 of *The Good Soldier*.

correspond to a "spot on the globe," Dowell proves that representations are not permanently "anchored" to their referents. And as he describes how the deeds were made "of wampum" and given by "an Indian chief to the first Dowell," he acknowledges that they were problematic representations long before their referent was paved over and partitioned into "blocks" (10). Although he believes that Edward and Florence divided their "depths" from their "shallows" through deliberate acts of deception, Dowell therefore finds that his own inner life has little to do with the deeds that he "carr[ies] about" in his pocket. But just as he intensified his struggles when he tried to reconcile the Ashburnhams he knew "well" with the ones he "knew nothing...about," Dowell encounters more problems as he tugs on the chains that "anchor" him to an imaginary epistemological norm. When he eventually recalls how Nancy "chanted Edward's praises to [him] for the hour together," he thus admits that he "could not make much of" his friend's many accolades (68):

It appeared that he had the D.S.O. and...the Royal Humane Society's Medal with a clasp. That meant, apparently, that he had twice jumped off the deck of a troopship to rescue what the girl called "Tommies"...He had twice been recommended for the V.C. whatever that might mean and although owing to some technicalities he had never received that apparently coveted order, he had some special place about his sovereign at the coronation. Or perhaps it was some post in the Beefeaters. (68, emphases added)

After claiming repeatedly that Edward was "a good soldier," "a fine soldier" or "a first rate soldier," Dowell finds that he cannot connect the Captain's "medal[s]," "order[s]" and "post[s]" to any actual achievements. As he explains how his friend's

"Royal Humane Society's Medal" "apparently" corresponded to his heroics "in the Red Sea and such places," Dowell fails to determine what Edward did or even what "Tommies" are in the first place (68). But while he is at least certain that this medal came "with a clasp," Dowell cannot remember whether Edward had "some [unspecified] post in the Beefeaters" or "some special place about his sovereign at the coronation." And while he is at least able to admire Edward for "jump[ing] off the deck" to rescue the "Tommies," Dowell cannot ascertain what the "apparently coveted" V.C. "might mean." When he fails to evaluate the actions that are represented by accolades and articulated in military discourse, Dowell once again exposes the epistemological discontinuities that run from the "depths" he "knew nothing...about" to the "shallows" he thought he knew "well." But since he realizes that the Captain's achievements have been obscured by the decorations that make him seem like a "good soldier," Dowell begins to doubt that he will ever understand a subjective field that is separate from and contradictory to its objective representations.

As he continues to encounter the fundamental disparities between the "shallows" of social intercourse and the "depths" of inner life, Dowell develops a theory to make sense of his struggles. Because he cannot explain how his "intima[te]" friendship could be a distanced "acquaintanceship," he admits that he and the Ashburnhams "took for granted that [they] all liked beef underdone but not too underdone; that both men preferred a liqueur brandy after lunch [and] that both women drank a very light Rhine whine" (30). Once he realizes that his friends always performed the behaviors that were "fitting to [their] station," Dowell concludes that the English have a "whole collection of rules" that regulates "good people" down to

the "slightest of movements" and the most "intimate [of] sounds" (30, 31). But when he attempts to figure "taking for granted" as a specifically English practice, Dowell lets slip that it is in fact a "modern civilized habit" (31). And when he tries to claim that it is a "collection of rules" that restrict behaviors and impair judgments, Dowell ends up suggesting that it is only one manifestation of a fundamental set of social and epistemological problems. Although he initially believes that his struggles would "only [be] possible with [the] English," Dowell therefore realizes that his American wife was a "personality of paper [who] represented a real human being...only as a bank note represents a certain quantity of gold" (83). When he begins to think of Florence as "a mass of talk out of guide books [and] drawings out of fashion plates," Dowell in turn determines that behaviors and preferences are never adequate bases for sound judgments (83). By the time he finally acknowledges that "good people" are constituted by a "collection of rules" so particular that their beef must be "underdone but not too underdone," Dowell has thus found that his environment is "peopled with incalculable simulacra amidst smoke wreaths" (12). As he recognizes that his companions are representations who become doubly removed from their referents as they swirl nebulously "amidst" "wreaths" of "smoke," Dowell "suffers" what Sally Bachner calls "a full scale epistemological crisis, no longer knowing how knowledge is attained or verified" (109). Because his "external world [loses] all solidity as he finds himself unable to distinguish between real people and their simulacra," Dowell eventually laments, "Who in this world can give anyone a character?" (Bachner 110; Ford, *The Good Soldier* 104). But as he solidifies the divisions between the "shallows" of "character" and the "depths" of the "heart," Dowell holds out for an

account that would not just "form an average estimate of the way a person will behave" but will instead "become certain...[how he] will behave in every case" (104). And as he dismisses the objective representation that "form[s] estimate[s]" its "character[s]" based on things like gender, class and occupation, Dowell begins to interrogate a subjectivity that becomes all the more obscure as it is represented.

