THE FEELING OF FORM:
EXPERIENCING HISTORIES IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITISH NOVEL SERIES

by

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MA, University of Victoria, 2015
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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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ABSTRACT

How do we understand our encounter with ambivalent or visceral aesthetic feelings—textual environments, moods, and atmospheres—if they do not solely belong to the *representation* of individual or collective emotions? This dissertation proposes a concept of "the feeling of form" to approach these aesthetic feelings *as formal dynamics*, such as restless orientations and rhythmic intensities. How can literary forms *have* feelings, and where—or is it necessary—to locate the textual body and the subject of these feelings? The goal of my dissertation is not to show what specific neurological procedures are involved in the emotive-cognitive entanglement between the text and the reader, but to understand "form" as a verb—*forming, shaping, mediating, transmitting*—whose dynamics and actions manifest the narrative form's visceral aesthetic feelings, and to examine how such feelings bear significant cultural and political currency. Reading formal dynamics as aesthetic feelings also invites us to adjust our usual gaze at "form" away from categories coined by various formalisms, such as "genre," "structure," "focalization," or "style." In doing so, we are able to reimagine these categories as part of the dynamics of formal reorientations, rhythms, and syntactic intensities, and to open ourselves up to the impersonal agency and criticality of literary forms.

Based on these convictions, my dissertation argues that reading for the feeling of form allows us to experience how literary forms transmit and regenerate volatile experiences of history in ways that complicate, supplement, or subvert the explicit representation of historical events and temporality in a literary text. In this dissertation, I focus on the relationship between the feeling of form and the experience of various histories in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* (1924–1928), Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* (1932–1934), Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957–60), and Kazuo Ishiguro's single-volume novel *The Unconsoled*

(1995). Chapter One traces how nauseous form in *Parade's End* allows us to experience wartime and postwar anxiety through Christopher Tietjens's self-revolting and incoherent consciousness. Chapter Two examines how the deterioration of rhythm in *A Scot's Quair* transmits a historical experience of gradual suffocation intricately linked with Scotland's political and ecological disasters. In a brief Coda, I conclude my project by looking at how *The Alexandria Quartet* and *The Unconsoled* manifest weakened and depleted feelings of form, and how these feelings prompt us to rethink the relationship of the feeling of form to European heteronormative ideology and the ethics of community formation. *The Unconsoled* (1995), in particular, serves as a twofold limit case of the feeling of form: first, as a limit case of the futile feeling of form, and second, as a limit case of the distinction between the novel form and the novel series form. This twofold limit case speaks to its own historical experience of futility at the end of history, and responds to the aesthetic and ideological legacies of early twentieth-century experimental novel series.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The initial sparks for this project were kindled by my experience of reading Beckett's *Molloy* in the dampest and coldest time of the year in Victoria. I want to show my appreciation for Beckett's affectively rich, dark, and comical writing, which made that winter even colder and led me to this project today.

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To parody a well-known saying, I shall say that a little formalism turns one away from History, but that a lot brings one back to it.

— Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*

INTRODUCTION: THE FEELING OF FORM, HISTORY, EXPERIENCE

Example 1

> [For] Miss Kilman would do anything for the Russians, starved herself for the Austrians, but in private inflicted positive torture, so insensitive was she, dressed in a green mackintosh coat. Year in year out she wore that coat; she perspired; she was never in the room five minutes without making you feel her superiority, your inferiority; how poor she was; how rich you were; how she lived in a slum without a cushion or a bed or a rug or whatever it might be, all her soul rusted with that grievance sticking in it, her dismissal from school during the War—poor embittered unfortunate creature! For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered into itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of those spectres with which one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and suck up half our life-blood, dominators and tyrants. (*Mrs Dalloway* 10)

Example 2

> He [Murphy] rose and hastened to the garret, running till he was out of breath, then walking, then running again, and so on. [. . .] Slowly he felt better, astir in his mind, in the freedom of that light and dark that did not clash, nor alternate, nor fade nor lighten except to their communion. The rock got faster and faster, shorter and shorter, the gleam was gone, the grin was gone, the starlessness was gone, soon his body would be quiet. Most things under the moon got slower and slower and then stopped, a rock got faster and faster and then stopped. Soon his body would be quiet, soon he would be free. (*Murphy* 252–3)

Example 1 is excerpted from the opening chapter of *Mrs Dalloway* where Clarissa contemplates on Miss Kilman, the governess of Clarissa's daughter Elizabeth. In this passage, we encounter Woolf's dazzling display of a series of formal reorientations within what has been commonly recognized as "the stream of consciousness." As Clarissa's mind does not hesitate to show distaste for Miss Kilman's ascetic patriotism ("in private inflicted positive torture"), the restless formal reorientations from the objective "she" to the dialogical "you" and then to the neutral "one" and the collective "us" embody visceral feelings of repulsion and self-contradiction in Clarissa's tortured mind. In example 2, a passage from Samuel Beckett's *Murphy,* the protagonist Murphy returns to his garret in a mental hospital and is later killed that night by coal gas explosion. This passage constructs synchronicity between the representation of Murphy's

respiratory activities and the rhythmic, respiratory intensities of the syntax. As he hurries back to his garret, the syntax features short and paratactic rhythms accordingly: “He [Murphy] rose and hastened to the garret, running till he was out of breath, then walking, then running again, and so on.” As Murphy suffers from an increasing degree of asphyxiation in his garret due to a gas leak, the rhythm of breathless syntax generates a correspondent textual environment of breathlessness, “Most things under the moon got slower and slower and then stopped, a rock got faster and faster and then stopped.”

These two moments in twentieth-century British and Irish fiction are among many others that raise a shared question for our interpretative methods in literary studies: how do we understand and locate these ambivalent, visceral feelings of repulsion, infliction, and breathlessness if they do not solely belong to the *representation* of individual or collective emotions? This dissertation proposes a concept of “the feeling of form” to approach these feelings as *formal dynamics*, such as restless orientations and rhythmic intensities. How can literary forms *have* feelings, and where—or it is necessary—to locate the textual body and the subject of these feelings?

To illustrate how “the feeling of form” helps us start addressing these questions, I want to clarify the following general parameters for this concept. First, I prefer the word “feeling” over “emotion” and “affect” because “feeling” is both capacious enough to register more ambivalent physical and mental feelings, and constrained enough to retain a degree of locatability and specificity that the literary texts discussed in my dissertation often offer.[1] Second, “the feeling of form” is not a conceptual master key to unlock the secret chamber of aesthetic feelings, as if these feelings belonged to “form” alone, or as if “form” were an entity, a category, or something stable and predicated on the Kantian “thing-in-itself.” I suggest that the feeling of form does not

exist independently of our senses, perception, and interpretation, but rather takes place in the attachment between the text and the reader, as thinking and feeling are always already an entangled process.[2] If there has to be a register for this entanglement, I adopt a phenomenological one. The ultimate goal of my dissertation is not to show what specific neurological procedures are involved in this entanglement (as neuroaesthetic theories are trying to answer[3]), but to understand "form" as a verb—*forming, shaping, mediating, transmitting*—whose dynamics and actions manifest the narrative form's visceral aesthetic feelings, and to examine how such feelings bear significant cultural and political currency. This leads to my third point: thinking of formal dynamics *as feelings* invites us to adjust our usual gaze at "form" away from categories coined by various formalisms, such as "genre," "structure," "style," or "focalization."[4] In doing so, we are able to reimagine these categories as part of the dynamics of formal reorientations, rhythms, and syntactic intensities, and to open ourselves up to the impersonal agency and criticality of literary forms. Reading formal dynamics as feelings also echoes various iterations of linguistic theories that language is not a dead object but something alive.[5] Moreover, as I will discuss in detail, my approach to the feeling of form nods at yet departs from Sianne Ngai's brilliant theorization of "tone" as a literary text's affective orientation. Instead, I focus on local and contingent phenomena of formal orientations, rhythms, and other kinds of syntactic play, and I also consider the complexities of the form of *the novel series*—the primary focal point of this dissertation—as central to the conception of the feeling of form. Ultimately, instead of trying to take down existing formalist categories or associating the feeling of form with object-oriented ontology, I am more interested in what aesthetic and political experiences of history we might obtain by attuning ourselves to embodied feelings of forms in literary works.

Based on these convictions, my dissertation argues that reading for the feeling of form allows us to experience how literary forms transmit and regenerate volatile experiences of history in ways that complicate, supplement, or subvert the explicit representation of historical events and temporality in a literary text. In this dissertation, I focus on the relationship between the feeling of form and the experience of various histories in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* (1924–1928), Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* (1932–1934), Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957–60), and Kazuo Ishiguro's single-volume novel *The Unconsoled* (1995). Chapter One traces how nauseous form in *Parade's End* allows us to experience wartime and postwar anxiety through Christopher Tietjens's self-revolting and incoherent consciousness. Chapter Two examines how the deterioration of rhythm in *A Scot's Quair* transmits a historical experience of gradual suffocation intricately linked with Scotland's political and ecological disasters. In a brief Coda, I conclude my project by looking at how *The Alexandria Quartet* and *The Unconsoled* manifest weakened and depleted feelings of form, and how these feelings prompt us to rethink the relationship of the feeling of form to European heteronormative ideology and the ethics of community building. *The Unconsoled* (1995), in particular, serves as a twofold limit case of the feeling of form: first, as a limit case of the futile feeling of form, and second, as a limit case of the distinction between the novel form and the novel series form. This twofold limit case speaks to its own historical experience of futility, and responds to the aesthetic and ideological legacies of early twentieth-century experimental novel series.

Before I move to specific theoretical and historical contexts from which "the feeling of form" emerges, two points in my argument need immediate explication. First, regarding the word "history" in my use of the phrase "the representation of history," I echo Robert Lehman's definition of history as "the historical worldview that continues to determine our representation

of the past" (xv), which resulted from "the codification of history both as an academic discipline" and "as an increasingly hegemonic worldview" since the nineteenth century (xvi). Meanwhile, I depart from Lehman's productive examination of how Walter Benjamin and T. S. Eliot use liteary forms (satire, myth, allegory, etc.) to engage with the question of historical representation though a "critique of historical reason" (xxiii): I turn to how the *feeling* of literary form works with another set of questions central to the representation of history: 1) how the feeling of form problematizes the subject of history—the individual (human) subject in and subjugated to history—who makes historical representation possible within and beyond a literary work; 2) how embodied discordances or impasses in formal reorientations and intensities prevent a literary work from shaping a recognizable, univocal form—such as the form of allegory or satire, which succumbs to its own historical and ideological condition, and 3) how contriving a feeling of time and space *differently through aesthetic forms* helps undo the temporal and geopolitical conditions of historical representation in the novel series. For example, I argue that in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* the formal dynamics of eversion (turning the "modernist inward turn" inside out) embody a feeling of nausea. This nauseous feeling of form transmits a historical experience of ubiquitous and normalized anxiety through a feeling of non-dialectical self-repulsion and self-contradiction, which not only fundamentally unsettles how the tetralogy's macro-narrative constructs the individual subject of England's history but also captures a collective anxious experience of history as indigestible. This collective experience appears in Sartre's *Nausea* too; *feeling* history as a similarly indigestible experience of time and space through nausea, the historian Antoine Roquentin in *Nausea* goes through an odyssey of his own mind that finally relocates external nausea as something internally constitutive of the "I."

Second, the seemingly odd selection of primary literary texts as case studies in my dissertation—the novel series—in fact not only allows me to work out a more thorough understanding of the feeling of form and its engagement with the representation of history, but also strikes me as a complex historical phenomenon that merits more nuanced theorization. For one thing, the novel series always already retains the maximal tension between temporal fragmentation and linearity, between chance and history. In the twentieth-century British novel series I examine, experimental forms and styles inevitably confront the serial form's inherent desire to collect, preserve, and project a succession of historical events and futures; the serial form often bears the residual structures of the historical fiction, *Bildungsroman*, *roman-fleuve*, and Victorian serial novels. The novel series is an extremely spacious and rich site within which we are able to examine the full-blown workings of the feelings of forms against a novel series' desire for teleological or cyclical representations of history.

The French influence of *roman-fleuve* on the Anglophone novel series is obvious: from Balzac and Zola to Marcel Proust, Romain Rolland, Roger Martin du Gard, and Jules Romains, this tradition of *roman-fleuve* led to a parallel Anglophone phenomenon from Anthony Trollope to John Galsworthy and C. P. Snow, and eventually to Anthony Powell. However, the selection of these novel series in my dissertation neither privileges this form of novels over single-volume novels, nor focuses on authors who were predominantly or only known for writing novel series; rather, I situate the emergence of these experimental or avant-garde novel series both within and alongside Anglophone modernism. Besides Ford Madox Ford (who also wrote a historical novel series *The Fifth Queen*), Lewis Grassic Gibbon, and Lawrence Durrell, we can also find modernist novel series or, more loosely, traces of sequence forms in such works as Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, Joseph Conrad's Marlow novels, Mary Butts's *The Taverner Novels*,

James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, Christopher Isherwood's *The Berlin Stories*, Samuel Beckett's novel trilogy, and even Virginia Woolf's single-volume novel *The Years* (whose structure echoes both the historical novel and the sequence form). Experimental novel series also border on popular genres in which seriality is more commonly seen: family saga, science fiction, detective fiction, romance, and fantasy. Thus, I read experimental novel series as affective repositories of multiple aesthetic forms negotiating with the weight of the past and the possibility of future, repositories that fuse and ferment various historical experiences into monstrous and often uncontainable forms. To attend to the feeling of form not only *in* but also *of* experimental novel series means to situate them within broader and heterogeneous realms of historical experience that are at once aesthetic and social.

In what follows, I aim to outline the theoretical, historical, and aesthetic contexts that have informed my conceptualization of "the feeling of form," and to illustrate how this term invigorates our reformulation of the relationship of literary form to aesthetic feelings in the studies of twentieth-century fiction as well as in aesthetic theories.

I. Significant and Palpable Forms

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed a theoretical departure from what I call "the stimulation model" of aesthetic emotions in philosophical aesthetics. Various versions of this stimulation model, from Aristotle to Hegel, share a common presupposition that a certain form or structure of the artwork is able to evoke a particular emotion in us, although the relationship of form to the evoked emotion does not have to be rigidly correspondent. For example, Aristotle claims that the sources of tragic effects are plots and events, "The story should be put together in such a way that even without seeing the play a person hearing the series of events should feel dread and pity" (33). Hume's story about wine tasting, although often read as his justification of

the subjectivism of individual sentiments, oddly implies a version of objectivism that formal or structural components in a work of art pre-exist and dictate our sensory responses to it ("Of the Standard of Taste"). While Kant believes that the pure judgment of taste concerns an object's form of purposiveness instead of empirical sensations and emotions, his notion of disinterested pleasure leaves room for "disinterestedness" itself to be a feeling of detachment in our attachment to the formal properties of an object. Schiller, while acknowledging the "relationship to our capacity to feel from the idea of *beauty*" (97) and encouraging us to understand them "reciprocally as effect and as cause" (97), also reaches a limit case where beauty evokes our pleasurable feelings in a rather unperceivable process, during which "reflections flow so completely into feeling that we believe ourselves to be directly apprehending form" (97). Hegel ambiguously calls what Schiller considers as unperceivable "in the middle": "thereby the sensuous aspect of a work of art . . . is elevated to a pure appearance, and the work of art stands in the middle between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought" (38).

This common presupposition behind the stimulation model, which often bases itself off an ambiguous and even mystified correlation between form and aesthetic emotion, is symptomatic of two splits in the history of Western aesthetic theories. One split is between the artist and the spectator, which Giorgio Agamben has delineated in his discussion of the emergence of "the man of taste" in mid-seventeenth century Europe: "the work of art starts to be regarded as the exclusive competence of the artist. . . . The non-artist, however, can only *spectare*, that is, transform himself into a less and less necessary and more and more passive partner, for whom the work of art is merely an occasion to practice his good taste" (*The Man Without Content* 15). This split transforms a work of art into an autonomous object alienated from both the artist and the spectator, and reduces the spectator into a passive receptacle of the

power of the work of art. This split serves as the foundation of modern theories of aesthetic emotions. The second split is between reason (the objective) and sentiment (the subjective); accompanying this split is the devaluation of sentiment, which is most evident in the historical phenomenon of the decline of the sentimental novel towards the end of the eighteenth century as well as the gravitation towards objectivism in aesthetic theories.[6]

I suggest that a departure from this common presupposition emerged from parallel reformulations of aesthetic emotions in Anglophone modernism and Russian Formalism. As it is impossible to evoke modernism as a unitary aesthetic movement or to summarize the entire theoretical edifice of Russian Formalism, I only highlight modernist artists and Russian formalists whose reformulations of aesthetic form and emotion are central to my conceptualization of "the feeling of form." Meanwhile, a general claim I think I can make without risking too much oversimplification is that modernism did not abandon the concept of aesthetic emotions, even in T. S. Eliot's critique of Hamlet's excessive emotions.[7] Not only do detachment and impersonality produce their own aesthetic emotions but also, in more specific terms, modernist artists' critical writings and aesthetic practices have unsettled the two aforementioned splits (the artist vs. the spectator; objectivity of reason vs. subjectivity of emotion) and catalyzed new theories of aesthetic forms and emotions. What's more, modernist reformulations of aesthetic form's relation to emotion are always situated in broader attempts to conceptualize the nature of reality, subjectivity, objectivity, and individual consciousness.