#### The Deployment of Subjectivity

While Ford often boasted that he "dictated [*The Good Soldier*] very quickly" and had "almost every word of it in [his] head" before he began writing, I have shown that Dowell has no such luck when he "sit[s] down to puzzle out what [he] know[s] of [his] sad affair" (Stannard 180). After he retitles the novel in his very first sentence, Dowell reconsiders and revises it until he forms two incompatible accounts of his relationship with Florence, Leonora and Edward. And after he tries repeatedly to unite the "tale" of the "little four-square coterie" with the "story" of the licentious "heart patients," Dowell skips a line at the end of his fifth paragraph as if the fundamental gaps between "shallows" and "depths" have made it too difficult for him to continue. But as he gets up from his cluttered desk and leaves his darkened room (to recall the metaphor of the Kafka figure), Dowell seems to regain his determination find some meaning in his epistemological "tangle." For though he returns to his scribbled-over manuscript in the belief that the "breaking-up of [his] little four-square coterie" was as "unthinkable" as the "sack of Rome," Dowell insists that he will "set down what [he has] witnessed for the benefit of...generations infinitely remote" (11). Because he realizes that his experiences became "unthinkable" when the people he knew "well" revealed the "depths" he "knew nothing...about," Dowell "set[s] down"

his account by exploring the subjective field that he has gradually revealed. While I have shown how *The Good Soldier* intensifies *Lord Jim*'s critique of objective representation at each stage of its epistemological feedback loop, I will now argue that Dowell interrogates subjectivity through Marlow's interdependent processes of representation and fragmentation. And as I demonstrate how he continues to thicken his epistemological "tangle" by trying to understand its separate threads, I will claim that Dowell makes subjectivity even more problematic than does Marlow.

Like Marlow before him, Dowell distinguishes subjectivity from objectivity based on its incomprehensibility, asking himself again and again, "Who in this world knows anything of any other heart—or of his own?" (102). But since he yearns to "soun[d] the depths of [the human] heart" precisely because he knows "nothing... about" it, Dowell begins to interrogate subjectivity through interdependent acts of representation and fragmentation. Just as Marlow illuminates the "edge" of Jim's subjectivity in a discourse that makes it all the more obscure, Dowell examines his friends "heart[s]" only to find that both their "shallows" and their "depths" become all the more difficult to understand. When he claims that Leonora always appeared to be "so extraordinarily the real thing that she seemed too good to be true," Dowell thus goes on to describe how she "tried to have a lover but [found herself] so sick at the heart [and] so utterly worn out that [she] had to send him away" (13). As he learns that she was "sick at the heart" even when she "seemed too good to be true," Dowell does not find any definitive knowledge of Leonora, but instead wonders whether she confessed the sins "of a harlot" or the desires that "every decent woman ...[has] at the bottom of her heart" (13). And as he fails to ascertain whether other apparently "good

people" have these sorts of thoughts "all the time for the matter of that," Dowell concludes by asking "Who knows?...And, if one doesn't know as much as that about the first thing in the world, what does one know and why is one here?" (13). Because Dowell realizes that even the most "extraordinar[y]" representations are not permanently "anchored" to any "real thing[s]," he looks beneath the "shallows" to find what Marlow described as "something else." But while he makes both representation and referent more inscrutable as he tries to understand the distinctions between them, Dowell fragments subjectivity with even greater intensity as he tries to depict the different perspectives on a particular event.

Just as Marlow "thicken[s] the enigma" of Jim's subjectivity when he represents and fragments it from every possible direction, Dowell makes his simulacra companions appear all the more nebulous as he builds their stories upon one another (Barthes, S/Z 62). After he insists that he has presented "absolutely the whole of [his] recollection" of his wife's death, Dowell thus explains how he found out "what had actually happened" by "piec[ing] it together afterwards" (76). While he thought that Florence had suffered a heart attack until Leonora brusquely told him that "it was stupid of [her] to commit suicide," Dowell ascertained his wife's motive by recalling one of his last conversations with Edward (76). Because he claims that Edward "talked...like a very good novelist...if it's the business of a novelist to make you see things clearly," Dowell ties his friend's account and by extension his own to Conrad's ambition "to make you see" (76).\(^3\) But as he goes on to insist that he "see[s] [the events] as clearly as if it were a dream that never left [him]," Dowell places his

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> While I would like to think that I would have caught this allusion on my own, I must in all honesty credit Martin Stannard for bringing it to my attention in his footnote.

descriptions in the tradition of Literary Impressionism with the same move that he relegates them to the unreal world of "dream[s]" (76). And as he tries like Ford's Impressionist to "give [his] reader the impression that he was...passing through an experience," Dowell ends up looking so closely at his friends' "experience[s]" that he obscures their subjectivities and makes it impossible to come up with judgments about them (Ford, "On Impressionism" 264). Drawing on a "great deal of what one may call non-Impressionism" so that he can later achieve his "strongest effects," Dowell describes how "it was a very black night," how Florence "was all in black" and how "the girl was dressed in cream-colored muslin...that must have glimmered under the tall trees of the dark park like a phosphorescent fish in a cupboard" (Ford, "On Impressionism" 264; Ford, *The Good Soldier* 76). As he combines details that he hopes the reader "will remember" with points that "Edward remembered" or "said," Dowell complements his visual images with aural ones, adding that the "Casino orchestra was...playing the Rakocy march...[which] was certainly sufficiently audible to efface, amongst the noises of the night, the slight brushings and rustlings that might have been made by the feet of Florence" (77). By the time he has noted how Edward and Nancy "sat down in the darkness upon a public bench" and how Florence "came creeping up behind them," Dowell can therefore orchestrate the perspectives of his three companions into a vivid impression of "the immensely tall trees...towering and feathering away up into the black mistiness...the silhouettes of those two upon the seat; the beams of light coming from the Casino, the woman all in black peeping with fear behind the tree-trunk" (77). But while he is so confident in his impressionistic account that he tells the reader "there you have the picture,"

Dowell cannot ultimately determine how the sensory features of the scene influenced "the most monstrously wicked thing that Edward Ashburnham ever did" (78):

And then, it appears, something happened to Edward Ashburnham. He assured me—and I see no reason for disbelieving him—that until that moment he had had no idea whatever of caring for the girl...Had he been conscious of it, he assured me, he would have fled from it as from a thing accursed...But the real point was his entire unconsciousness. He had gone with her into that dark park with no quickening of the pulse, with no desire for the intimacy of solitude...It hadn't come into his head that they would talk about a single thing that they hadn't always talked about; it had not even come into his head that the tabu which extended around her was not inviolable. And then, suddenly, that—— (77).

Although Dowell realizes that the impressions Edward experienced in "that moment" in "that dark park" "suddenly" brought an "accursed" desire "into his head," he doesn't try to connect his friend's sense perceptions to his feelings. And although he realizes that "the real point was [Edward's] entire unconsciousness," Dowell "see[s] no reason for disbelieving" his friend's eventual "assur[ances]" and no way of representing the "something" that "happened" to him or the "——" that he did. As he continues to gather impressions even after he squanders his opportunity to examine his friend's "depths," Dowell only "thicken[s] the enigma" of subjectivity by engulfing it conflicting discourses. By the time he actually admits that he is "so near to all these people that I cannot think any of them wicked," Dowell has already represented and fragmented Edward so completely that he cannot assemble the

discontinuous bits of his subjectivity into any cohesive entity (78). But as he describes how he tries to "push the [good] image of [Edward] away as you might try to push aside a large pendulum," Dowell admits that the "shallows" "always com[e] back" and by extension that his own impressions make it difficult to evaluate Edward's subjectivity (78).

By now I have traced a line that runs from Marlow's "subtle and momentous quarrel as to the true essence of life" to Dowell's attempt to "soun[d] the depths of [the human] heart." Just as I argued that Marlow tries to illuminate the "human emotions" that Jim's trial leaves obscure, I have now claimed that Dowell struggles to reconcile the "shallows" he knew "well" with the "depths" he "knew nothing... about." And just as I showed how Marlow deepens the "perpetual darkness" of Jim's subjectivity by skittering around its "edge[s]," I have now demonstrated that Dowell looks so closely at his friend's impressions that he has trouble seeing anything at all. Because they interrogate subjectivity through interdependent acts of representation, Marlow and Dowell constitute a field of power-knowledge in which inner life is a source of truth even though it is created as it is brought into discourse. But while the old salt can at least evaluate the parts of the field that he illuminates with a "fearful ashy light falling at times on [its] edge," Dowell cannot ultimately make a distinction between "shallows" and "depths" that he only perceives through his own troubled subjectivity. And while Marlow emerges with at least some knowledge about subjectivity from a discourse that can never "pronounce" its "full utterance," Dowell works the conflicting processes of representation and fragmentation into the foundations of his text and the "depths" of his own inner life. When he tries to

describe the incompatible but ultimately indissoluble sides of his "four-square coterie," Dowell therefore realizes that he has internalized the apparently objective "shallows" to form impressions that are as confusing as Edward's depths:

Permanence? Stability! I can't believe it's gone. I can't believe that that long tranquil life, which was just stepping a minuet, vanished in four crashing days at the end of nine years and six weeks...No indeed, it can't be gone. You can't kill a minuet de la cour. You may shut up the music book; close the harpsichord; in the cupboard and presses the rats may destroy the white satin favours. The mob may sack Versailles; the Trianon may fall, but surely the minuet—the minuet itself is dancing itself away into the furthest stars, even as our minuet of the Hessian bathing-places must be stepping itself still. Isn't there any heaven where old beautiful dances, old beautiful intimacies prolong themselves?...

No, by God it is false! It wasn't a minuet that we stepped; it was a prison—a prison full of screaming hysterics, tied down so that they might not outsound the rolling of our carriage wheels as we went along the shaded avenues of the Taunus Wald.

And yet, I swear by the sacred name of my creator that it was true. It was true sunshine; the true music; the true plash of the fountains from the mouth of stone dolphins. For, if for me we were four people with the same tastes, with the same desires, acting—or no not acting—sitting here and there unanimously, isn't that the truth? If for nine years I have possessed a goodly apple that is rotten at the core and discover its rottenness only in nine years

and six months less four days, isn't it true to say that for nine years I possessed a goodly apple? (11-12)