Clive Bell's theory of "Significant Form" is among the most salient examples of this attempt. In *Art* (1913), Bell defines "Significant Form" this way: "In each, lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combination of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms, I call

'Significant Form'; and 'Significant Form' is the one quality common to all works of visual art" (23). His concept of "Significant Form" on the surface seems to reiterate the exact common presupposition that certain artistic forms evoke emotions in the audience, but it stretches the dialectics of subjectivity and objectivity beyond its limit. For Bell, the Significant Form has the capacity to produce aesthetic emotions are able to absorb everything—including ourselves and our empirical world—and become the *only* content of our aesthetic judgment: "We have no other means of recognizing a work of art than our feeling for it" (23), "Art transports us from the world of man's activity to a world of aesthetic exaltation" (36), and "In this world the emotions of life find no place. It is a world with emotions of its own" (37). The question of how exactly a work of art's Significant Form evokes our aesthetic emotions does not concern Bell; for him, the nature of aesthetic judgment requires us to experience extreme modes of subjective feelings that already compel us to dissolve our subjectivity in the work of art. Bell calls this world of artworks as "ultimate reality" (60), and he eventually turns to religious experience to account for this aesthetic experience as "ultra-human emotions" (242). In Bell's theory, then, emotions produced by the Significant Form are not individual, subjective, and cognized feelings, but more atmospheric and totalizing feelings that construct a phenomenological world we fully immerse ourselves in. Clive Bell's contemporary Wilhelm Worringer, in advancing his theory of empathy as the nature of aesthetic experience in modernist aesthetics, uses the term "objectified self-enjoyment" to describe this immersion: "To enjoy aesthetically means to enjoy myself in a sensuous object diverse from myself, to empathise myself into it" (5). Worringer concludes that this process suggests a fundamental need for self-alienation in aesthetic appreciation—"we *are* in the other object. We are delivered from our external object, an external form, with our inner urge to experience" (24).

This "immersion model" of aesthetic form and emotion is further complicated by modernists' understanding that aesthetic emotions, feelings, and moods bear historical and social significance beyond subjectivism and relativism. This understanding precedes John Dewey's discussion of the social quality of aesthetic emotions in *Art as Experience* (1934) and anticipates Raymond Williams's "structures of feeling" as "social experience in solution" (133). Virginia Woolf and Ford Madox Ford, for example, are brilliant theorists of "structures of feeling": they come at the question of aesthetic emotions not with the intention to explicate how exactly form evokes the audience's emotions but with critical and political motivations to encapsulate and activate aesthetic emotions and feelings that are social, historical, and collective. For instance, in "Professions for Women," the angel between Woolf and her paper is a structure of oppressive feelings as well as a conventional female character in Victorian literature. The affective quality of such moods is prominent in Woolf's description of "the shadow of her wing or the radiance of her halo" (151). As Woolf warns us, simply killing the angel is not enough; in order to move past the angel, she has to "[tell] the truth about [her] own experiences as a body" (153), which manifests in how she uses aesthetic forms to produce a counter-mood to transgress the boundaries between the interior and the exterior, the metaphysical and the physical. Ford also has a nuanced understanding of the political and historical dimensions of aesthetic emotion, especially that of sentimentality. In *The English Novel* (1929), he understands sentimentality as both England's national sentiment and a predominant Anglo-Saxon aesthetic emotion. After commenting on Samuel Richardson's "sentimentalizing" tendency as "his E string," Ford continues,

> Against that I have nothing to say. Anglo-Saxons are sentimentalists before everything and in all their arts, and it is probable that without sentimentality as an ingredient no Anglo-Saxon artist could work: certainly he could have no appeal. To produce national masterpieces in paint Turner must bathe his canvases deep in

> that gentle fluid; the English lyric is a marvel of sentimentality and so is English domestic architecture with its mellow—or mellowed!—red brick, its dove-cotes, its south walls for netted fruits. So the first of modern novelists must be one of the greatest sentimentalists. And on those lines his appeal is universal and everlasting. (72-3)

Ford positions sentimentality in the intersection of political, historical, and aesthetic emotions that he traces back to the eighteenth century: "It had begun with Richardson. His vogue with the French would be incomprehensible if we were not able to consider that the French Revolution was, in the end, a sentimental movement, basing itself on civic, parental, filial, and rhetorical virtues" (114). Ford's notion of sentimentality refers to refinement and mellowness instead of indulgence or excessiveness; for him, sentimentality is integral to Englishness as both national sentiment and a distinct aesthetic emotion, as long as one only has "a wholesome dose of sentimentality" (74).

The immersive and the historical: these two major models of theorizing the relationship between aesthetic form and emotion are central to my conceptualization of the feeling of form because: 1) they prompt us to adopt intertwined historical and social angles to understand aesthetic feeling as more than an idiosyncratic product of sensory stimulation; 2) they invite us to attend to both explicit emotions and more ambivalent feelings; 3) they acknowledge the impersonal yet agential quality of aesthetic form—namely form's capacity to create a semblance of totality not through representation but through sensory immersion; 3) they pave our way towards theorizing the feeling of form: thinking and feeling with the phenomenological world of formal dynamics, we can start to explicate the relationship of the feeling of form to the experience of history in twentieth-century novel series.

In parallel with these two modernist models of aesthetic emotions, two Russian Formalists, Viktor Shklovsky and M. M. Bakhtin, both focus their attention on the dynamism of

literary forms in relation to aesthetic feelings that are broader than the category of aesthetic emotions. In his essay "Potebnya," Viktor Shklovsky critiques Alexander Potebnya's equation of image capacity with poetic capacity. Shklovsky argues instead that the distinction between poetic language and everyday language should be based on "the palpability" of poetic construction (417). As Shklovsky explains, "This palpability can be expressed in the acoustic, or articulating or even semasiological component of the word. And sometimes it is not the structure that is palpable, but the construction of the words, the syntax" ("Potebnya" 417). Although he does not offer a clear definition of "palpability" in the essay, his examples of poetic rhythms and sounds suggest that palpable form refers to stylistic and syntactic intensities of poetic language, intensities that can be felt yet do not produce or provoke a particular emotion.

The concept of the palpability of form also links to the famous "*ostranenie*" in his seminal essay "Art, as Device," in which he anchors his critique of Potebnya in the poetic value of formal intensities: "he [Potebnya] failed to notice that two kinds of images exist: the image as a practical means of thinking, as a means of grouping objects—and the poetic image, as a means of intensifying an impression" ("Art, as Device" 76). The palpability of construction Shklovsky discusses in "Potebnya" is precisely this *intensifying process* of an impression. Another name of this intensifying process is "*ostranenie*"—the "complication of the form, which increases the duration and complexity of perception" (80). It is worth noting that Shklovsky's concept of *ostranenie* is not merely about creating a defamiliarized visual impression but about creating *an intensified poetic form and syntax* ("the complication of the form") in the process of defamiliarization. The palpability and intensity of form aim to retain the reader's impression and attachment to poetic language.[8] It is also worth noting that in "Art, as Device" Shklovsky extends poetic language (rhythm and sound) to the poetics of prose—novels and erotic

folklores[9]—whose ability of "semantic change" produces *ostranenie* (93). This opens our way to read the palpability of form in a novel.

Shklovsky's discussion of palpability suggests that he understands poetic form as something alive, visceral, and dynamic that we encounter and participate in. This understanding provides us with an early articulation and prototype of the feeling of form—that is, literary form is not a static construction but something palpable. While Shklovsky's emphasis on the visual effects and perception in his theorization of *ostranenie* seem to have obscured his attention to the non-visual, acoustic, and visceral aspects of literary form, Bakhtin extends the latter aspects of form to his own concept of "the emotional-volitional tension of form" against the methodology of "material aesthetics" (262). In *Art and Answerability*, Bakhtin points out the foundational presupposition of material aesthetics as follows: "*aesthetic activity is directed towards a given material,* it *gives a form to that material alone:* an *aesthetically* valid form is *the form* of a given *material*—conceived from the standpoint of natural science or that of linguistics" (262). What Bakhtin discloses here is a dichotomy of form (an organizing principle) and content (the formed material) central to the presupposition of material aesthetics. Following this disclosure, Bakhtin problematizes the conceptualization of form in this presupposition:

> The basic position of material aesthetics with regard to form [. . .] is quite unconvincing.
>
> Form, understood as the form of a given material solely in its natural-scientific (mathematical or linguistic) determinateness, becomes a sort of purely external ordering of the material, devoid of any axiological constituent. What fails to be understood is the *emotional-volitional tension of form*—the fact that it has the character of expressing some axiological relationship of the author and the contemplator *to* something apart from the material. For this emotional-volitional relationship that is expressed by form (by rhythm, harmony, symmetry, and other formal moments) is too intense, too *active* in character to be understood simply as a relationship to the material. (264)

For Bakhtin, the bedrock of material aesthetics—the dichotomy of form and content—fails to take into account "the emotional-volitional tension of form." Several things need to be unpacked in this complicated argument in order to see why Bakhtin's understanding of form and emotion is pertinent to my conceptualization of the feeling of form. First, Bakhtin's description of the emotional-volitional tension suggests the possibility of a reader-text relationship in which the reader is able to feel something intangible—emotional and volitional—which exists independently of content (the material). This means that there is a certain emotion circulating between the reader and the text that nonetheless cannot be expressed by literary representation and meaning. Second, he locates the cause and formation of this relationship in formal dynamics such as rhythm and harmony, which resonates with Shklovsky's discussion of the palpability of poetic syntax. Third, Bakhtin is aware of our cognitive limits and insufficient vocabularies around "emotion" as well as "material," for he admits that the emotional-volitional relationship is "too intense, too *active* in character to be understood simply as a relationship to the material." Bakhtin also believes that this emotion is not a mere pleasure simulated by the given material "in hedonistic terms" (264).

While using the concept of emotional-volitional relationship negatively to refute the logic of the form-content dichotomy in material aesthetics, Bakhtin also advances, consciously or unconsciously, an emerging theory of the feeling of form that Shklovsky's concept of palpability initiates. In *Towards a Philosophy of Act*, Bakhtin specifically evokes the notion of palpable form and supplements the visual aspect of expression ("palpable-expressive," *nagliadno* or German *anschaulich*) with sonic and embodied components: "The expression of a performed act from within and the expression of once-occurrent Being-as-event in which that act is performed require the entire fullness of the word: its content/sense aspect (the word as concept) as well as

its palpable-expressive aspect (the word as image) and its emotional-volitional aspect (the intonation of the word) in their unity" (31). Here, although Bakhtin predominately grapples with the language and expression of "a first philosophy" towards answerability—a concept that this dissertation cannot do justice[10]—the significance of the potential "fullness of the word" to our understanding of literary form is that form also participates in this three-dimensional concept of language, and that form not only mediates content, concept, and perception but also constitutes its own sonic and "emotional-volitional" existence. For Bakhtin, this unitary existence is a phenomenological world / word that we encounter and are oriented towards through our "interested-effective attitude" (32).

To extrapolate from my delineation of modernist and Russian formalist reiterations of aesthetic emotions, I stress that severing the embodied feeling of literary form from the text would deny our access to a complex phenomenological world whose potentialities—aesthetic, philosophical, and political ones—would be denounced by our indoctrinate impulse for abstraction and objectivism. Following Bakhtin and many others, I believe that however "isolated" a reading or writing process might be, there is a certain answerability between the world of the novel and that of the reader, be it virtual, phenomenological, potential, or ultra-real; to be a part of this relationship does not discredit our interpretative ability but instead conditions this ability in the first place. Of course, the feeling of literary form also partakes in this dialectical and dialogic relationship.

Furthermore, another primary task of this dissertation is to reimagine how we approach the dynamism of literary forms as feelings instead of solely attributing it to linguistic actions and expressions as Toril Moi does in her book *Revolution of the Ordinary*. This conscious choice does not mean that literary forms cannot be both, but rather suggests varying scalability of

literary texts and language; Moi herself also acknowledges the potential of palpable form in Russian Formalism while still being able to identify a version of problematic formalism that is predominantly the New Criticism.[11] The point of my choice, then, is to think and feel *otherwise*: how does the feeling of form provide us with different ways to look at aesthetic feelings and literary forms? How does our attention to the feeling of form cast insights into twentieth-century fiction's experience of history? What kinds of embodied feelings staged by literary forms disclose alternative experiences of history that literary representation alone cannot register?

II. Experiencing Histories Through Form: Transmission and Mediation

The questions above imply that I consider the relationship between the feeling of form and the experience of history as one about mutual embodiment. The feeling of form—immersion, empathy, palpability, intensity, or other emotional-volitional aspects of form—should not be simply treated as the result of artists' idiosyncrasy or the endpoint of interpretation. Instead, I treat the feeling of form as a starting point and look further into its double status: the feeling of form simultaneously transmits, in whatever fragmentary and partial modes, a certain *social and historical experience*—that is, the feeling of form is an aesthetically mediated historical product, but a historical product nonetheless—and embodies *volatile experience of alternative histories* that complicate the articulated representation of history.

To further parse this double status, I draw upon some Marxist perspectives of literary form, especially Walter Benjamin, Fredric Jameson, and Raymond Williams. I consider their theorization of transmission and mediation as useful ways to conceptualize non-causal and fuzzier relations between the feeling of form and the experience of history that I aim to outline. For the purpose of conceptualizing the feeling of form, I only focus on Marxist approaches to the question of mediation and transmission in relation to literary forms. Before I start, though, it is

important to note that Marx himself understands aesthetic feelings and emotions quite differently from some later Marxist thinkers. Whereas the concept of aesthetic sensory experience has been mainly treated as an epiphenomenon or repressed all together in some Marxist aesthetic theories (such as Adorno's denunciation of aesthetic emotions in his lectures[12]), Marx himself positions human sensory experience—especially human aesthetic sensibility—at the centre of his theorization of the distinction between human and non-human species, a distinction which then becomes the foundation of his theory on the estranged labor. In "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," for example, Marx bases the difference between human and non-human animals on human's *extra* aesthetic sensibility:

> Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a music ear, an eye for beauty of form—in short, senses capable of human gratification, senses confirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being. For not only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses—the practical senses (will, love, etc.)—in a word, *human* sense—the humanness of the senses—comes to be by virtue of its object, by virtue of *humanized* nature. The *forming* of the five senses is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present. (88–89)

Besides his anxiously anthropocentric ideology and Darwinist undertone, which is especially evident in his repeating emphasis on the human and the humanness of the human, Marx treats aesthetic experience as a uniquely and essentially human capacity. "The *forming* of the five sense is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present"—in this single statement, Marx regards the formation of experience in the dual process of "becoming human" and "becoming labor" as the condition of and entrance into History. The centrality of experience, especially an aesthetic one, is further bound up with his theorization of the estranged labor:

> We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process,

> we get it result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be. (*Marx & Engels on Literature & Art* 344–45)

The idea that the circularity of aesthetic imagination envelops the entire labor-process allows Marx to separate the human from the non-human. Moreover, this passage emphasizes the subordination of human aesthetic pleasure to a labor-process in which the worker is alienated from enjoying "his bodily and mental powers" as a laborer. A sense of coercion in this process is clearer in the original German "Wir unterstellen" (translated here as "we presuppose")—"unterstellen" means "to (make) subordinate" as well as "assume." This harks back to Marx's critique of political economy as "the science of marvellous industry," as "a science of asceticism" (95) contrasted with aesthetic sensibility and pleasure: "the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you save—the greater you become your treasure which neither moths nor dust will devour—your capital. The less you are, the more you have; the less you express your own life, the greater is your alienated life—the greater is the store of your estranged being" (95–6). While Marx's theories and Marxist theories are often prescribed with various degrees of scientism, Marx's humanist emphasis on aesthetic sensibility, which is almost a kind of residual subjectivism left in aesthetic theories, is undeniably important to his critique of capitalism. (For me, Adorno and Horkheimer's notion of "the cultural industry" is less about the nativism of Marx's own view towards the antithetical relation between aesthetic sensibility and commodification than about the later development of capitalism itself.) In other words, Marx's

writing needs to be contextualized not simply as the onset of "the Marxist thought" but also as a prototypical repository of a historical experience that emanates the necessity to preserve an almost Romanticist, utopian, and anti-capitalist aesthetic subjectivism. As a historical narrative, Marx's anxious writing on aesthetic sensibility responds to the precarious status of subjective aesthetic experience amidst the social and intellectual tendency towards abstraction and objectification in the development of capitalism. His anxiety about preserving what remains as subjective, aesthetic, and human seems to have been transmitted into modernists' and Russian formalists' strenuous theorization of aesthetic forms beyond mere objectivism.