As he explains how the "extraordinarily safe castle" he knew "well" was in fact a "prison full of screaming hysterics" who were "tied down" so that he could know "nothing...about" them, Dowell seems to simply describe the epistemological impasse that he reaches in the novel's opening paragraphs (11). But while he associates his "long tranquil life" with "permanence" and "stability," Dowell shows how both the "shallows" of social intercourse and the "depths of [his friends'] "hearts" are impressions that can "vanish" instantaneously. Even though he gestures towards an objective world in which "the mob may sack Versailles," Dowell brackets such "external forms of chronology and causation" under an account that by Samuel Hynes' analysis "tak[es] its order from the processes of [his] puzzled mind" (226). As he admits that his nine years are "gone" only to insist that they "can't be gone," as he acknowledges that the "shallows" were "false" only to "swear by the sacred name of [his] creator that [they were] true," Dowell levels out falsehood and truth until they become two alternative impressions. And as he looks for truth in his ephemeral of memories of "sunshine," "music" and the "plash of the fountains from the mouth of stone dolphins," Dowell makes his own subjectivity an object for the reader's scrutiny. While he examines his friends' subjectivities through interdependent acts of representation and fragmentation, Dowell therefore uses these same processes in his very way of perceiving, thinking and talking. By forcing the reader to "puzzle out" his impressions simply to understand the story, Dowell brings him or her into his field of subjective power-knowledge.

Because he believes that the "shallows" he knew "well" diverged from the "depths" he "knew nothing...about" through an improbable series of epistemological accidents, Dowell continually examines his (mis)interpretations of his "four-square coterie." But as he describes in exquisite detail the ways in which he experienced his nine years with the Ashburnhams, Dowell leaves the reader wading in a convoluted mass of impressions. While I have noted how he convinced himself that Leonora was defensive about her religious convictions when she screamed out at the castle of Marburg, I will now show how Dowell prepared himself for this climactic misinterpretation with his impressionistic perceptual strategies. As he remembers boarding the train that carried his wife to her most fateful "affair," Dowell is so open to his impressions that he seems to have what Ford called a "peasant intelligence," a "virgin mind" that has "least listened to accepted ideas" and that "will not insist that grass must always be painted green [just] because all the poets...had insisted on talking about the green grass" (Ford, "On Impressionism" 272, 273). Even though he will soon admit that he disregarded Edward and Florence's "heart[s]," it seems at the very least that Dowell has his own meaningful "depths" in which the "country isn't really green" but rather "blood red and purple and red and green and red" (35). But as he remembers how he "chuckled...for the whole rest of the day" after watching "a black and white cow land on its back in the middle of a stream," Dowell makes it clear that his impressions are an obstruction to epistemological clarity (35). Since he heard his wife "imparting information" and determined that he was "off duty" and "out for enjoyment," Dowell distracted himself with the cow until he turned the "shallows" of social intercourse into a set of elaborate impressions that make the

"depths" of his companions' "heart[s]" all but invisible (35). By the time Leonora finally asks him "Don't you see?," Dowell therefore cannot think of anything but his feeling that the "two blue discs" he had imagined her eyes to be "were immense, were overwhelming, were like a wall of blue that shut me off from the rest of the world" (37, 38). And as he translates her exclamations into the benign but petulant warning that "it would be better if Florence said nothing at all against my co-religionists," Dowell leaves the reader to scrutinize his subjectivity (52).

As Dowell tries to "puzzle out what [he] know[s]" by "sound[ing]" the "depths" of his own "heart," he forces the reader to deploy the interdependent processes of representation and fragmentation simply to understand his findings. While he admits that he only discovered "what had actually happened" on the night of Florence's suicide by "piec[ing] together" Leonora and Edward's accounts, Dowell makes it impossible for the reader to reconstruct the event itself without reference to his impenetrable impressions. Because he is the only person to know (from Leonora) that Florence committed suicide and (from Edward) that she had a motive to do so, Dowell inadvertently privileges his account of how the experience "presented itself to [him]" at the time (75). But as he lures the reader back to the "whole of [his] recollection of [the] evening," Dowell traps them in his unending hermeneutic loop:

In such circumstances of clamor, of outcry, of the crash of many people running together...it is some little material object, always, that catches the eye and that appeals to the imagination. I had no possible guide to the idea of suicide and the sight of the little flask...in Florence's hand suggested instantly to my mind the idea of the failure of her heart...How could I have known that,

during all the years of our married life, that little brown flask had contained, not nitrate of amyl, but prussic acid? It was inconceivable. (74)

As Dowell describes "circumstances" so "clamor[ous]" that people seem to "ru[n] together" in an indissoluble blur, he insists that he was not "an imbecile" and even that he was not "singularly lacking in suspiciousness" because "it is some little material object, always, that catches the eye." But as he explains how he focused in on the "flask" that "appeal[ed] to the imagination" at the expense of its contents, Dowell acknowledges that he looked so closely and thought so hard that he couldn't recognize the tragedy of his "married life" in so obvious an object. Even when he realizes that the medicine that was supposed to cure an ailing physical "heart" was actually a poison that was meant to spare Florence the misery of a failed "affair," Dowell ignores this powerful encapsulation of "all the years of [his] married life." Admitting that he only now remembers "the sort of pinkish effulgence from the electric lamps in the hotel lounge" and the faces of "the grand-duke, the head of the police and the hotel-keeper" seemed to "bob into my consciousness, like floating globes," Dowell obscures the intensely focused images that he developed in a blur of lights (75). While he invites the reader to interrogate his own subjectivity with his very form of seeing and writing, Dowell asks her questions on so many occasions that he ensures that his "listener" will not be "silent" for long (17). And as he cultivates an unrelenting will to discourse through which the reader can constitute herself as a subject, Dowell builds up several sides to his text only to admit that he "can't make out which of them [is] right" and therefore that he will "leave it to you" (15).

### Chapter III

# A Portrait of the [Subject] as a Young Man: Subjectivity as Language

By now I have shown how Lord Jim and The Good Soldier interrogate subjectivity through interdependent acts of representation and fragmentation. But while I have argued that the two novels illuminate an "edge" that suggests an even deeper "darkness" and examine the "depths" that they insist are unknowable, I have paid little attention to one of their most important similarities. For when I described how they explore the inner life that is excluded from objective representations, I could have noted that their first-person narrators are literally unable to access the human "heart." And when I explained how they teach the reader a new way of looking that makes objects all the more obscure, I could have figured their failure "to make you see" as a consequence of Marlow and Dowell's perceptual limitations. Because I have used *Lord Jim* and *The Good Soldier* as examples of a genre that is most remarkable for its invention of the stream of consciousness, it may therefore seem that I played down their reliance on first-person narration to link them more securely to the works of high modernism. But while I have shown how the tension between representation and fragmentation takes shape in Marlow and Dowell's firstperson accounts, I will now argue that A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) reconfigures the interrogation of subjectivity with its third-person narration. Although it is hard to mention this novel in one of the heaving breaths that one takes in a reading of *The Good Soldier*, I will examine the ways in which it uses free-indirect discourse to show the mental processes that its predecessors try to name or define. As

I describe how it adapts Marlow and Dowell's attempts to understand inner life into Stephen's endeavor to cultivate his specifically artistic interiority, I will claim that *Portrait* assembles its protagonist from the "verbal-ideological" "nets" that are "flung at him" during his "slow and dark birth" (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 269; Joyce 220). And as I explain how it recasts subjectivity as a discourse that is always indebted to, distinguished from and in dialogue with other genres of speech, I will conclude that *Portrait* makes the Novel Subject even more distinctively aesthetic.

Although Joyce takes up Conrad and Ford's interest in inner life, he seems to resolve the conflict between representation and fragmentation by dispersing subjectivity into the very form of his third-person narration. With the free-indirect discourse that depicts "each stage of [Stephen's] developing consciousness in the language through which the child himself perceives the world," Joyce therefore seems to illuminate the once-obscured "darkness" and articulate the long-awaited "full utterance" (Lewis 123; Conrad, Lord Jim 163). But when he aligns his third-person narration with Stephen's "developing consciousness," Joyce expresses the tension between representation and fragmentation in a new form. For as Stephen begins to "make ready for the great part [in life] which he felt awaited him," he figures his specifically artistic interiority in the way that Dowell explores his friends' "depths" (64). And as he tries to understand the "foreknowledge" that somehow "sickened his heart and made his legs sag," he determines like Marlow that his "ambition" emerged from the "darkness of his soul" (66, 67). By the time that he takes over the freeindirect discourse with his account of this mysterious "darkness," Stephen has

therefore resumed the processes of representation and fragmentation that delineate inner life in opposition to its visible, external and social counterpart:

A strange unrest crept into his blood. Sometimes a fever gathered within him ... The noise of children at play annoyed him and their silly voices made him feel...that he was different from others. He did not want to play. He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld. He did not know where to seek it or how: but a premonition which led him on told him that this image would, without any overt act of his, encounter him. They would meet quietly...and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. He would fade into something impalpable under her eyes and then in a moment, he would be transfigured. (67)

After examining Stephen's "boyish conception of the world" from a safe and even critical distance, the third-person narration is finally inflected (or is it "infect[ed]"?) by the "language through which the child himself perceives the world" (Joyce 67; Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 290). As it reduces the "children at play" to an "annoy[ing]" and even "silly" "noise," the discourse shows the thought processes through which Stephen determines that he is "different from others." Like Marlow before him, the derisive and pretentious protagonist believes that his interiority "cre[eps] into his blood," "gather[s] within" his body and takes over his "soul" "without" him making "any overt act." Just as Marlow thinks that inner life is important since it can "lie hidden...repressed or maybe ignored more than half a lifetime," Stephen expects his "image" to "transfigure" him precisely because he "[does] not know where...or how" it will "encounter" him (Conrad, Lord Jim 32).

And just as the old salt discovers that "darkness" that places Jim at the "forefront of his kind" is "obscure" and "invisible," the young artist finds that the "image" which makes him "different from others" is "unsubstantial" and "impalpable" (Conrad, *Lord Jim* 67). But while Stephen draws on Marlow's style of thinking to oppose his artistic interiority to his social milieu, he can never fully take over the third-person narration that has the ability to depict even his most inscrutable "premonition[s]." And as he continues to think that the "darkness of his soul" is separate from the light of social intercourse, this narration shows how his "monstrous reveries...[spring] up before him, suddenly and furiously, *out of mere words*" (95, emphasis added).