Some later Marxist thinkers tend to move away from Marx's emphasis on aesthetic sensibility, or from feelings and sensory experiences all together. For example, in *The Historical Novel*, a book entirely dedicated to aesthetic forms, Lukács only mentions aesthetic feeling implicitly and regards it as secondary to more explicit or articulate social and historical consciousness. In his critique of "bourgeois humanism," he writes:

> Of course, this new historical humanism was itself a child of its age and unable to transcend the limits of that age—except in a fantastical form, as was the case with the great Utopians. [. . .]
>
> This conception of the last great intellectual and artistic period of bourgeois humanism [. . .] is founded upon a ruthlessly truthful investigation and disclosure of all the contradictions of progress. [. . .] And even if it cannot consciously transcend the spiritual horizon of its time, yet the constantly oppressive sense of the contradictions of its own historical situation casts a profound shadow over the whole historical conception. This feeling that—contrary to the consciously philosophic and historical conception which proclaims unceasing and peaceful progress—one is experiencing a last brief, irretrievable intellectual prime of humanity manifests itself in the greatest representatives of this period in different ways (29–30)

The Utopians are quickly brushed aside by Lukács as a fantastical—and hence insufficient—form, because for Lukács bourgeois humanism cannot transcend its historical condition of self-contradiction, although such humanism is helpful in terms of registering *unconsciously* a feeling

of oppression and contradiction in the progress of history. What resides in this realm of "fantastical" form, however, is precisely what I describe as a slippery aesthetic feeling, a feeling that is emerging, anticipating, and partially transmitting historical feelings of the past and the potential. But for Lukács the aesthetic experience produced by fantastical form is not as critical a tool to expose the conception of history and class struggle as the form of the (realist) historical novel. I use this quick example of Lukács to clarify that even though I draw upon some Marxist approaches to literary form in this section, I am careful with not exaggerating the room that they leave for aesthetic feelings and emotions. That being said, although *Marxist* theories of aesthetic feeling is not my focal point, thinkers like Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Fredric Jameson, Raymond Williams among others did contribute substantially to the discussion of literary form, experience, and history. In what follows, I further concepualize the feeling of literary forms in relation to the questions of the transmission and mediation of historical experience.

"Historical experience" is a compacted concept that connotates more layers of meaning than what the common sense of the phrase offers. I want to begin by highlighting two definitions of "experience" in *OED*:

> 4.
> a. The fact of being consciously the subject of a state or condition, or of being consciously affected by an event. Also an instance of this; a state or condition viewed subjectively; an event by which one is affected.
> b. In religious use: A state of mind or feeling forming part of the inner religious life; the mental history (of a person) with regard to religious emotion.
>
> 6. What has been experienced; the events that have taken place within the knowledge of an individual, a community, mankind at large, either during a particular period or generally.
> ("experience, n.")

In definition 4, experience refers to a subjective state of feeling being affected, which emphasizes a subjective state. In definition 6, experience is both the source and result of

knowledge produced by an individual or a community. In *Infancy and History*, Giorgio Agamben helpfully delineates how these two definitions converge in one word. He locates the cause of the "expropriation of experience" ("experience" more in the sense of definition 4) in modern science's "verification of experience which is enacted in the experiment—permitting sensory impressions to be deduced with the exactitude of quantitative determinations and, therefore, the prediction of future impressions" (17). In other words, modern scientific empiricism has largely expropriated and externalized the subjectivity of experience to the extent that sensory impressions and knowledge are unified into the double nature of experience: "The idea of experience as separate from knowledge has become so alien to us that we have forgotten that until the birth of modern science experience and science each had their own place" (18), and what modern science did "was less a matter of opposing experience to authority [. . .] than of referring knowledge and experience to a single subject, which is none other than their conjunction at an abstract Archimedian point: the Cartesian cogito, consciousness" (19).

However, this unification of experience and knowledge confronts its profound crisis in early twentieth century. In "The Storyteller," Walter Benjamin discusses this crisis in terms of the historical experience of trauma and incommunicability since WWI, under which condition not only did the expropriation of subjective experience become impossible but also this impossibility became the normative historical experience of the twentieth century:

> Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent-not richer, but poorer in communicable experience? What ten years later was poured out in the flood of war books was anything but experience that goes from mouth to mouth. And there was nothing remarkable about that. For never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power. (84)

What Benjamin touches upon here is not simply the destitution and intransmissibility of a particular experience but also the psychological and physical destruction of the speaking subject who conditions transmissibility in the first place. This destruction of the speaking subject is clear in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*, where Christopher Tietjens is unable to communicate his war experience. In his discussion of experience in *Infancy and History,* Agamben argues that Benjamin's notion of intransmissibility also has its earlier iteration in not only Baudelaire[13] but also in Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu,* where its aesthetic experience is "something which has been neither lived or experienced"—"an infinite drifting and a casual colliding of objects and sensations," "the negation of experience" (42–3).

Benjamin and Agamben seem to have proposed a not very promising relation between aesthetic form and experience—namely, the intransmissibility or non-translatability between historical experience and expression. However, at the core of this negative relation, there is in fact not so much destitution of feelings and sensations as the *destruction of the modern subject* who previously had access to the experience and expression of entangled feeling and knowledge. I suggest that the intransmissibility of historical experience in verbal and written communication is precisely when we can turn to the feeling of form. I suggest that the feeling of form is both the symptom of intransmissibility and a residual site where we can still access historical experience through formal dynamics. This means that there is a dual process of form's transmission of historical experience and literary expression's insufficiency in communication. This dual process both acknowledges the limits of literary expression (literary form cannot directly "translate" social forms) and foregrounds the impersonal agency of literary form (literary form's visceral dynamics mediate, articulate, and partially transmit historical and social experience). In Chapter One, for example, this dual process manifests as Christopher's failure in communication and

narrative form's ability to transmit this failure as an self-revolting, indigestible experience of national and personal histories.[14]

The question of transmissibility finds its later reiteration in what Fredric Jameson calls "transcoding" in *The Political Unconscious*. For Jameson, Marxist (literary) theories have always been focusing on the question of mediation "as a process of *transcoding*" (25) between text and context; regarding the discussion of this question in the 1970s, especially the Althusserian structural causality, Jameson clarifies for us that mediation refers to how the *entire structure* mediates each part of the superstructure instead of "immediate mediation" between parts: "Althusserian structure [. . .] necessarily insists on the interrelatedness of all elements in a social formation; only it relates them by way of their structural *difference* and distance from one another [. . .] Difference is understood as a relational concept, rather than as the mere inert inventory of unrelated diversity" (26). Jameson's critique is that the structural difference or distance is still a form of mediation because the affirmation of such difference relies on a larger backdrop to mediate—a kind of infinite deduction. Building upon the undeniable centrality of mediation between "the practice of language in the literary work and the experience of anomie, standardization, rationalizing desacralization in the world of daily life," Jameson himself advances an alternative method of transcoding not through the Althusserian positivism, but precisely through the textual (the superstructural and symbolic) negation of transcoding—non-translatability as translatability, as the "very locus and model of ideological closure" (32), waiting for us to "restor[e] to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality" (4).

The feeling of form, then, recuperates what has been largely dismissed in Jameson's rhetoric of closure, repression, and absence, for the relationship between the feeling and *ideology* of form is more unstable and complex than that of mere subordination. The feeling of form, I

argue, is a counterpart to Jameson's idea of "formal processes as sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest content of the works" (84): instead of being the *sedimented content* carrying their ideological messages, formal intensities and rhythms as feelings become *the affective content* carrying *experiences that are not simply interrelated to but also superimposed upon the ideological message.* If reading for what the text represses is looking for what is absent and buried beneath the surface, reading for the feeling of form means to look for what is in front of us—formal intensities and dynamics beyond the dichotomy of surface and depth. On the level of formal dynamism, which even departs from Jameson's own formalist notion of form, the non-translatability of historical experience in literary representation and meaning is precisely the locale of the translatability of historical experience via *the feeling of form.*

In this regard, I find it is also helpful to mention briefly Adorno's concept of *Gehalt* (import; vs. *Inhalt*, "content"), as this concept is another way to articulate the tramission / transcoding / translation of historical experience via the feeling of form. In Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, especially in his discussion of music, *Gehalt* refers to a dialectical importing process of *Form* (form) and *Inhalt* (content), and this process is the very dynamics *shaping* the artwork aesthetically, thematically, and socially. *Gehalt*, therefore, is to some extent the synonym of transcoding, but transcoding in the sense of *Gehalt* is not a vertical, hierarchical structure in which historical and social experience works its way into an artwork in a top-down or bottom-up manner. Instead, transcoding morphes in Adorno's theory as a horizontal proesses between two interrelated planes of the societal context and the artwork, a process during which the artwork's *internal* dialectic of Form and Inhalt is simultaneously the *external* social dialectic of the context and the artwork. Although it is almost impossible—and perhaps unnecessary—to materialize or

visualize *Gehalt*, this concept helps us comprehend transmission / transcoding as a process of importing historical and social experience not as mere content (representation) or form (as the organizing principle of content) but as a dynamic, open atmosphere which I understand as the feeling of form.

Raymond Williams's term "structures of feeling" follows upon the question of transmissibility that further refines the relationship between historical experience and artworks: incompleteness (or openness and temporal lapses). Ben Highmore's recent recovery of Williams's use of the "structures of feeling" casts invaluable insights into my inquiries into this relation. As Highmore points out, the concept "structures of feeling" needs to be situated in Williams's overall method of cultural studies that "treat[s] culture as a 'whole way of life'" (24), and "structures of feeling" participating in this "whole way of life" are comparable to Jacques Rancière's "the distribution of the sensible" (24–5). William's attention to cultural feelings—including the feeling of form, as I would add—not only helps us understand how such feelings "transform finished artworks [. . .] into unfinished, socially responsive works" (23), but also prompts us to consider the feeling of form as an always emerging, incomplete point of reference and to explore how it participates in cultural feelings. Instead of dwelling on the dialectic of translatability and non-translatability, Williams's sociological and anthropological project of "patterning feelings" (through his keywords, as Highmore mentions) seems to bear the ambition of overcoming the mammoth theorization of mediation in traditional Marxism, for according to the logic of his project the feelings traversing across different social domains constitute a kind of mediation itself—an atmosphere that blurs the picture of the dialectic yet is socially significant, a mood that Marxism desperately attempts to capture yet fails to assimilate into its theory. This ambition has been well articulated by Sianne Ngai: "Williams is not analysing emotion or affect,

but, rather, strategically mobilizing an entire register of felt phenomena in order to expand the existing domain and methods of social critique" (qtd. in Highmore 37). Drawing upon Williams's term and revisionist Marxist method, I regard the feeling of form as part of this kind of social patterning of historical experience—as patterning itself is already a formal feature of the novel series—and I preserve a sense of incompleteness and openness in my conception of the feeling of form's transmissiblity of historical experience in each chapter.

III. Historical Experience and the Feeling of the Novel Series Form

The form of the modernist novel series evokes some more specific characteristics concerning particular historical experiences. To begin with, I think it is helpful to recall Elizabeth Margaret Kerr's definition of the novel series, or "the sequence novel" as she calls it in her 1950 study *Bibliography of the Sequence Novel:*

> The term sequence novel is used to designate a series of closely related novels that were originally published as separate, complete novels but that as a series form an artistic whole, unfitted by structure and themes that involve more than the recurrence of characters and some continuity of action. [. . .]
> Characteristics of content and form are more significant than external features. The sequence novel has its origin in the writer's desire to expand the scope of the novel without destroying the form. It is characteristically distinguished by a deep and serious purpose and an active concern with technical and esthetic problems created by the inclusion of a broader social scene, a more intensive study of psychology, or a longer span of family history than can be accommodated in the ordinary novel. (3)

We do not have to buy into Kerr's rhetoric of serious and popular literature, which she lays out more explicitly through reading Galsworthy's *Forstyte Saga* as "sequence" (serious) and Mazo de la Roche's Jalna novels as "sequel" (popular). But Kerr's definition here does strike several key notes on the form of the novel series: the formal demand for some sense of unity beyond mere continuation of plots and repeating appearance of characters, the significance of expanding the novel form without destroying it, the need to broaden social scenes as well as to

accommodate longer duration of family, personal, and psychological history. Kerr also identifies another useful formal measurement of the novel series: patterning. According to her, the sequel only prompts the reader to ask "What happens next?" whereas the sequence invites the reader to contemplate on "Why does it happen, and what does the pattern mean?" (5).

In what follows, I link the formal features of unity, expansion, and patterning in the novel series to three other forms: Epic, encyclopedia, and the Bildungsroman. By considering these three key formal residues as what constitutes a hybrid form of the novel series, I demonstrate that Kerr's attention to the novel series form can be refined by the dimension of the *feeling of residual forms* that bears a complex relationship to particular historical experiences. To explicate the feeling of this hybrid form, I start with *the novel form* and its feelings. From there, I proceed to demonstrate the feeling of the novel series form as not only an intensified feeling of the novel form but also a unique fusion of several feelings.

Although Lukács (as my quick example shows earlier) regards the felt antagonism and oppression in bourgeois humanism's fantastical forms as insufficient to achieve the kind of "awakening of national sensibility" (*The Historical Novel* 25) that the historical novel can do, in his early work *The Theory of the Novel* (1920) his discussion of the epic and the novel contains a more intriguing formulation of aesthetic feelings and the novel form.[15] After establishing his theoretical premise that the transition from the epic to the novel is a manifestation of the gradual emergence of the modern subject since Enlightenment—"the transformation of the transcendental *loci*" (37), a process in which the Hellenistic harmony and homogeny gives way to the awareness of a split between the subject and the object—Lukács proceeds to explain the relationship of this split or dissonance to the novel form:

> Every art form is defined by the metaphysical dissonance of life which it accepts and organises as the basis of a totality complete in itself; *the mood of the resulting*

> *world, and the atmosphere in which the persons and events thus created have their being, are determined by the danger which arises from this incompletely resolved dissonance and which therefore threatens the form*. The dissonance special to the novel, the refusal of the immanence of being to enter into empirical life, produces a problem of form whose formal nature is much less obvious than in other kinds of art, and which, because it looks like a problem of content, needs to be approached by both ethical and aesthetic judgment, even more than do problems which are obviously purely formal.
>
> [. . .] The danger by which the novel is determined is twofold: either *the fragility of the world* manifest itself so crudely that it will cancel out the immanence of meaning which the form demands, or else the longing for the dissonance to be resolved, affirmed and absorbed into the work may be so great that it will lead to a premature closing of the circle of the novel's world, causing the form to disintegrate into disparate, heterogeneous parts. (71–2; my emphasis).

Lukács himself describes the novel form demanded by this metaphysical dissonance as embodying a feeling of "transcendental homelessness" and nostalgia for the lost harmony (41), but I also read this passage as central to a more specific relationship of the feeling of the novel form to historical experience. The mood or atmosphere of the fragile world that the novel creates faces danger and threats from the novel's incapacity to dissolve fully the dissonance between its construction of reality and the reality of life. This danger not only manifests in the novel form but also epitomizes a historical experience of crisis, uncertainty, and anxiety about the fragility of subjectivity since Enlightenment. Written during 1914-1915, *The Theory of the Novel* also signifies the culmination of this historical experience of anxiety in WWI; as Lukács writes in the Preface to the book: "The immediate motive for writing was supplied by the outbreak of the First World War [. . .] Thus, it was written in a mood of permanent despair over the state of the world" (11-12). This historical experience works its way through the novel form precisely by means of the non-translatability of literary representation—or as Lukács diagnoses, the content is often misunderstood as the locale of the problem—and, I add, this non-translatability coincides with an alternative translatability of *the feeling of the novel form under threat*. According to Lukács, the feelings of threat and fragility fall upon the novel form as a paradox: the novel form's cohesion

is either too strong and mimetic to grant the novel's world its unique meaning outside the fragility of life and the world ("the fragility of the world manifest itself so crudely that it will cancel out the immanence of meaning which the form demands"), or it is too weak to construct "concrete socio-historical realities" (Preface to *The Theory of the Novel* 17) or to retain formal consistency ("a premature closing of the circle of the novel's world, causing the form to disintegrate into disparate, heterogeneous parts"). For Lukács, this feeling is not only unerasable and inherent in the novel form but also deemed necessary for the novel form to exist (74-5).

The feelings of threat and fragility of the novel form speak to a meta-historical experience of non-translatability and incompleteness itself. The novel series, then, is the most desperate attempt to overcome this experience by trying to close the gap between the safe world of the epic and the fragile world of the novel; but this attempt in turn only widens the gap to its extreme, for the novel series betrays an even stronger desire to unify its structure on formal and thematic levels, and to create a prolonged and expansive totality of its own kind. The result of this limit case of aesthetic semblance or formal mimesis is that the feeling of the novel series form becomes the uncanny *par excellence*. If there has to be a difference between the feeling of the novel form and that of the novel series form, it is a difference of intensity.

Besides its striving for unity, the novel series form also speaks to the questions of exhaustiveness, scalability, and knowledge production inherent in the encyclopedic form. Encyclopedia itself is, of course, an ancient form; it is originated from a scribal error that confuses ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία ("encyclical education") with ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία (*OED*, "encyclopedia, n."). The emergence of the modern form of encyclopedia and encyclopedic dictionaries in the age of Enlightenment, such as Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopædia* (1782), was contemporary with the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century. The modern encyclopedia retains the "encyclical"

nature—en-cycling or circling—through its exhaustiveness of references to the totality of a world. This *circling* feature also corresponds to the novel series form's attempt at constructing a social *panorama*: a flattening and making visible of as many social scenes as possible on the page through an extremely wide angle of narrative focalization and representation. This is an attempt at exhaustiveness: for the modernist novel series, in particular, this exhaustiveness means an exhaustive inclusion of not only content but also various formal techniques to demonstrate simultaneously a width of social phenomena and the depth of individual interiority.

As a result of this attempt at exhaustiveness, the novel series form's striving for unity is in fact also destabilized by a *formal heterogeneity*. This struggle between unity and heterogeneity both echoes and nuances Bakhtin's description of the tension between a unitary language and heteroglossia:

> A unitary language is not something given [dan] but is always in essence posited [zadan]—and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystallizing into a real, although still relative, unity—the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, "correct language." (270)

Bakhtin's description of the tension between the linguistically centripetal (unitary language) and centrifugal forces (heteroglossia) is based on the basic unit of linguistic components and norms, whereas the novel series form's struggle between unity and heterogeneity takes place on a qualitatively different scale of forces, actions, and phenomena that do not separate from yet move beyond linguistic dynamics and government. This discordant experience and feeling retained in the novel series form also suggests its departure from encyclopedia's primary function of knowledge production; in this light, the emergence of the novel series form can be contextualized with another set of aesthetic practices to which the preservation of experience—

not knowledge—became central: the documentary films and later the Mass Observation, both of which signal the desire to capture and preserve a variety of historical and social *experience* beyond facts and information. With this parallel aesthetic phenomenon in mind, looking at the feeling of the modernist novel series form means to attend to both the form's desire for unity (under the threat of the split between the subject and the object) and its desire for exhaustiveness of experience that inevitably leads to the heterogeneity and destabilization of form. This inevitability is precisely that of non-translatability and incompleteness between the feeling of the novel series form and the historical experience of the anxiety to capture its totality. This intense and constant struggle between unity and destabilization in the form of the novel series also partly contributes to the dynamism of local formal orientations and rhythm in each novel of the series.

Kerr's intriguing identification of the reader's question for the novel series—"Why does it happen, and what does the pattern mean?" (5)—points out another important character of the novel series: patterning, or in a more formalist term, development. The residual or sedimented form of the *Bildungsroman* is the most explicit site for this kind of development that we can find in the novel series. Just as the *Bildungsroman* focuses on the development of its central character caused by both internal growth and external factors in the novel, the novel series also advances some modes of character development. However, the feeling of hope, growth, and romantic nationalism first registered by the *Bildungsroman* after the fall of Napoleon[16] requires a simultaneous harmony in the novel form and the flattening of the feeling of formal dynamism that gives away to plot development and characterization. By skipping the realist novels here—which is often posited in a dialectical relation to both Romanticism and Modernism—I read the parallel emphasis on "development" in *Bildungsroman* and the modernist novel series as *an inflation* of the feeling of form: it is an inflation undergirded by the shifted focus from the

development of content to that of literary forms. Ford's *Parade's End* is probably the most salient example of the inflation of the feeling of the novel series form: the tetralogy starts with a quasi-realist form and gradually develops into more unstable, intense formal reorientations and syntactic plays. Ford's tetralogy is itself a meta-study of the relationship between the feeling of form and historical experience.

The feeling of hope and nationalism, which helps shape the *Bildungsroman*'s privilege of character growth over formal experimentation, is the historical experience of optimism and illusional stability that the modernist series form rejects. The eternal formal struggle between unity and destabilization I mentioned earlier is already one way to comprehend this rejection. However, a more difficult question is: what's the relationship between the modernist *Bildungsroman* and modernist novel series? Does this comparison cast more insights into an inflated or intensified feeling of the modernist novel series form that not only the German tradition of *Bildungsroman* but also the Anglophone modernist *Bildungsroman* cannot achieve? To answer these questions, I want to begin by recapturing briefly Gregory Castle's extensive study of this topic in his book *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*. In it, Castle advances a convincing argument that the modernist *Bildungsroman* bears "a double gesture of recuperation and critique" (4) of the German tradition of *Bildungsroman*: it recuperates the eighteenth-century German "classical ideal of Bildung"—or an "aesthetico-spiritual" ideal (3)—before "Bildung" became a term for institutionalized, pragmatic self-cultivation in the nineteenth century, and it simultaneously "subjects that ideal to what Adorno calls an 'immanent critique,' one that allows for more sensitive negotiations of complex problems concerning identity, nationality, education, the role of the artist, and social as well as personal relationships" (3). This subjection of the classical idea of Bildung to the immanent critique, as Castle argues, achieves its outcome of

critique through the modernist *Buildungrsroman*'s failure to fully conform to its generic features (1). This failure, more specifically, hinges on transforming the German tradition of a positive dialectic between self-development and societal circumstances in a negative dialectic, in "a new questioning of the ideological subtexts concerning the nature and function of the subject and a new concern for the structure and goal of self-cultivation" (3).

If, as Castle characterizes it, the shift from the eighteenth-century German tradition of *Bildungsroman* to the twentieth century Anglophone modernist *Bildungsroman* is one from the positive to the negative/critical, from celebrating spiritual self-development to recuperating and critiquing a development as such, then the distinction between the modernist *Bildungsroman* and the modernist novel series is less explicit. James Joyce's *Portrait* and *Ulysses* are representative of this overlap. Meanwhile, as it is not hard to see that the difference of *the feelings* of *Bildungsroman* forms between the German tradition and the modernist revision lies in the distinction between the optimism and skepticism of the *Bildungsroman* form, it becomes more explicit that the feeling of the novel series form not only shares and prolongs this feeling of skepticism but also contains a unique sense of self-irony for adopting formally a developmental model of the world view and selfhood it rejects. This self-irony is at once a self-critique, allowing the novel series form to have enough time and space to achieve a mode of Bildung in which the individual's interior Bildung is turned inside out and folded into the Bildung of the intensifying feeling and materiality of the form itself, into the form's desire for self-cultivation. Yet the Bildung of form and its feeling does not have a *telos* built into it precisely because of what I mentioned earlier as the novel series form's eternal struggle between unity and destabilization.

IV. Interrelations Between Local and Macro Forms

I consider embodiment and contradiction as two critical ways that the feeling of form generates a certain experience of history. In this part, instead of discussing the feeling of form two separate levels of micro style and macro seriality, I emphasize their dynamic, complex interrelations that yield an unstable, multifaceted, and often self-contradictory experience of history. I have left a fuller explanation of the nature of local formal orientations and intensities to this moment because these feelings can be more explicitly perceived and comprehend in comparison to Sianne Ngai's reformulation of "tone." In *Ugly Feelings*, Ngai extends the concept of aesthetic emotions to what she calls "ugly feelings," feelings that "are explicitly amoral and noncathartic, offering no satisfaction of virtue, however oblique, nor any therapeutic purifying release," "a bestiary of affects" (6–7). For Ngai, One key formal aspect of literary narratives that produces such affects is "tone," or more precisely, "the affective-aesthetic idea of tone" (41), which refers to neither the representation of feelings in the narrative nor the reader's emotive response to the text, but rather "a global and hyper-relational concept of feeling that encompasses attitude: a literary text's affective bearing, orientation, or 'set forward' its audience and world" (43). With a rigorous theoretical delineation of aesthetic emotions from Aristotle to Susan Langer, Mikel Dufrenne, and Silvan Tomkins, Ngai recuperates the affective character of "tone" that New Criticism dismisses as "Affective Fallacy." Her reading of *The Confidence-Man* reveals more closely that she focuses the concept of tone on its function of affective amplification (by drawing upon Tomkins's theory), especially the sonic, intensifying affects of poetic language—"destabilization of 'pitch'" or the assonances and alliterations of sounds in literary texts (60).

My conception of formal orientations and rhythms as feelings emphasizes less on the sonic and phonetic affects of poetic language in prose, and more on the visceral embodiment of

feelings: nausea, suffocation, exhaustion. The second difference between the feeling of form and Ngai's "the affective-aesthetic idea of tone" is that the former, as it splits into two levels of forms, does not necessarily operate on a holistic or global scale throughout a novel series, but rather foregrounds contradictory workings of feelings at the disjunction of contingency and relationality, parts and whole, locality and atmosphere. Moreover, Ngai's ultimate goal is to investigate how ugly feelings, on the interacting levels of aesthetic form and representation, become "signs that not only render visible different registers of problem (formal, ideological, sociohistorical) but conjoin these problems in a distinctive manner," signs that "read the predicaments posed by a general state of obstructed agency with respect to other human actors or to the social as such—a dilemma I take as charged with political meaning regardless of whether the obstruction is actual or fantasized, or whether the agency obstructed is individual or collective" (3). The feeling of form—as a revision of the Marxist and, in particular, a Jamesonian ideological critique—is very much in line with Ngai's focus on the politics of aesthetic feelings, but the feeling of form does not work towards the *negativity* of "a general state of obstructed agency" as Ngai has attempted in order to "[shed] new light on the intimate relationship between negative affects and 'negative thinking,' Herbert Marcuse's shorthand for ideology critique in the dialectical tradition" (8). On the contrary, the feelings of form on both local and macro levels move away from the positive/negative affective spectrum. The ideological critique mobilized by the feeling of form relies much more on the *generative and explicatory* capacity of aesthetics form, style, and syntax in excess of literary representation.

Thinking about the relationship between the feeling of form and the experience of history in terms of embodiment does not mean I simply regard the text as a body. Rather, I consider embodiment as a process in which local forms in the novel series stage and constitute their

nauseous, breathless, disorienting, or exhausted feelings without a unitary body to begin with. Thus, "embodied" or "visceral" feelings of form emphasize the traffics between the form's inward- and outward-turning orientations, or between an increase and decrease of intensities. These feelings of local forms inevitably confront and interact with the macro feelings of the novel series form: the former not only contributes to the fragility of the novel series form and the latter's struggle between unity and heterogeneity, but also, more fundamentally, de-familiarize and decompose the feeling of the novel series form which supposedly transforms historical experiences into experiences of history *solely and negatively through ambivalence (or struggle), skepticism, and self-irony.* In other words, the contradictory workings of the feeling of form on local and macro levels prevent the novel series from producing a unitary affective orientation or attitude towards history even in the domain of the negative and the ambivalent; such workings instead become a generative site for an irreducible multiplicity of feelings that problematizes the conditions for *any* experience of history to be unitary. In a word, embodiment and contradiction crack open any possible closure of the feeling of form in ways that make the novel series render an experience of history as contingent and multiple. Therefore, the feeling of form sometimes differs from holistic and global aesthetic feelings that are fusing and traversing between the lines. In addition, as my subsequent chapters will show, contingent and disruptive characters of the feeling of form does not necessarily predetermine its messianism; on the contrary, for example in Chapter Two, the suffocation of form—encoded by the deterioration of syntactic rhythm—suspends at the moment of form's total explosion and destruction in the final volume of *A Scots Quair.*

V. Reading for the Feeling of Form

If there has to be a name for the way I read the literary texts in this dissertation, I call it "reading for the feeling of form." It does not simply recall renewed attention to literary form since the 2000s—from the essay collections *Reading for Form* and *New Formalisms and Literary Theory,* Fredric V. Bogel's *New Formalist Criticism,* to Caroline Levine's *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* and the most recent constellation of "political formalism,"[17] just to name a few—but in fact aims to invite literary scholars to rethink the meaning and role of literary form in the proliferation of post-critique reading methods, some of which are hostile or critical of particular versions of formalisms because of their depoliticization and ideological foreclosure of literary texts. Ngai's observation of the differentiated focuses in various methods explains brilliantly why methods predominately grappling with ideology are more attuned to aesthetic feeling than formalisms:

> [T]he ideology of a literary text may be, in fact, revealed more in its tone—as for instance, in its 'euphoria' or 'paranoia'—than in any of its other formal features. This may offer another explanation for our observation that it is ideology-sensitive readers who seem to draw on tone most for their analyses of literature, and not (as one might expect from tone's historical and institutional association) New Critical formalists or more technically oriented structuralists. (48)

Although new critical formalism is primarily featured with "a return" to politics, the question of feeling and affect remains marginal in the discussion of form, and Ngai's observation still holds true in regard to the difference between formalism and ideological critique. Meanwhile, I would add that this is not because new formalist theories discount the importance of aesthetic feelings, emotions, and affects, but because the context they choose to begin with—the context they either reject or revise—is New Criticism's particular way to categorize and depoliticize formal properties and its method of close reading, which itself bears a distinct genealogy from Kant's disinterestedness to T. S. Eliot's depersonalization.[18] This only means that new critical

formalisms invest most of their energy in this specific genealogy, advancing diverse ways to overcome its limits by bringing together literary forms and socio-political forms. Being fundamentally reactive and defensive, though, they leave already political-oriented approaches to literary texts, such as Marxist ideological critique and post-interpretative engagement with late capitalism, in the margin.

My goal here, then, is not to use "the feeling of form" to defend any formalism or to propose a neo-New Formalism; instead, I want to show that, besides Sianne Ngai (and of course Susan Lang, upon whose work Ngai expands and reformulates the relationship between form and feeling), the relationship between literary form and aesthetic feelings remains under-examined in the current reinvigoration of formalist approaches to literary texts. Nonetheless, I do not intend to demonstrate the possibility of repairing or supplementing what new formalisms have not heavily invested in, but to redirect our attention from various formalisms to the feeling of form altogether as a messy, slippery, yet critical site for literary studies when the meaning of "form" itself fundamentally departs from the New Critic's conception. This also means that I approach "the feeling of form" from "the other side," where not only does a kind of "rapprochement" between dialectic, mediation, and affect become possible in literary criticism (Beverley Best 62), but also a different understanding of forms as dynamic feelings is articulated *again* (we shouldn't forget Shklovsky and Bakhtin) by post-critique and post-interpretative methods of literary studies that primarily focus on affect and network. In what follows, instead of tracing the massive and incoherent contours of various formalisms today (which is an important topic this dissertation cannot do justice), I turn to works that advocate methods for engaging with aesthetic and cultural affect, feeling, and emotion.

Close vs. distant reading, mere reading, surface reading, reparative reading, close but not deep reading, or reading as acknowledgment: although each reading method promises to tackle a particular set of problems other reading methods cannot fully attend to, the common ground is the concern with the surface and depth of literary texts, a concern closely bound up with their advocating for weak theory and affect theory. What follows is not an outline of the position of each reading method occupies in the debates on surface and depth, but rather an explication of their latent re-conception of literary forms to demonstrate my contention that the problematic dichotomy of surface and depth they grapple with is at once the manifestation of the significance of the rather messy feeling of form. Another way to put this is that the proliferation of reading methods is very much a reaction against certain "bad" formalisms—i.e., New Criticism and dogmatic, hyper masculine Marxism (Jameson has been the whipping boy)—rather than against nuanced theorization of and attention to aesthetic forms *per se*.

Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus's "Surface Reading: An Introduction" is among the most salient examples that demonstrate the necessity and potential when we start to think literary form beyond conventional formal categories as well as beyond the dichotomy of form and content.[19] In their article, rejecting what they call "symptomatic reading"—reading for "clues, symptoms, details on the surface that indicate the form and content of hidden depths to the trained and intuitive interpreter" (4; my emphasis), they propose to privilege surface over depth by, for example, treating "[s]urface as the intricate verbal structure of literary language" and "unraveling what Samuel Otter, in a recent account of New Formalism, has called the 'linguistic density' and 'verbal complexity' of literary texts" (10). The unannounced yet most crucial reason why they are able to construct such a tension between surfaces and depth is that they regard "the intricate verbal structure," "linguistic density," and "verbal complexity" as *surface instead of*

form—or instead of the Adornoian import—that shape a literary text.[20] Form, being understood implicitly in its most conventional sense (latent organizing principles), is swept into the realm of hidden depths, whereas in fact Best and Marcus are precisely forwarding a new way to situate form beyond the dichotomy of form and content, surface and depth. If, according to them, surface at least partly means "the intricate verbal structure," "linguistic density," and "verbal complexity," isn't this surface another name of Shklovsky's "the palpable form" whose presence can be felt through rhythm and intensity? We can even take a step further by arguing that not only is form part of the surface but also the feeling of form unsettles overly concentrated attention to text alone in this mode of surface reading. Best and Marcus do not shy away from saying that this mode recalls the method of New Criticism, "which insisted that the key to understanding a text's meaning lay within the text itself, particularly in its formal properties" (10). However, focused attention to the feeling of form precisely means being attuned to the affective traffic between text and context, which interestingly bears the opposite risk of too rapid or oversimplified moves between text and context;[21] that is why the question of mediation as I lay out earlier is so essential for us to be vigilant about the danger of what Jameson calls "premature immediacy" (qtd. in Dimock 744).

But mediation does not mean that our description and interpretation of relations and networks constructed by the feeling of form *will be mature*. It is precisely "maturity"—a problem of what Wai Chee Dimock calls "a sovereign knowingness" (744)—the feeling of form refuses to and cannot possibly achieve. As I mentioned at the very beginning that the concept of "the feeling of form" is not a master key to "solving" or "unearthing" all kinds of aesthetic feelings, emotions, and affects. Following upon this conviction, I add here that because (non)translatability, incompleteness, embodiment, and contradictions are key features in the

mediating processes between historical experience, the feeling of form, and the experience of history, we may be able to rethink *mediation not as the inevitable cause* of sovereign theory. Here I second Beverley Best's lucid delineation of this position—which I will turn to in a second—that mediation is not necessarily at odds with affect's prominent features of immediacy and immanence as various affect theories insist upon it, but rather constituting itself as an ongoing, incomplete, and contingent process in a network.

But, first, let's stay with Wai Chee Dimock's formulation of non-sovereign theory. Dimock herself, like Best and Marcus, moves away from "formal properties" in a way that in fact clears out a potential route to the feeling of form. Redefining genre as a phenomenological register that cannot be formalized by formal and stylistic features, Dimock uses the concept "multiply symptomatic field" to conceive Colm Tóibín's and Henry James's works as two environments in a network. In her discussion of Tóibín's *The Master* as a host environment for James, her description of hosting in fact foregrounds feeling:

> *The Master* plays host to that bitterness, but the rawness and the feverishness of the episode suggest that the host is not quite neutral to begin with, not without some fever of its own. Tóibín is the first to admit that this is the case—that the hospitality here is overmotivated, doubled and redoubled. There are in fact two contexts for James's play, one from a century ago and the other from the immediate present, "still raw, still preying on my mind." Tóibín is speaking of the trauma of the Booker Prize. (739)

Not only does the very notion of hosting as a way to understand genre already register a certain hospital attitude of form—or tone, as Ngai would call it—but also a conflation of the feeling of the form with the hosting environment has been hinted by Dimock in terms of "rawness," "feverishness," and "overmotivated." This conflation, in a phenomenological sense, is especially pronounced in the opening scene of *The Master* that Dimock speaks of:

> Now as he woke, it was, he imagined, an hour or more before the dawn; there would be no sound or movement for several hours. He touched the muscles on his

> neck which had become stiff. As he moved his head, he could hear the muscles creaking. I am like an old door, he said to himself.
>
> It was imperative, he knew, that he go back to sleep. He could not lie awake during these hours. He wanted to sleep, enter a lovely blackness, a dark, but not too dark, resting place, unhaunted, unpeopled, with no flickering presences.
>
> When he woke again, he was agitated and unsure where he was. He often woke like this, disturbed, only half remembering the dream and desperate for the day to begin. [. . .]
>
> But this dream was different. It was dark or darkening somewhere, it was a city, an old place in Italy like Orvieto or Siena, but nowhere exact, a dream-city with narrow streets, and he was hurrying. (1–2)

The opening scene of *The Master* provides a perhaps too intimate hosting environment for Henry James, whose physical and psychological intensity is simultaneously staged by an anxious, jostled form. The syntactic cadences and the suddenly inward turn ("I am like an old door"), followed by a paratactic style of depicting his anxious dream (not shown here), suggest that the narrative form hosts not only the anxious image of Henry James but also its own anxiety and eagerness for mastering the master's literary form of psychological realism. The raw and feverish hosting environment Dimock talks about is precisely the environment of this anxious and hesitant feeling of form in Tóibín's narrative. While the formal and stylistic properties alone in this passage may not be sufficient to define the relationship between two environments, the shared feeling of anxiety in James's and Tóibín's (more intense) use of formal rhythms embodies the mediating traffic and relationality between the hosting and hosted environments.

This detour to Dimock as well as to the original text of *The Master* illustrates how the feeling of form participates in a phenomenological field while retaining the essential operation of mediation in this field. In other words, the feeling of form is not aligned with affect or lines of flights to operate against mechanisms and processes of mediation; instead, the feeling of form is the cause and effect of the mediating process itself, the mediating process that at once constitutes

and is constituted by the unmediated formal rhythms and intensities in excess of representation and meaning. Beverley Best has articulated a similar concept of mediation in a nuanced way:

> A figure of mediation is, therefore, not a case of drawing analogies between different levels of reality or of finding homologies between different spheres of social production. Nor is mediation a case of observing instances of mechanical, unidirectional causality. The difference between these forms of causality and a dialectical modality of mediation is that, from an expanded critical perspective, categories like figure and ground, individual and collectivity, universal and particular, and so forth interact to the extent that each must be understood as both cause and effect of the other. (64)

After laying out this concept of mediation, which I think is among the most accurate understandings of Marx and Jameson, Beverley Best goes on to examine the major objections of mediation rising from post-interpretative approaches to power, empire, and late-capitalism in favor of affective modalities (here she refers to Hardt and Negri, Deleuze and Guattari): "post-interpretative" in terms of such claims that everything is immanent, that there is no inside/outside, subjective/objective, or that there is nothing outside capitalism. (Post-critique in literary criticism, for me, seems to be a by-product of such a world view). For this conventionally conceived contradiction between mediation (dialectic) and affect, Best brings together mediation and assemblage in convincing ways:

> If, however, we take up a Jamesonian figure of mediation, it does not entail a passage to the outside of anything. Here, mediation refers to the dynamic of relationship—the historical interconnectedness of two or more distinct moments, identities or entities, organs or desiring machines. To use the language of Deleuze and Guattari, it is the function of assemblage. It connects an identity—always incomplete as a positive moment—to an outside (to all other identities, to an alterity) that makes it possible, but to an outside that remains immanent to the mode of production (or, in this case, Empire). Mediation is the very possibility of diversity, of two different moments of a network. It refers to the way in which different entities in a system are always simultaneously connected and separate. (67)

As the very mediating process between historical experience, literary form, and the experience of history, the feeling of form precisely hinges on "the dynamic of relationship" that is "always

incomplete as a positive moment." The feeling of form not only exists both inside and outside the textual and social realms but also acknowledges the existence of the porous, mediating boundaries between the inside and outside. This is an acknowledgment of connectedness and separation that does not sacrifice "historical interconnectedness"—or historical details and specificities—for the (quite dystopic) pure flux and affect. If our ways of reading literary texts imply our ways of reading the past, present, and future of the world, then I will not hesitate to say that there is indeed a sense of weak utopia embedded in *reading for* the feeling of form and its mediating function (whereas the feeling of form itself often suggests the rejection of utopia): there still seems to be a possibility for something different and unexpected to come from something not necessarily inside or outside, but from interconnectedness itself. The final diagram also serves as a dynamic network of related feelings and experiences, not as a fixed relationality based on cause and effect.

The co-existence of mediation and networks in the case of modernist novel series further invites us to look at the recent interest in affect in modernist studies, from Charles Altieri's *The Particulars of Rapture* (2003) and Sianne Ngai's *Ugly Feelings* (2005) to Julia Taylor's edited volume *Modernism and Affect* (2015), *Modernism/modernity*'s special issue on weak theory and weak modernism (2018), and the *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus cluster "Modernism's Contemporary Affects" (2018). In particular, we may understand this rekindled interest in affect better in relation to Paul Saint-Amour's introduction to the *Modernism/modernity*'s special issue on weak theory and weak modernism, where he speaks of the correlation between period studies and methodologies: "modernist studies's emergence as a field has been concomitant with a steady weakening of its key term, *modernism"* (441). In the introduction to her edited volume *Modernism and Affect*, Julie Taylor has brought together recent scholarship on affect and literary

modernism to contest the critical assumption that modernism privileges detachment over sentimentality and emotions, an assumption that was previously shared by critics but not modernist artists themselves (2). Alys Moody's recent article in the cluster "Modernism's Contemporary Affects" also demonstrates that modernist detachment operates as affect.

In this context, modernist experimental form is often regarded as the mechanism that produces aesthetic feeling and affects (a reiteration of the stimulation model that I mentioned earlier), leaving us irresolvable susceptibility to and risk of subjectivism as well as the difficulty to talk about feeling, emotion, and affect in concrete ways in specific texts. Reading for the feeling of form, then, helps us rethink several key questions of the role of experimental form. For example, Taylor's helpful evaluation of recent works by Anthony Cuda, Rochelle Rives, Justus Nieland, and Heather Love among others leads to several interrelated questions that invite further exploration: 1) how to understand literary form not simply as a means to reduce affective experiences into contained representations but as a kind of textual agency that embodies feelings beyond representation;[22] 2) how to situate the feeling of literary form in specific historical and aesthetic contexts of various "signature" modernist affects such as detachment, coldness, aggression 3) more specifically, how to understand detachment, coldness, or cerebral aesthetics in modernist works in relation to the embodied, rhythmic energies of the literary form, and 4) how to maintain or challenge the difference between affect, feeling, and emotion without falling back on a masculine discourse that feminizes sentimentality and melancholia in order to neutralize affect. One implicit motivation for me to take on these questions is that they instigate an approach to the feeling of form through historical and discursive specificities while retaining the epistemological uncontainablity of affect. To take on these questions also means that I do not offer any ready-made categories of emotion, feeling, and affect; for now, I only propose the

feeling of form in terms of how Ford, Gibbon, Durrell, and Ishiguro proposed "affect theories" *avant la lettre* as something different from theories on clearly formed and cognized emotions. In responding to these questions, I will also explicate the problems and limits of the concept of the feeling of form, especially in the Coda of the dissertation. Eventually, looking at the feeling of form through the case studies of experimental novel series provides us different approaches to the relationship between aesthetic feeling and form, and helps repair a more nuanced picture of how / what literary forms *feel.*

Notes

1. In *The Particulars of Rapture*, Charles Altieri defines affects as "immediate modes of sensual responsiveness to the world characterized by an accompanying imaginative dimension" (2). As he continues to distinguish affects from other terms related to it, he defines feelings as "elemental affective states characterized by an imaginative engagement in the immediate process of sensation," moods as "modes of feeling where the sense of subjectivity becomes diffuse and sensation merges into something close to atmosphere," and emotions as "affects involving the construction of attitudes that typically establish a particular cause"(2). From his definitions we can see a general hierarchy from affect as an umbrella term to specific feelings ("elemental affective states"), then to specific "modes of feeling" as moods, and eventually to emotions that "establish a particular cause." In *Ugly Feelings*, Sianne Ngai surveys current theories of affect, such as the various "attempts to differentiate 'emotion' and 'affect' on the grounds that the former requires a subject while the latter does not (Lawrence Grossberg, Brian Massumi)" (24). I agree with Ngai's own conceptualization of affect and emotion as two modes of experience on a shared spectrum: "the difference between affect and emotion is taken as a modal difference of intensity or degree, rather than a formal difference of quality or kind" (27).

2. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed incisively points out the problematic hierarchy between thought and emotion that allows feminism to become an "extension of the already pathological 'emotionality' of femininity" (170). "This hierarchy," she continues, "clearly translates into a hierarchy between subjects: whilst thought and reason are identified with the masculine and Western subject, emotions and bodies are associated with femininity and racial others" (170).

3. See, for example, Carsten Strathausen's *Bioaesthetics: Making Sense of Life in Science and the Arts.*

4. In her essay "Formalism and Time," Catherine Gallagher helpfully delineates two sets of meaning of form. On a microscale, form refers to stylistic features such as grammar, diction, and syntax. On a microscale, form refers to narrative structure, focalization, point of view, etc.; it is about how a narrative is structured and arranged into a whole. Sandra Macpherson, however,

remains skeptical about the definitions of form and shares her frustration in "A Little Formalism": "There I realized three things that came to shape my future work: firstly, the term [form] was massively underelaborated, weakly synonymous with 'plot' or 'structure'; secondly, that my formalism was therefore also rather thin, registering an interest in a determinism equated with formalism but lacking any rigorous discrimination between form, structure, and necessity; and finally, [. . .] I had no idea what distinguished form from genre" (386). Focusing on the dynamics of form in this dissertation, I share Macpherson's conviction that "the pitting of formalization against freedom overlooks the tradition in which form is understood as itself formless, as, for example, in Coleridge's *forma efformans*—form as a shaping agency rather than a shaped body" (388).

5. In *Revolution of the Ordinary*, Toril Moi states that "A literary text does not become an object—a sculpture, a painting—just because it is written down. Language remains action and expression" (203), and that "If texts are expressions and actions, then they call for our acknowledgment" (205). Mel Chen's fascinating linguistic study in *Animacies* also shows that grammatical structure is political: it determines the conceptualization of the degree of agency that human, non-human animals, and inanimate objects have. These recent studies on the intersubjective and agential quality of language resonate with Roland Barthes. In "The Grain of the Voice," Barthes describes an embodied experience of speaking and writing a language: "The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs" (*Image Music Text* 188).

6. As Robert Burns comments on Henry Mckenzie, "Still, with all my admiration of Mckenzie's [sic] writings, I do not know if they are the fittest writing for a young Man who is about to set out . . . to make his way into life . . . [T]here may be a purity, a tenderness, a dignity . . . which are of no use, nay in some degree, [are] absolutely disqualifying, for the truly important business of making a man's way into life" (qtd. in Harkin 18).

7. In "Hamlet" (1919), T. S. Eliot writes: "In the character Hamlet it is the buffoonery of an emotion which can find no outlet in action; in the dramatist it is the buffoonery of an emotion which he cannot express in art. The intense feeling, ecstatic or terrible, without an object or exceeding its object, is something which every person of sensibility has known; it is doubtless a study to pathologists" (*Selected Essays* 146). For Eliot, an ideal expression of emotion in a work of art should follow an "objective correlative"—"a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion" (145). Alys Moody's recent article "Indifferent and Detached: Modernism and the Aesthetic Affect" has brilliantly demonstrated detachment and indifference themselves as affect.

8. Alexandra Berlina insists, this concept is exactly the opposite of Bertolt Brecht's Verfremdung, which refers to alienation and decrease of emotional attachment (152). But it does correspond to Brecht's idea of *Entfremdung*. See Berlina's "Translating 'Art, as Device.'"

9. See Alexandra Berlina's new translation of the 1919 version of "Art, as Device," which includes Shkvolsky's discussion of erotic *ostranenie*.

10. As Michael Holquist, the translator of *Towards A Philosophy of Act*, mentions in the Foreword to the book, two substantial fragments of Bakhtin's earliest manuscripts when he was on exile in Kazakhstan survived and underwent meticulous reconstruction by generations of scholars: one is *Art and Answerablity*, and the other is *Towards A Philosophy of Act* (1919-1921). Both works in some sense deal with a common aesthetic-philosophical question of the

relationship between words and worlds; or, as Holquist summarizes neatly, it is a question of "seeking a synthesis between sensibility (the lived act, the world of postupok) and reason (our discursive systems accounting for, or giving meaning to the act, a world always open to the danger of falling into mere 'theoriticism')" (xii).

11. Moi implies New Criticism's defense of "literariness" here: "Such definitions are variations on the usual formalist definitions of 'literariness,' as if attention to form were the key feature of all literature, or at least of all valuable literature (but here the defense of literature becomes tautological: valuable literature is valuable)" (214). She sees more potential in the Russian formalist notion of palpability: "For Jakobson, poetry foregrounds its own 'palpability' [. . .] Viktor Shklovsky's view— that literature uses various "defamiliarizing" techniques to make us wake up, fall out of the routine— is also an attempt to define poetic or literary language. This view, fortunately, doesn't have to be understood in strictly formalist terms. Shklovsky is right to say that the best writing—whether fiction or non-fiction—makes us pay attention to things we took for granted, makes us see some aspect of the world more clearly" (211). What Moi describes here as not "strictly formalist terms" are precisely the feeling of form I aim to conceptualize and incorporate into my reading method.