Even though he realizes that his first "image" was based on Mercedes from *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Stephen keeps following his "premonition[s]" in the belief that they will soon make him an independent artist. But while he shares Marlow's sense that his "directing spirit" exists as "something else" precisely because it is "invisible" to the eye and "Inconceivable" to the mind, he cannot separate his "darkness" from the rest of the world (Conrad, *Lord Jim* 23, 68). For as he attempts to consolidate an artistic interiority that is free from external constraints, Stephen discovers that he must think about it in words that by Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis are always "filled with [the] echoes and reverberations of other utterances" ("Speech Genres" 91). And as he tries to solidify his notion that he is "different from others," he finds that even this very feeling is "born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought" (Bakhtin, "Speech Genres" 92). When Stephen takes over the discourse during his visit to Cork with his father, the third-person narration thus endows his "pursuit of phantoms" with an entirely new meaning (89):

The sunlight breaking suddenly on his sight turned the sky and clouds into a fantastic world of somber masses with lakelike spaces of dark rosy light. His very brain was sick and powerless. He could scarcely interpret the letters of the signboards and the shops. By his monstrous way of life he seemed to have put himself beyond the limits of reality. Nothing moved him or spoke to him from the real world unless he heard in it an echo of the infuriated cries within him. He could respond to no earthly or human appeal, dumb and insensible to the call of summer and gladness and companionship, wearied and dejected by his father's voice. He could scarcely recognize as his his own thoughts, and repeated slowly to himself:

—I am Stephen Dedalus. I am walking beside my father whose name is Simon Dedalus. We are in Cork, in Ireland. Cork is a city. Our room is in the Victoria Hotel. Victoria and Stephen and Simon. Simon and Stephen and Victoria. Names. (98)

With its impressionistic account of the "sunlight" that somehow makes the "clouds" at once "dark" and "rosy," the narration aligns itself with Stephen and his attempt to explore his "fantastic world." But as it explains how the "somber masses with lakelike spaces" inspired the "infuriated cries within him," the narration makes it all the more clear that these "unsubstantial image[s]" only "seemed to...[take him] beyond the limits of reality." For though it is so close to Stephen that it describes the "real world" as a set of vacuous norms that are departed from and returned to, the narration insists that the "echo[es]" in his consciousness are in turn "echoes and reverberations of other utterances." By pointing out that he could still "interpret the

letters of the signboards and the shops" amidst the most "monstrous" of his "reveries," the narration places Stephen firmly in what Bakhtin calls the "chain of speech communication" ("Speech Genres" 93). While it allows him to speak in the "language through which [he] perceives the world," the narration forces him to draw on other "links" in the "chain," on the medical authorities who would tell him that his "brain was sick and powerless" and the educators who would deem his "way of life" "monstrous." And when it explains that Stephen's "thoughts" were so "[un]real" that he "could scarcely recognize [them as] his," the narration suggests that the words he uses to articulate "thoughts" are *not* his, or at least, that they are "entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents" (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 276). By the time it notes how he "repeated slowly to himself' that he is "Stephen Dedalus," that his father is "Simon Dedalus" and that they are staying in Cork's "Victoria Hotel," the narration has therefore demonstrated that the "infuriated cries within him" are just tied as securely to "reality" as this list of "Names." But because it shows how his inner life is "born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought," the narration leaves open the possibility that Stephen will "infect with [his] own intention [the] aspects of language" that he wants to use (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 290).

As he tries and fails to fulfill his personal and artistic ambitions, Stephen determines that he will have to cut his ties with "[his] home, [his] fatherland [and his] church" in order to "express [him]self in some mode of life or art as freely as [he] can and as wholly as [he] can" (268-9). Long after he thought that he needed to avoid the "children at play" if he wanted his "unsubstantial image" to "encounter him," he still

believes that he has to escape his social milieu in order to become "free" and "whol[e]." But while he continues to regard his "mode of life or art" as a means to "express" something that is already "within him," the third-person narration suggests that his attempt to discover an artistic interiority is really an endeavor to produce an artistic language. Just as it illustrated Bakhtin's claim that "all words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party [or] a particular work," the narration thus insists that Stephen can only speak about his "free" identity if he "infect[s]" a set of words with his own unique "taste" ("Discourse in the Novel" 293). Although Stephen hopes at one point that his efforts as a "Latinist" might earn him an individual "taste" and a privileged place "at the feast of the world's culture," the narration makes it clear that this "dead" language will stand little chance against the "living, ideological power of the word to mean" (Joyce 194; Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 352). For since it shares Bakhtin's belief that "each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life," it maintains that Stephen's artistic language will be indebted to and distinguished from the "verbal-ideological" forces of his own day (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 293). When Stephen "[finds] himself glancing from one casual word to another...in stolid wonder that they [have] been so silently emptied of instantaneous sense," the narration therefore forces him to engage with the "mean shop legend[s] [that] bound his mind like words of spell" (193). As it describes the "words" that are so "casual," "empt[y]" and "sense[less]" that even Stephen's "wonder" is "stolid," it places him in the "chain of speech communication" that constitutes the consumer economy of "shops" and advertisements. Yet while it demonstrates that the "mean shop legends" have becomes so vacuously powerful that

they are both averaged-out values and malicious, "spell"-casting enemies, the narration gestures all the more favorably toward Stephen's desire to revive the "heaps of dead language" (193). Because it shows him thinking about how the word "ivory... [shines] in his brain, clearer and brighter than any ivory sawn from the mottled tusks of elephants," the narration allows Stephen to find "instantaneous sense" in the aesthetic properties of language itself (193). And because it channels the fascination with words that drove the young boy to "lie on the hearthrug before the fire... think[ing] of [the] sentences" from his spelling book, the narration suggests that Stephen will be truly "transfigured" when he rejuvenates language in his art (7). But as it holds out hope that he will be able to shape the words of the "marketplace" into an artistic language, the narration confirms Bakhtin's claim that "expropriating [language and] forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents is a difficult and complicated process" (Joyce 203; Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 294).