12. In one of his lectures on aesthetics, Adorno critiques the celebration of the reader's/viewer's "emotional relationship with art": "In the present context, this aspect of art itself now leads to a peculiar inversion, a peculiar perversion. For now art itself is not experienced in line with the dialectic of nature and its domination, which I tried at least to outline for you, but rather the reverse: art now becomes a receptacle for one's own affects. It becomes a kind of nature reserve in which one can let oneself go, where one can allow oneself to feel anything at all. And the relatively large part which art plays in our present culture – that fact that art is tolerated to such a degree at all in such a rationalized civilization – is connected precisely to this change of function, that it becomes a nature reserve which allows people to act out their affects, to feel something at all, to feel passions at all, without having to repress them – but also without these affects having any consequences for their real-life behaviour" (*Aesthetics*, "Lecture 18," Kindle location 6680 of 8223).

13. As Agamben explains, the modern poetry since Baudelaire feeds on this crisis of experience before the turn of the twentieth century, and it "responds to the expropriation of experience by converting this expropriation into a reason for surviving and making the inexpropriable its normal condition"—the inexpropriable as "the new" or shock, as something that "cannot be experienced" (*Infancy and History* 43).

14. I want to add here that Benjamin specifically emphasizes the human body's performativity as the essential condition of transmission: the absence of the body in the process of writing and reading a novel contributes to a modern literary work's fundamental intransmissiblity of experience. In "The Storyteller," Benjamin shows that stories created in the process of storytelling contain the capacity for transmission because they are not sheer information but are able to preserve energy and release it long after the information becomes unavailable (90). And what grants stories such capacities is the embodied and performative aspects of storytelling: the storyteller "takes what he tells from experience" (87) and "[w]hen the rhythm of work has seized him, he listens to the tales in such a way that the gift of retelling them comes to him all by itself" (91). This is what Benjamin calls the "genuine storytelling," a practice in which "the hand plays a part which supports what is expressed in a hundred ways

with its gestures trained by work" (108), whereas the written form of novel means it has less potential for transmitting experience because the body's communal, physical, and affective dimensions in storytelling. "The feeling of form" I conceptualize in this section challenges Benjamin's distinction of storytelling and the novel: by proposing a more ambiguous middle ground where the form of the novel helps retain some embodied and experiential aspects of storytelling, I suggest that the novel also partially transmits historical experience, and that it does so through its formal dynamics in ways that also require a text's materiality and the emotional-physical-cognitive engagement of the reader.

15. *The Theory of the Novel* is Lukács's transitional work from the Hegelian dialectic to Marxism. It is interesting that the question of the novel form is central to his own political and methodological shift.

16. See Tobias Boes's *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman.*

17. See, for example, Thomas Davis's *The Extinct Scene,* Nathan Hensley and Philip Steer's edited volume *Ecological Form*, and Caroline Levine's "Strategic Formalism."

18. See T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in *Selected Essays,* 13–22.

19. Other examples: Eve Sedgewick's reparative reading, Toril Moi's reading as acknowledgment, and Heather Love's "close but not deep reading" tend not to discuss literary form unless they critique New Criticism or only mention "new formalism" in passing. But in fact they more or less articulate a kind of dynamics of form that is precisely pointing to the feeling of form.

20. Best and Marcus refer this particular mode of surface reading (among several other modes in their article) to Samuel Otter's take on Levinson's essay on New Formalism in *PMLA.* Rejecting that such a thing as "new formalism" exists, Otter writes: "Instead, the conjuring of 'form' and 'aesthetics' (related but not identical terms) discloses a variety of intellectual and emotional responses, spurred by a perceived indifference to verbal complexity, literary agency, textual explication (rather than critique), artistic wholes (rather than symptomatic parts), and readerly pleasures. Many of these responses affirm the category of the 'literary' as identifying a distinctively intricate or reflexive verbal arrangement. 'Form' and 'aesthetics' often signal a resistance to transparency, a regard for tone, and a sense that there has been a loss of recalcitrance, idiosyncrasy, and surprise in textual analysis" (116–7). Otter's account of formalism includes Russian theorists such as Victor Shklovsky, but he charts the contour of formalism as including both Russian formalism and New Criticism. While these two methodologies have things in common (the latter is influenced by the former), they stemmed from very different historical and political contexts, and it is precisely the historical experience and politics of formalist methods that are at stake in my dissertation. And that's why I want to reorient us from "formalism" as a method to reading formal dynamism.

21. In *Forms*, Caroline Levine's thought-provoking reading of literary and social forms seems to risk a similarly hasty move.

22. See Paul Atkinson and Michelle Duffy's essay "The Amplification of Affect: Tension, Intensity and Form in Modern Dance" in *Modernism and Affect,* 94–100.

CHAPTER ONE: NAUSEA
The Eversion of Form and the Indigestible Experience of History in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*

To present Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* as my first case study of "the feeling of form," I focus on how Ford's use of a peculiar formal technique enables restless reorientations of the tetralogy's form. I call this technique "the eversion of form," a process of reorienting the form's "inward turn" by turning it inside out. The eversion of form takes place when the narrative abruptly shifts to the second person "you" in the middle of constructing an individual's interior space—be it an interior monologue, the stream of consciousness, or more slippery free indirect discourse. The two passages below, both excerpted from *Parade's End*, illustrate how eversive form differs from more common usages of the second person in the tetralogy:

> 1. Dialogical Form
> When *you* came in the space was desultory, rectangular, warm after the drip of the winter night, and transfused with a brown-orange dust that was light. (*NMP* 9; my emphasis)
>
> 2. Eversive Form (Nauseous form)
> "Not gory! Green-stained with vital fluid of innocent plant . . . And by God! Not a woman in the country who won't let *you* rape her after an hour's acquaintance! [. . .] *I* bet she's virtuous. But *you* don't have to bet. It isn't done on certainties. *You* can tell it in the eye. Nice eyes! Attractive back. Virginal cockiness . . . Yes, better occupation for mothers of empire than attending on lewd husbands year in year out till *you're* as hysterical as a female cat on heat . . . *You* could see it in her: that woman: *you* can see it in most of 'em!" (*SDN* 131–4; my emphasis)

The first mode of "you" shows the dialogical, impressionistic feature of the narrator's speech—to "make you *see*" (52), as Conrad puts it—whereas the second mode is what I call "eversion" within an interior monologue. While it is common to read the "you" in the second example as the synonym of "one" to designate general or random interlocutors, the contingent shifts of pronouns between the inward-turning "I" and the outward-turning "you" *within* this interior monologue superimpose an unstable, self-contradictory, or disorienting dynamic of form upon the mental

dialogue with one's self. This eversive technique is most analogous to the combination of two contradictory dramatic devices, soliloquy and aside; it likely results from Ford's fascination with theatre and his lifelong endeavor to experiment with literary forms.[1] As he wrote to Conrad about *Some Do Not . . .* in 1924, "You'll notice I've abandoned attempts at indirect reporting of speech—as an experiment. How late in life does one go on experimenting?" (qtd. in MacShane 56). One result of Ford's experimentation, I suggest, is this restless, contingent turning inside-out of form that allows us to access a predominant feeling of form in *Parade's End*: nausea.

In this chapter, I argue that nauseous form in Ford's tetralogy transmits a historical experience of anxiety and allows us to experience English national and personal histories as indigestible, self-contradictory, and non-cathartic. In what follows, I set a more specific premise for this argument by outlining a series of adjacencies between nauseous form, the historical experience of anxiety, and the indigestible experience of history pertinent to *Parade's End* and its contexts. But before delving into the tetralogy's form, I want to address a preliminary question about reading for the nausea of form: why do we read eversive form as form's feeling of nausea? Is the connection between eversion and nausea merely metaphorical?

To clarify this point, I suggest that we start with acknowledging how *Parade's End* already tends to foreground characters' nausea as a symptom of repression, trauma, and disgust. For example, in *Some Do Not . . .*, Christopher Tietjens furiously attacks Rossetti as an "obese, oily man" who revolts him (22). Christopher also "nearly vomited" (101) by being startled by Macmaster, a reaction which would appear less exaggerated if we could understand nausea as a symptom of repressing his feeling of being cuckolded; Sylvia Tietjens experiences nausea as a symptom of trauma triggered by Glorvina's suggestion that her assumed sexual relationship with the Germans has ruined Christopher (205). In *No More Parades* and *A Man Could Stand Up—*,

nausea persists in Christopher's intertwined experience of war violence and sexual desire. The grotesque death of O Nine Morgan triggers Christopher's various experiences of disgust and his "bowels turned over" multiple times (*NMP* 30); realizing his desire for Valentine, he feels that thinking about it "made your bowels turn over" (78); he also "knew that if he had had to touch a prisoner he would have felt nausea. It was no doubt the product of his passionate Tory sense of freedom" (*AMCSU* 154). In *Last Post*, Christopher's absence does not stop nausea from permeating the seemingly idyllic landscape of post-war West Sussex. Mark Tietjens, Christopher's elder and only living brother, is paralyzed and dying from pneumonia in a thatch shelter. Mrs. Pape, seeing the condition of Christopher and Valentine's house, exclaims that "'It *isn't* fit for human habitation!'" and "'The homes of the poor in these old countries beggar even pity. Do you suppose they so much as have a bath?'" (54).

If nausea is one of the major symptoms of repression, trauma, and disgust central to Ford's thematic treatment of war, violence, and social transformation, it also invites us to understand his use of eversive form as a formal rendering of nauseated mental and physical interiority. What insights does nauseous form offer us, then, other than affirming the tetralogy's explicit depiction of nausea? I contend that nauseous form transmits an ineffable and visceral historical experience of anxiety on existential and political levels that the tetralogy may not be able to engage sufficiently through plots or events. This historical experience of anxiety not only refers to "a pathological state characterized by inappropriate or excessive apprehension or fear" ("anxiety, n"), as has been demonstrated through the nauseous symptoms of Christopher and other characters in the tetralogy, but also should be understood as an ontological and social mood of existential anxiety in anticipating the unforeseeable yet impending death, a mood that was normalized by total war and intensified by the possibility of the next world war. Unlike fear, this

experience of anxiety does not have an immediate object but only retains a holistic feeling of being threatened. While this totalizing and objectless experience of anxiety looms larger than any concrete images and words could possibly render, Ford's tetralogy captures the symptom of this experience through the nausea of form: nausea not in the literal sense of an individual's physical inclination to vomit, but in the sense of philosophical, ideological, and temporal reorientation against the unnamed and unnameable "you"—the haunting threat, the heterogeneous and inassimilable otherness within psychic and physical interiority. Thus, nausea in this chapter describes incomplete and contradictory formal reorientations that stage both an individual mind's and the narrative form's oscillation between the threat of self-annihilation and the desire for radical freedom by self-purging and detachment, between ideological closure and dissent, and between anticipation and contingency. In Ford's fictional world, nausea becomes the "standstill" without dialectics, viscerality without the individual body.

Indexing the historical experience of anxiety in the epoch—and *epoché*—of war through revolting against the haunting threat from an absent heterogeneity, Ford's nauseous form allows us to access an indigestible experience of history in the tetralogy. As I have delineated in the introduction, grasping history *through and as* experience means not only comprehending history as a worldview and a philosophy but also feeling particular temporal and spatial duration, fragmentation, juxtaposition, and multiplicity. This chapter will focus on how the indigestible experience of history unfolds through two major effects of nauseous form in the tetralogy, both of which centre on the inassimilable: first, the nausea of form renders inassimilable the "I" within interior monologues that are central to the subject of history the tetralogy assigns to the main characters, especially Christopher Tietjens; second, the nauseous form stages irresolvable incoherence within a collective memory and imagination of historical continuity that the

tetralogy explicitly—perhaps too explicitly—intends to build. As the second aspect falls on a larger scale of the tension between the nauseous form and the serial form of the novel series, the second section of this chapter analyzes how this tension creates temporal contradictions and multiplicities against the tetralogy's macro construction of a teleological history from the pre-war to the post-war eras. Towards the end of the last section, I further examine such temporal contradictions by drawing upon Fredric Jameson's discussion of *récit* and Paul Ricœur's conceptualization of narrative time. I delineate how nauseous form composes a contingent, inassimilable, and absolute "present time" that complicates the tetralogy's formal construction of the experience of history and time via inward-turning form (personal experience of history and time) and dialogical form (social experience of history and time). Ultimately, I consider nauseous form as the means by which Ford conveys an indigestible and incoherent experience of history in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and by which he is able to pursue his ambition of being the "historian of his own time" (*It Was the Nightingale* 179) without giving up his skepticism about the reliability and sovereignty of the human mind.

In charting the functions and effects of nauseous form through these two aspects, this chapter also attends to the complex form of the tetralogy as a whole. This means that reading nauseous form along these two lines of inquiries includes examining the feeling of the experimental novel series form I mentioned in the introduction, especially when feelings of fragility and anxiety are already inherent in the form of the novel series. Reading *Parade's End*, then, requires us to have at least two lenses like those used in Man Ray's *L'Étoile de mer*: one out of focus, showing the tetralogy's general contours of the storyline and the fictional world, and another close-up, foregrounding the messiness of form in each novel that overwrites those

contours. To make my reading of *Parade's End* easier to follow, I provide a brief outline of the temporal structures of the tetralogy:[2]

Some Do Not . . . (1924) (*SDN*)	Part I: pre-war, the 1900s–10s, progression of the storyline through regression (progression constructed by a series of retrospection or "delayed decoding"[3]) Part II: in the middle of WWI; Christopher Tietjens on leave; linear progression of the storyline
No More Parades (1925) *(NMP*)	Part I: war; linear progression of the storyline; Christopher returns to the army and works in Rouen Part II: war; partly in parallel with Part I; linear progression of the storyline; Sylvia Tietjens goes to Rouen to see Christopher Part III: war; linear progression of the storyline with a delayed revelation of the previous event in the hotel (which causes Christopher's leave for the front)
A Man Could Stand Up— (1926) (*AMCSU*)	Part I: Armistice Day, Valentine Wannop's school, linear progression of the storyline Part II: the front, Christopher's experience of trench war; linear progression of the storyline Part III: Armistice Day, Valentine and Christopher reunite
Last Post (1928) (*LP*)	Part I: post-war, West Sussex, Mrs. Pape and Michael (questionably Christopher's son) visit the Tietjenses; Mark's and Marie's stream of consciousness Part II: Sylvia arrives at the Tietjenses in West Sussex Part III: Valentine, pregnant, receiving Mark's last words and witnessing his death

Even this rough timeline foregrounds the tension between the tetralogy's macrostructure and its local forms and styles in individual novels. While the former produces a general representation of history as teleological and linear, the latter produces local feelings of nausea and disorientation that cannot be fully contained by the macrostructure. On the former, Max Saunders is right to observe that the tetralogy focuses on the pun of "movement" that "brings together ideas of motion, emotion, and progression through temporal aesthetic forms" (209).

This chapter, however, aims to demonstrate that the nausea of form unsettles the tetralogy's "movement"—its teleological construction of history—by producing impasse and contradiction.

Before moving to *Parade's End*, I want to raise the last point on the overarching argument of the dissertation and on the broad significance of reading nauseous form. I suggest that the relationship between anxiety, nauseous form, and the indigestible experience of history in Ford's tetralogy shows how attending to the feeling of form helps us see aesthetic form's subversion and complication of the representation of history in a literary text. This criticality of the feeling of form in *Parade's End*—via its production of the inassimilable aesthetic experience and the aesthetics of the inassimilable—has been hidden in plain sight and escaped most critics' scrutiny. Although primarily focusing on the tetralogy's treatment of Tory Radicalism, Andrzej Gasiorek articulates the broad benefit of recuperating the critical blind spot to the tetralogy's general ability of self-critique: "To look at the novel in this way [self-critique] is to raise issues that cannot be articulated within the framework of readings that are themselves in thrall to a historical nostalgia of a quite determinate kind, for it opens up the possibility that tradition, feudalism, Toryism, even nostalgia itself may be being undermined" (54). If, for Gasiorek, Ford's treatment of Tory Radicalism is a concrete manifestation of the tetralogy's self-critique in "search for viable solution to the problems of modernity in the tradition of the past" (53), this chapter shows that looking at how nauseous form disrupts the tetralogy's representation of history invites us to see a more multivalent politics of the tetralogy's form. Ultimately, if reading for the ideology or concrete politics of literary form often direct us to the aesthetic form's *embeddedness in or distantiation from* historical contexts,[4] reading for the feeling of literary form redirects us to the narrative form's *phenomenological (re)orientations* that are open to

ideological critique yet provide modes of relationality more nuanced than causalities of ideological refusal or subjugation.

I. The Century of Anxiety: Nauseous Form and the Indigestible "I"

The twentieth century began to feel anxiety as one of its motifs decades before Auden's diagnosis in "The Age of Anxiety" or in his earlier poem "September 1, 1939"—"The lights must never go out, / The music must always play" (87). From Kierkegaard's psychological-theological study of anxiety and Freud's concrete typology of anxieties, to Heidegger's and Sartre's philosophical conceptions of anxiety, the nature and causes of this peculiar and ambiguous feeling called "anxiety" gained increasing attention across disciplines. What underlies disciplinary differences in the studies of anxiety is a shared understanding that anxiety is the anticipation of an impending threat without requiring an immediately threatening object. In *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844), Kierkegaard conceptualizes anxiety through the negative and the absent, whose "ignorance is about nothing" (44) and whose appearance is "the pivot upon which everything turns" (43). In the case study of little Hans (1909), Freud writes that "Hans's anxiety [. . .] was [. . .] without an object to begin with: it was still anxiety and not yet fear" (25); in *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger describes the threatening feeling in anxiety as that which "does not have the character of a definite detrimentality which reaches what is threatened, and which reaches it with definite regard to a special factical potentiality-for-Being" (231); Sartre's *Nausea* (1938) depicts existential angst through the historian Antoine Roquentin's passivity under the threat of unforeseeable "Nausea." In all of the theories above, however, the lack of object does not mean that anxiety is merely fantastical or hallucinatory but means that the object is the totality existing outside the self, the world with which "I" forms, cannot form, or refuses to form a relationship.

More importantly, beyond this shared understanding of anxiety, these works suggest that the twentieth century featured a continual escalation of anxiety, which has been evident in the conceptual expansion of anxiety from an individual symptom to a historically and socially normative mood. One of the major causes of this escalating anxiety on existential and socio-political levels was the actualization of total war through WWI.[5] Ford Madox Ford writes in his "subterfuge" to *No More Parades* about ubiquitous anxiety in the front:

> We were oppressed, ordered, counter-ordered, commanded, countermanded, harassed, strafed, denounced—and above all, dreadfully worried. The never-ending sense of worry, in fact, far passed any of the 'exigencies of troops actually in contact with enemy forces,' and that applied not merely to the bases, but to the whole field of military operations. Unceasing worry! (3–4)

Abundant contemporary recounts and critical studies of wartime emotional history point to such "unceasing worry" as a pronounced mood not only in the front but also at home. For example, in *The Beauty and the Sorrow*, Laura de Turczynowicz, one of Peter Englund's "dramatic personae," spells out the normativity and ubiquity of anxiety: "it is as though anxiety has become a bad habit" (170). In the critical essay collection, *The Myriad Legacies of 1917*, Jay Winter surveys the intensifying anxiety in domestic societies after Russia's withdrawal from the war in 1917, which manifested in increasing divorce rates and social upheavals (28). As Winter also notes, this deepened anxiety led two main political and existential questions, both of which centre on anticipating the unforeseeable: "Would the war ever end? And would the world we know, the domestic world for which we are fighting, topple over or collapse before the fighting comes to an end?" (23). Both in and beyond Ford's tetralogy, such feelings of restless reorientation and anticipation for the unforeseeable yet somehow doomed end of the world were gradually boiling up in the interwar years towards the outbreak of WWII. More pertinent to my argument on the viscerality of *Parade's End*, Paul Saint-Amour points out how Ford's strategic

use of "total worry" keeps readers engaged in his depiction of war: "But worry, as Ford conceives it, is not only eternally self-renewing for the soldier but also inexhaustibly transmissible to a reader" (287). Following upon Saint-Amour's observation that Ford depicts ubiquitous anxiety to retain the reader's attachment to the text, I stress that the tetralogy also transmits the objectless anxiety of *form*: Ford's nauseous form shows form's constant need to test its efficacy of engaging readers in war and wartime experience by navigating between the lens of individual experience (i.e. Christopher's interior monologue) and that of interpersonal / social perspective (i.e. the narrator's use of dialogical form).

It is this historical experience of ubiquitous and normalized anxiety that *Parade's End* (1924–1928) tends to respond to through nauseous form. By reorienting against "you" as an unnamed and unnameable otherness immanent to interiority, the narrative form indexes anxiety as a feeling of being threatened and disoriented by an unnamed, absent object. Nausea becomes the only possible response to the century of anxiety, for when the historical experience of anxiety entails uncertainty and disorientation on such holistic and all-encompassing scales, the narrative form's attempt to capture the anxiety of the present epoch has recourse to itself as the only anchor and object to react against. In this light, again, the "modernist inward turn" and realistic "outward turn" of narrative forms both seem to retain a degree of certainty that Ford's notoriously unreliable narratives often problematize and find insufficient for rendering anxiety. *The Good Soldier*, for example, creates irresolvable uncertainty through the epistemological and ethical undecidability in John Dowell's storytelling. *Parade's End* magnifies such uncertainty through an unnamed narratorial voice that shifts between the omniscient third person, the first-person plural, and the second person. Consequently, in the tetralogy, nauseous form obstructs any coherent individual interiority (including the narrator's), operates as an excess of

representation to create a textual environment of nausea, and transgresses the boundaries of individual consciousness and collective memories in ways that the narrator and characters cannot articulate. In a sense, nauseous form almost becomes a character in the tetralogy—a messy character, nonetheless.

In this section, I focus on the relationship of nauseous form to the protagonist of the first three volumes of *Parade's End*, Christopher Tietjens, within the premise of the historical experience of anxiety and the indigestible experience of history. Specifically, I trace how nauseous form within Christopher's interior monologues and stream of consciousness in the first three volumes—from the pre-war years to the end of the war—epitomizes a historical experience of ubiquitous anxiety in Christopher's sexual, political, and financial anxieties that he is unaware of or unable to articulate. In creating a dramatic irony—a gap between the nauseous formal construction of Christopher's interiority and the literary representation of his obliviousness to such nausea, the narrative form reveals his insurmountable limits: the nausea of his mind becomes both the most persistent symptom and the only possible self-expression of anxiety. This formal nausea fundamentally unsettles his self-identified position as the subject and steerer of England's history, the heir to Groby, and "the backbone of England" (*SDN* 134). Eventually, this section shows how this formal undoing of Christopher's mind, body, and identity sheds lights on our understanding of the narrative form's critical attitude towards the nature and possibility of experiencing "history"—history as a worldview, a philosophy of time, and a set of trajectories for Britain as a nation—in the early twentieth century.

Despite his absence in the last novel, Christopher Tietjens remains a Lukácsian central character whose development shares the trajectory of historical progression in the tetralogy;[6] Ford grants Christopher with an acute historical consciousness and a prophetic power that enable

the tetralogy to turn to England's past and future.[7] But if Christopher is set out as the medium or epitome to impart England's historical trajectory, it is also within his first long interior monologue in *Some Do Not . . .* that the eversion of form exposes the inward-turning form's feeling of nausea and indexes his sexual and political anxieties that he is oblivious to or utterly represses. This key interior monologue takes place while Christopher and Valentine are walking through the grass fields in the pre-war Kent. After lighting his pipe and contemplating encyclopedically on numerous plants and flowers in the field, Christopher has the following interior monologue:

> This, Tietjens thought, is England! A man and a maid walk through Kentish grass fields: the grass ripe for the scythe. The man honourable, clean, upright; the maid virtuous, clean, vigorous: he of good birth; she of birth quite as good; each filled with a too good breakfast that each could yet capably digest. [. . .]
>
> "God's England!" Tietjens exclaimed to himself in high good humour. "'Land of Hope and Glory!' – F natural descending to tonic, C major: chord of 6–4, suspension over dominant seventh to common chord of C major. . . . All absolutely correct! Double basses, cellos, all violins: all wood wind: all brass. Full grand organ: all stops: special *vox humana* and key-bugle effect. . . . Across the counties came the sound of bugles that his father knew. . . . Pipe exactly right. It must be: pipe of Englishman of good birth: ditto tobacco. Attractive young woman's back. English midday mid-summer. Best climate in the world! No day on which man may not go abroad!" Tietjens paused and aimed with his hazel stick an immense blow at a tall spike of yellow mullein with its undecided, furry, glaucous leaves and its undecided, buttony, unripe lemon-coloured flowers. The structure collapsed, gracefully, like a woman killed among crinolines!
>
> "Now I'm a bloody murderer!" Tietjens said. "Not gory! Green-stained with vital fluid of innocent plant . . . And by God! Not a woman in the country who won't let you rape her after an hour's acquaintance!" He slew two more mulleins and a sow-thistle! A shadow, but not from the sun, a gloom, lay across the sixty acres of purple grass bloom and marguerites, white: like petticoats of lace over the grass!
>
> "By God," he said, "Church! State! Army! H.M. Ministry: H.M. Opposition: H.M. City Man. . . . All the governing class! All rotten! Thank God we've got a navy! . . . But perhaps that's rotten too! Who knows! Britannia needs no bulwarks . . . Then thank God for the upright young man and the virtuous maiden in the summer fields: he Tory of the Tories as he should be: she suffragette of the militants: militant here on earth . . . as she should be! As she should be! In the early decades of the twentieth century however else can a woman keep clean and wholesome! Ranting from platforms, splendid for the lungs: bashing in policemen's helmets . . . No! It's I do that: my part, I think, miss! . . . Carrying heavy banners in twenty-mile processions through streets of Sodom. All splendid! I bet she's virtuous. But you don't have to bet. It isn't done on certainties. You

> can tell it in the eye. Nice eyes! Attractive back. Virginal cockiness . . . Yes, better occupation for mothers of empire than attending on lewd husbands year in year out till you're as hysterical as a female cat on heat . . . You could see it in her: that woman: you can see it in most of 'em! Thank God then for the Tory, upright young married man and the suffragette kid . . . Backbone of England! . . ." (*SDN* 131–4)

This long interior monologue demonstrates in complex and subtle ways how the eversion of form reveals Christopher's ineffable anxieties and problematizes his self-identified position as the subject of history. But before I parse this, it is worth noting that the narrative already sets up Christopher's mind in a disjunction between the past, the future, and an inassimilable present moment of history, a disjunction that simultaneously anchors in the displacement of his sexual desire. Christopher's thought first evokes the patriotic song "Land of Hope and Glory," composed by Edward Elgar and used at the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary on 22 June 1911. This song echoes the ending of this passage where Christopher glorifies himself and Valentine as the "backbone of England" (134). This passage also links Christopher's self-awareness of being the steerer of England's historical trajectory to his nostalgic turn to the past: "Across the counties came the sound of bugles that his father knew. . ." (133). However, the past and future of England Christopher tries to glue together through music and sound are interrupted by the present moment as he hits the mullein with his stick: "Tietjens paused and aimed with his hazel stick an immense blow at a tall spike of yellow mullein with its undecided, furry, glaucous leaves and its undecided, buttony, unripe lemon-coloured flowers" (133). A closer look at the language that describes Christopher's action of hitting the mullein reveals that the narrator is using free indirect speech to imitate Christopher's tone. In this line, the repetition of "undecided" resonates with that of "clean" in Christopher's earlier thoughts on himself and Valentine: "A man and a maid walk through Kentish grass fields: the grass rise for the scythe. The man honourable, clean, upright; the maid virtuous, clean, vigorous" (131). As Christopher's interior

monologue conflates with the narrator's voice in this passage, the parallel repetitions underscore Christopher's value judgment shown in this contrast between "clean" and "undecided": he associates the former with positive traits such as chastity and rationality, and the latter with negative characters such as superfluity and excess. If Christopher refers "the backbone of England" to "clean" men and women like himself and Valentine, his impulsive, violent action here indicates his struggle with the intrusion of material reality upon his mental construction of England's history and demonstrates his attempt at "cleansing" the excessiveness of the present material reality so that he can incorporate it into his mental image of a "wholesome" nation.

Christopher's attempt at cleansing the structural excessiveness of the yellow mullein is undoubtedly erotic too—literally "deflowering"—and his thoughts imply displacement of desire through the image of plants in the next paragraph: "'Not gory! Green-stained with vital fluid of innocent plant'" (133). While Christopher cannot bring to the surface of his conscious mind the true nature of this misplaced desire, the eversion of form comes in: "'And by God! Not a woman in the country who won't let *you* rape her after an hour's acquaintance!'" (133; my emphasis). This abrupt shift of pronoun indexes a crucial moment when his sexual desire for Valentine's attractive back, his moral principle of monogamy, and his displacement of desire by hitting the plant converge into intense yet inarticulate anxieties in the form of disorientation. By abruptly turning to the second person "you," the narrative form stages a disjunction within Christopher's consciousness, a simultaneous self-recognition and displacement of his sexual desire that can only be articulated by turning to the otherness within the self, to the unnameable "you" whose identity is irreducibly ambiguous. Later, in the same passage, the eversive form shows this disjunction again, in which his thought turns inside out in a more intense and unstable way: "'*I*

bet she's virtuous. But *you* don't have to bet. It isn't done on certainties. *You* can tell it in the eye. Nice eyes! Attractive back. Virginal cockiness'" (134; my emphasis).

I read the eversive form here as a formal explication of Christopher's nauseous mind for the following reasons. First, and broadly speaking, the human mind in Ford's fiction does not have full autonomy, but instead conforms to physical desire and anxiety; it is this visceral mind—or the mind as viscera—that stores Christopher's and several other main characters' nauseous historical consciousness in *Parade's End.* Ford's another narrator, Ernest Jessop in *The Marsden Case* (1923), has helpfully led us to Ford's satirical theory of the human mind through Jessop's blending of the physiology of involuntary reflex actions and the psychology of trauma and repression. Jessop explains involuntary reflex actions this way: "well, your physical shuddering is a reflex action. Or, still more, suppose that going along a street and seeing a man with a bulbous nose, you should feel a sudden unreasonable desire to tweak that conspicuous organ. If you did tweak it, I should call that a reflex action" (14). Later, he turns to trauma and repression: "There is one school that holds that you should 'dwell'—that if you, as the French say, *piocher* round and round your mental weakness, you will at last hit upon a spot like the button of an electric bell—and, *heigh presto,* the whole thing will clear itself and disappear from your consciousness. But there are others who say that, by dwelling on these painfulnesses, you raise all sorts of buried reminiscences, all sorts of remorse for past sins, omissions, or mere foolishness" (24). It is important to note that both theories rely on masturbatory imageries, "a sudden unreasonable desire to tweak that conspicuous organ" and "you will at last hit upon a spot like the button of an electric bell." These interlinked erotic imageries not only show the influence of modern physiology and psychology on Ford but also reveal more explicitly Ford's understanding of a holistic linkage between sexual catharsis, digestion, and absorptive

consciousness as something underpinning Jessop's theorization; Jessop, like Dowell in *The Good Soldier,* is either disguising, repressing, or oblivious to his own sexual anxiety in the novel. The eversive form in Christopher's long interior monologue, then, can be understood as a formal construction of his mind as a physical organ, an organ that nauseates and revolts against desire in his body and psyche. As I will discuss later in detail, understanding Ford's emphasis on the viscerality of the mind also helps us see how Christopher's nauseous mind complicates Sartre's aesthetics of nausea in his philosophical novel *Nausea*.

Second, several main characters' anxiety for sexual desire is often tied to various feelings of nausea in the tetralogy, especially in *Some Do Not. . .* where extramarital sexual desire is understood as something excessive, indigestible, and inducing uncertainty. As I briefly mentioned before, Sylvia explicitly says in her conversation with Father Consett that Christopher would feel nauseated if she resumed her physical contact with Christopher right after she leaves Perowne. Christopher also almost vomits at the inn in Rye when he is waiting for Sylvia to return. A more immediate context of the long interior monologue quoted above is also built upon the physical indigestion of "a too good breakfast" (131) at the Duchemins, the guests' mental indigestion of promiscuous Latin words from the delirious priest Duchemin's during the breakfast, and Macmaster's superfluous romance with Mrs. Duchemin. The eversive form, therefore, explicates what Christopher's mind feels but fails to make visible in his consciousness: the convergence of various nauseous feelings tied to displaced, misplaced, and indigestible sexual desire.