Even after he finds that his most "monstrous" of "reveries" emerged "out of mere words," Stephen still believes that he is nurturing an "instinct" that is "stronger than education or piety" and pursuing a "destiny...to be elusive of social or religious orders" (174, 175). But while he thinks that he is "destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others," the third-person narration shows how he develops his artistic interiority through a dialogue with these very people (175). And while he regards these "social and religious orders" as so many "nets that are flung to hold him back from flight," he eventually announces that he "shall try to fly by those nets" (220). With his memorable proclamation, Stephen unwittingly admits that he will fall from the sky like Icarus unless he can "fly" with the genres of speech that he is indebted to

and distinguished from. As he begins to position his interiority amidst the full range of nets that impede its "slow and dark birth," Stephen therefore realizes just how "difficult and complicated" it is to come into possession of a language of his own:

While his mind had been pursuing its intangible phantoms and turning in irresolution from such pursuit he had heard about him the constant voices of his father and of his masters, urging him to be a gentleman above all things and urging him to be a good catholic above all things. These voices had now come to be hollowsounding in his ears. When the gymnasium had been opened he had heard another voice urging him to be strong and manly and healthy, and when the movement towards national revival had begun...yet another voice had bidden him to be true to his country...it was the din of all these hollowsounding voices that made him halt irresolutely in the pursuit of phantoms. He gave them ear only for a time but he was happy only when he was far from them, beyond their call, alone or in the company of phantasmal comrades. (88)

Although Stephen considers his "mind" an almost independent entity positioned "far from" society and "beyond" the "call" of its forces, the narration demonstrates that his apparently profound "phantoms" are as "intangible" as the "voices" of gender, class, religion and nation are "hollow." By conceiving of both his "phantoms" and his "hollow" opponents as "voices" that shift "irresolutely" in a "constant" "din," the narration in turn suggests that his very language is a cacophony of conflicting meanings imposed by different social groups. Because it ties each of these warring "voices" to an institution that fashions individuals into subjects, the narration reflects

what Bakhtin calls "heteroglossia," the "multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems" within a national language ("Discourse in the Novel" 288). As it shows how the "voice" of religion prioritizes itself "above all things" and how the "voice" of masculinity repeats words like "strong and manly and healthy," the narration points out that there are patterns of linguistic usage appropriate to and enforced by each of these "languages of heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 291). While it locates the power of the family, the church and the nation in the sound (or lack of sound) of its "voice," the narration also notes that all of these "languages" are "specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words" (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 291-2). Because it demonstrates that an individual becomes a subject as he develops a "vocabulary...[and] an accentual system...depending on social level, academic institution...and other stratifying factors," the narration suggests that the words which promise Stephen freedom are the very "nets" which hold him in place (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 290). But once it admits that the "voices" of society could "come to be hollowsounding in [Stephen's] ears," the narration concludes that he will be able put himself in the "company of [his] phantasmal comrades" if he appropriates the "languages of heteroglossia" into his specifically artistic language.

As Stephen continues to use the interdependent processes of representation and fragmentation to explore his inner life, he seems like Marlow and Dowell to make this "dark" and "monstrous" realm all the more obscure. But since his attempt to *discover* an artistic interiority is really an endeavor to *produce* an artistic *language*, his conflicting formal mechanisms fill him with words instead of emptying him of

meanings. Although Stephen opposes his interiority to the "social or religious orders" that have apparently hampered its growth, the narration therefore shows how the words he tries to use "according to the literary tradition" are still "infect[ed]" by "the tradition of the marketplace" (203). When he notes in Chapter Five how English is "so familiar and so foreign [that it] will always be for [him] an acquired speech," Stephen ties military conquest and political subjugation to a linguistic violence that has penetrated his body and "infect[ed]" his spirit (205). But though he acknowledges that he is filled with a language that makes his "soul fret," the narration demonstrates that Stephen must also struggle against the "languages of heteroglossia" that operate within the national language of England (205). By infusing Stephen's most intimate thoughts with Father Arnall's language throughout the third chapter, the narration supports his friend Cranly's claim that his "mind is supersaturated with the religion in which [he says he] disbelieve[s]" (261). And by showing how Stephen appreciated the aesthetic properties of language from the time that he imagined he "was [the] baby tuckoo" he had read about, the narration shows how his ability to write a book has been shaped by his experiences reading books. Because it amasses Stephen's artistic language through his confrontations with the institutions and discourses that he wants to elude, the narration resolves the interdependent processes of representation and fragmentation into an unceasing interplay of words. While it assembles Stephen from the discourses he is indebted to and distinguished from, it shows the resultant thought processes by composing itself of everything from songs, rhymes and prayers to letters, poems, sermons, diary entries, children's books and religious manuals. When it ends the novel with Stephen's definitive attempt to escape

"[his] home, [his] fatherland [and his] church," the narration allows him to complete his language in the very moment that it shows him fulfilling his artistic destiny by writing *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. After rejecting the various forms of power-knowledge that try to turn Stephen into a subject, the novel leaves the reader with a style, with a way of perceiving, knowing and being through which she can constitute herself as a subject. And as it merges Stephen's search at the level of content with the narration's work at the level of form, the novel establishes a way of exercising power-knowledge and a new version of the Novel Subject.

## Conclusion

## One More Addendum to an Addendum

Critics write themselves into the stories they are writing about. Most often this means that they inscribe their work on top of a text, that they define words, gloss phrases and interpret passages to rewrite it with a different formal or thematic emphasis. But in some cases, it also means that they write about a text as if they were in it, that they examine a story in a way that extends its formal logic into their criticism. As I extended Lord Jim into my first chapter, I crafted an addendum to an "addendum to a court case" that explored the novel's peculiarities as Jim or Marlow might. Just as Jim becomes more determined "to go on talking for truth's sake" when he senses that he has "dash[ed] round" the "true horror" of the *Patna* incident, I prolonged my formal analysis when I realized that Fredric Jameson had overlooked the novel's first generic struggle (23). And just as Marlow laments that "our lives [are] too short for that full utterance which through all our stammerings is of course our only and abiding intention," I postponed my full account of the Novel Subject so that I could first show how the collapse of realism coincides with the emergence of modernism (163). Because I wrote myself in to Marlow's meandering tale, I was able to explain how he "thicken[s] the enigma" of Jim's subjectivity and then acts as if it were inscrutable to begin with (Barthes, S/Z 62). But while I extended Lord Jim's logic of representation and fragmentation long enough to understand its approach to inner life, I soon abandoned a form that "give[s] up expecting [its] last words" so that

I could expose the power-knowledge that is hidden in and articulated by *The Good Soldier* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (163).

As I withdrew from my discursive position in Conrad's text to survey the novels that succeeded it, I started to describe how Ford's "best book" intensified the interrogation of subjectivity in the years leading up to the Great War. By examining the ways in which it takes up and modifies Lord Jim's interdependent processes of representation and fragmentation, I began to argue that it helped turn the centered subject of the nineteenth century into the irrational, unknowable and all-important subject of the twentieth. But in the moment that I started to rewrite *The Good Soldier* and analyze the techniques it uses to exercise power, I realized that Ford Madox Ford extended the formal logic of the novel into his tale of the two titles. Although I had noted that Dowell undermines the foundations of knowledge and severs the links between representations and referents, I therefore found that he compels both author and reader to determine whether he is telling "A Tale of Passion" or "The Saddest Story." And while I had already observed that Dowell consolidates the Novel Subject when he tries to narrate his fellow characters, I thus discovered that his methods of interpretation make his own inscrutable subjectivity an object of analysis (40). Because I recognized that Dowell forces readers to write themselves into his nightmare of a narrative, I argued that he teaches them ways of perceiving, knowing and being that make objects all the more obscure. But as I showed how he cultivates an unrelenting will to discourse with which a "human being [can turn] him- or herself into a subject," I advanced to a text that builds this form of power-knowledge into the roots of language itself (Foucault, "The Subject and Power 778).

Although I tried to resist the logic of representation and fragmentation by writing myself out of Lord Jim, I turned to The Good Soldier only to discover that I would continue to write about the text as if I were in it. Even when I renewed my attempts to abandon a form that "give[s] up expecting [its] last words," I found myself looking hard at the captivating yet ultimately "unsubstantial" subjectivity at the heart of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Because I accompanied Stephen in his attempt to cultivate a specifically artistic interiority, I too expected some epiphany to "transfigure" me precisely because I could not fathom how it would do so (67). But when I realized that Stephen's inner life was constituted by its interaction with the external world, I completed the narration's gesture to a "chain of speech communication" in which discourses "infect" language with their own "intention[s]" (Bakhtin, "Speech Genres" 93; "Discourse in the Novel 290). And when I discovered that Stephen's search for subjectivity was really the making of a language, I began to resolve the tensions between processes of representation and fragmentation that are both linguistic in the final analysis. By the time I followed Stephen out of Ireland in his quest to "express [him]self in some mode of life or art," I too ended up with his Portrait, with a style that shows what Conrad and Ford tried to name or define (268-9). While I began my thesis with a title that suggested a number of possible arguments, I therefore reached its conclusion when several lines of thinking coincided in the notion of "Modernism's Novel Subject." Because I united the theme *in* the writing with the style of the writing, because I considered the "conscience or selfknowledge" as a way of being "subject to someone else by control and dependence," I pulled out and wound up the strands of my thesis without twisting them into an

impenetrable "tangle" (Foucault, "The Subject and Power" 781). As I freed myself from the tensions that I had struggled with *in* the text, I finally began to write myself *as* a text. And as I learned the new ways of perceiving, knowing and being that could lead me to my own inner life, I invested myself all the more deeply with a form of power-knowledge that is entirely Novel.

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