What's also important is that Christopher's sexual anxiety is underpinned by his ineffable anxiety about family lineage, the latter of which hinges on the uncertainty of the legitimacy of his son Michael. As some passages in *Some Do Not . . .* already hint, Christopher's revolt against

his desire for Valentine is not so much a struggle with his claimed virtue of chastity as anxiety about his own sexual misconduct before he marries Sylvia. For example, he quietly reflects on his relationship with Sylvia when he is talking with Mrs. Wannop, "he had had physical contact with this woman [Sylvia] before he married her! In a railway carriage; coming down from the Dukeries. An extravagantly beautiful girl!" (152). Therefore, Christopher's uncertainty and anxiety for the legitimacy of Michael throughout the three volumes also result from his guilt about acting on his sexual desire as much as from his silent distrust of his wife. And this anxiety has an economic impact on him, as he tells Sylvia that "'I've spent a great deal of money on tracing the movements of you and Drake before our marriage'" (217). The irony here is doubled: no matter how much money he has spent on this investigation he could never be sure, because not only does he have "physical contact" with Sylvia before they are married but also Drake seems to have had sex with Sylvia even on the wedding night: "there had been dreadful scenes right up to the very night of the marriage. She had hardly to close her eyes in order to see the Paris hotel bedroom, the distorted face of Drake, who was mad with grief and jealousy [. . .] She knew that she had been very near death. She had wanted death" (185).

The nausea of form indexes this circulation of Christopher's anxieties for sexual desire, familial and historical lineage, and financial difficulties, and links all of them to Christopher's political ideals. To be specific, the link between Christopher's sexual anxiety and his anxiety for furthering the line of a "clean" nation becomes explicit as his nauseous thoughts move to "mothers of empire": "'Yes, better occupation for mothers of empire than attending on lewd husbands year in year out till you're as hysterical as a female cat on heat . . .'" (134). Here, "mothers of empire" echoes the nation as mother in the line "mother of the free" in the lyrics of "Land of Hope and Glory," Sylvia as the mother of his son and possible heir to Groby, his own

mother whom he insists on calling "a Protestant saint" (51), and his unacknowledged desire for Valentine, who apparently has been paired up with Christopher himself as the backbone of England. Moreover, Christopher's seemingly respectful attitude toward the matriarchal line in the interior monologue is deeply misogynistic, for it implies that women are reproductive machines to further the line of the empire. This is another layer of irony: while he pairs himself up with Valentine, a suffragette, he misunderstands the political currency of Women's Suffrage as an effective way to preserve chastity and purge moral corruption—"[c]arrying heavy banners in twenty-mile processions through streets of Sodom" (134). This irony, along with the villainization of Sylvia as an intelligent, sarcastic, yet unfaithful wife, resonates with Margaret Wynne Nevinson's essay "Futurism and Woman" (1910). In it, she points out the complex social and intellectual anxiety about masculinity in the intersection of gender, sexuality, and political authority: "But although it was not the Suffragette's desire for liberty that aroused the Signor's admiration, but merely her method of enforcing her demands; yet the Suffragettes and Signor Marinetti are at one in deploring the existence of the serpent-of-old-Nile type of woman" (74). Christopher is precisely provoked by Valentine's physical fitness and her militant manners, not her political ideology, and Sylvia plays the role of vicious and seductive "serpent-of-old-Nile type of women." Three years after the publication of *Some Do Not . . .* the public would witness a similar setup of good woman versus bad women in Fritz Lang's futuristic film *Metropolis* (1927). I will return to the tetralogy's treatment of Valentine and Sylvia in the next section.

However, Christopher's ideal of a wholesome England is built upon a kind of asceticism he cannot achieve, and "the lewd husband" becomes a joke on himself. Through the nauseous form, the everted interior monologue shows his incapacity to fully integrate this intertwined sexual and political ideal into his consciousness; this is also a moment when the criticality of

form becomes more explicit and the distance between Ford and Christopher appears to be profoundly ambivalent. The feeling of nausea, therefore, demonstrates how the narrative form partially captures and responds to the age of anxiety that already began to ferment in the pre-war years in moral, political, and socio-economic realms. Furthermore, as Christopher's anxieties stem from the conflicting ideologies and values between his self-claimed eighteenth-century mentality and his twentieth-century Edwardian, genteel life, he becomes the very product and meta-case case study of the untranslatability of two historical experiences. The nausea of form precisely transmits this untranslatability as the only translatable aesthetic feeling, problematizing Christopher's self-identified position as the subject and steerer of England's historical trajectory. The history experienced by his nauseous mind becomes something irreducibly incoherent, disoriented, and indigestible.

Christopher believes that at the turn of the century militarism is the only way towards sexual and ideological catharsis—a liberation from nausea and paralysis—although he conveys this belief through his thoughts on Valentine: "she suffragette of the militants: militant here on earth . . . as she should be! As she should be! In the early decades of the twentieth century however else can a woman keep clean and wholesome!" (*SDN* 134). Eventually, Christopher joins the British army and Valentine performs a kind of militarism by becoming a Physical Instructress at a girls' public school. However, as Part III of *Some Do Not* . . . shows, when the shell-shocked Christopher returns home on a short leave from the army, nothing has been cleansed but further fermented by rumors, and his self-identified position as the backbone of England is ironized to the point of cruelty. Although the nauseous form does not appear often in this part, as Christopher's conscious mind is too slow and numb to be introspective, the rumors present us with a contagious excess of truth festered from Christopher's ineffable anxiety and

nauseous mind. He finds himself now faced with numerous entangled rumors about him, all of which stem from his obscure relationships with Sylvia and Valentine, and this obscurity is precisely caused by his insistence upon the "virtue" of not talking about them, by the nauseous, self-contradictory consciousness that cannot resolve anxiety. First of all, his financial difficulty has worsened not only because he has "lost seven thousand in Russian securities" (*SDN* 249)—which is already a mockery of how prophetic he is[8]—but also because his cheque is dishonored by the jealous Brownlie (the nephew of the banker Lord Port Scatho), who is in love with Sylvia, refuses her attempt to save Christopher's overdrawing, and tries to convince her to leave him. What's worse, his relationship with Valentine not only causes rumors of them having war babies but also leads to his father Mr. Tietjens's suicide. The motivation of Mr. Tietjens's suicide is not simply his disappointment at Christopher's "moral corruption" after he hears Ruggles's false reports (which come from Ruggles's conviction of rumors and his own *ressentiment*), but is in fact deeply rooted in Christopher's usurpation of the father-son relation and the disorder of family lineage. As the narrative reveals, "What broke his [Mr. Tietjens's] heart was that Christopher should not only have seduced but should have had a child by Valentine Wannop" (*SDN* 257) and "Mr Tietjens entertained for Valentine Wannop an affection of the very deepest, the same qualities appealing to the father as appealed to the son. He had even, in spite of his sixty odd years, seriously entertained the idea of marrying the girl" (257–8). The rumors thus destroy Mr. Tiejtens on all fronts: his desire for Valentine, disguised by the rhetoric of taking good care of his friend's daughter, will never be fulfilled; Christopher usurps his position and now "has" Valentine; as Christopher is the heir to Groby, the family lineage is now in chaos because of Christopher and Valentine's "misbegotten brat," as Mr. Tietjens puts it (258). The cruelest and ironic moment we confront Mr. Tietjens's firm belief in these rumors is when he

misunderstands Christopher's shell-shocked appearance, "in uniform, looking broken and rather bloated," as a result of "debauch" (258). Facing all the rumors and tragic news of the death in his family (everyone died except his brother Mark and his son Michael), however, Christopher's shell-shocked mind cannot sort any of them out. Unlike the political and moral convictions of fighting for the cleanness and health of the nation when he first goes to war, it is now the rumors, the messiness of his marriage, and the betrayal of his own people that make him prefer war over domestic and civic life; when Mark suggests that he can keep Christopher at home, Christopher thinks that "the best thing for him was to go and get wiped out as soon as possible" (*SDN* 273).

II. War and Christopher's Nauseous Mind

Following *Some Do Not* . . . are two "war novels" in the tetralogy, *No More Parades* and *A Man Could Stand Up—*. In both novels, while war experience enlarges Christopher's consciousness and intensifies its self-reflexivity,[9] nauseous form not only persists within the formal construction of his consciousness but also indexes widened gaps in his perceptions of the past, present, and future. In *No More Parades*, for example, nauseous form exposes that Christopher's mind fails to retreat into a completely inward-turning state and into the nostalgic mental gaze at a pastoral England. His interior monologue after confronting O Nine Morgan's grotesque death illustrates how nauseous form stages this failure:

> He wondered if his bowels would turn over again if he thought of the girl. He was gratified that they had. It showed that he had strong feelings . . . He thought about her deliberately. Hard. Nothing happened. He thought of her fair, undistinguished, fresh face that made your heart miss a beat when you thought about it. His heart missed a beat. Obedient heart! Like the first primrose. Not any primrose. The first primrose. Under a bank with the hounds breaking through the underwood . . . It was sentimental to say *Du bist wie eine Blume* . . . Damn the German language! But that fellow was a Jew . . . One should not say that one's young woman was like a flower, any flower. Not even to oneself. That was sentimental. But one might say one special flower. A man could say that. A man's job. She smelt like a

> primrose when you kissed her. But, damn it, he had never kissed her. So how did he know how she smelt! (*NMP* 30)

It is worth noting that Christopher's experience of *physical* nausea has become a rather "useful" feeling during the war, as it helps him re-establish his cognitive connection with the world and with himself, a connection constantly being blasted apart by bombing. That is why in this passage Christopher chooses to think of Valentine deliberately to test if he is still connected to his mind and body, "it showed that he had strong feelings." Unlike the long interior monologue in pre-war Kent in *Some Do Not . . .*, here Christophe's mind evokes his previously repressed desire for Valentine as a way to return to the land of the living. Moreover, as this interior monologue happens right after Christopher putting down O Nine Morgan's disfigured body, his provocation of sexual desire also suggests his attempt at regaining his ability to *have* feelings and to empathize with O Nine Morgan's death. The reactivated physical feeling of nausea grants Christopher some agency to return to romantic imageries of Valentine and a pastoral England associated with her, an England where one can find the first primrose "[u]nder a bank with the hounds breaking through the underwood." However, precisely in Christopher's romantic and even erotic fantasies about Valentine, nauseous form appears again: "He thought of her fair, undistinguished, fresh face that made your heart miss a beat when you thought about it," and "She smelt like a primrose when you kissed her. But, damn it, he had never kissed her." The eversive technique here harks back to the abrupt shift of pronouns in Christopher's long interior monologue in *Some Do Not . . .*: "All splendid! I bet she's virtuous. But you don't have to bet. It isn't done on certainties. You can tell it in the eye. Nice eyes! Attractive back" (134). The echo of formal eversion between the two novels shows that Christopher's mind is still haunted by the unnamed "you" and an inassimilable sexual desire. Nauseous form also exposes that during the war his retreat into a fully interior, solitary space fails: war does not provide him with a haven to

resolve his sexual anxiety, nor does it offer him a mental "state of exception" immune to political anxiety, where he can fully integrate a nostalgic image of a pre-war, pastoral England into the present. Although away from home and Sylvia at this moment (Sylvia reunites with him later in Rouen), the direct confrontation of physical disfigure and death causes him more intense anxiety in ways that force him to bring back his previous anxieties before the war. He is still stuck on the disjunction between the past and the present, between his identity of the backbone of England and his inassimilable desire that delegitimizes his self-identification.

The persistence of the nauseous form, therefore, does not undermine the impact of war on Christopher's enlarging and transforming consciousness, but rather shows that war experience forces him to confront more directly the *viscerality* of his psychological and physical feelings as a limit case of what his mind can take in. As a limit case, these feelings are only manifested as symptoms of physical nausea, and their fundamental cause of anxiety—the disjunction and bifurcation within the self and the aporia that comes with it—remains hidden: "He had never realised that he had a passion for the girl till that morning; that he had a passion deep and boundless like the sea, shaking like a tremor of the whole world, an unquenchable thirst, a thing the thought of which made your bowels turn over . . . But he had not been the sort of fellow who goes into his emotions . . ." (*NMP* 78). If this is one of the closest moments Christopher gets to an acknowledgment of his desire as well as the nature of his mind, this is also the moment of a limit case where his nauseous mind halts at its reflection on the ineffable "thing" that induces overwhelmingly physical nausea.

Unable to overcome the ineffability of the "thing," Christopher's mind manifests greater intensity of nausea through nauseous form in the third volume *A Man Could Stand Up—*. For

instance, the passage below reveals Christopher's increasingly nauseous mind and its simultaneously involuntary self-expulsion on the levels of both form and representation:

> Still, the chances against a hit by a rifle-bullet were eighty thousand-to-one in a deep gravel trench like that. And he had had poor Jimmy Johns killed beside him by a bullet like that. So that gave him, say 140,000 chances-to-one against. He wished his mind would not go on and on figuring. It did it whilst you weren't looking. As a well-trained dog will do when you tell it to stay in one part of a room and it prefers another. It prefers to do figuring. Creeps from the rug by the door to the hearth-rug, its eyes on your unconscious face. . . . That was what your mind was like. Like a dog!" (*AMCSU* 73)

This passage exemplifies how the narrative perspective in this novel becomes more unstable than the one in *Some Do Not . . .*, for the framing or signaling phrase of interior monologue such as "he said to himself" completely disappears. We can already see this destabilization of narrative subjectivity and hierarchy in the previous passage on Christopher's fantasies about Valentine where the anonymous narrator's use of the third-person "he" objectifies Christopher's subjective interior monologue ("He thought of her fair, undistinguished, fresh face that made your heart miss a beat when you thought about it"); and the "you" in a *third-person interior monologue / stream of consciousness*, in turn, implies a conflation between the character's and the narrator's voices / thoughts. In this passage, the nausea of form further intensifies, with several layers of displacement and negation of "I" take placing in Christopher's consciousness. First, the narrative form's attempt to describe Christopher's mental activity in the third person is abruptly replaced by his own thought / voice: "It did it whilst you weren't looking," which undermines the subjective position of the anonymous, omniscient narrator. Second, the eversion of form, the "you" in Christopher's interior monologue, simultaneously negates his subjective position by reorienting towards the otherness of itself. Third, because the first "it" in "It did it whilst you weren't looking" refers to Christopher's own brain, nauseous form exposes the aporia of his introspection: when he does not introspect, his mind gives in to the racing thoughts of calculating

the risk of death, but when he does, his mind eludes itself by self-negation and turning towards "you." Moreover, Christopher compares his mind to a dog, which suggests a further intensification of the heterogeneous, indigestible otherness immanent to his already nauseating consciousness. Eventually, his mind is equipped with its own pair of eyes "on your unconscious face"—the ultimate gaze from the unconscious that cunningly waits to take over the conscious mind.

The intense nausea of form here constitutes multiple revolts and displacements of the self within Christopher's consciousness, showing an infinite reflexivity that does not lead to a final return to the same or to a dialectical synthesis (negation of negation) but rather spirals down towards an unnameable otherness or unfathomable abyss that resides between his consciousness and the unconscious. At the centre of this abyss is the key figure of "a well-trained dog," an ultimate materialization of the indigestible in the nauseous mind, the irreducible bifurcation that profoundly problematizes Christopher as the steerer of England's historical trajectory. Mostly ironically, Christopher, the previous "backbone of England" in *Some Do Not . . .* , now transforms into the figure of the dog as a perversion of British Bulldog spirit (see Figure 1): the patriotic war spirit of valor becomes a spirit of fear and involuntary calculation of survival rates.

Figure 1 "Are We Afraid? No!" Postcard, 1915, British Library, https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/are-we-afraid-no

The irony of the bulldog also links to Sylvia's confession of beating Christopher's bulldog, her comparison of Christopher's head to the dog's head, and her prophecy that England as a nation is coming to its end in *No More Parades*. I will return to this important point in the next section.

Returning to Christopher's involuntary mind during the war, I suggest that the nausea of form in the third volume, *A Man Could Stand Up—*, further unsettles his self-identification as the heir to Groby and the subject of history. Before a strafe, Christopher's anxiety about being captured by the Germans—"If the Huns got him" (*AMCSP* 69)—is rising to the point where his mind is out of control, as he puts it in an eversive form, "You became second-in-command of your own soul" (77). The image of the dog creeping from the rug and staring from Christopher's unconscious now transforms into a fully erupted, manic, and everted consciousness, where any subjective, interior space is turned outwards in speech form: "God knew! Curiosity or fear. In terrific noise; noise like the rushing up of innumerable noises determined not to be late, whilst the earth rocks or bumps or quakes or protests, you cannot be very coherent about your thoughts" (76). Shortly, his mind shows its involuntary nature again through eversion: "And, of course, you might lose control of your mind in a reeling cellar where you cannot hear your thoughts. If you cannot hear your thoughts how the hell are you going to tell what your thoughts are doing?" (76). These two moments in his nauseous mind are key because they expose the futility of Christopher's attempt to overcome fear and to regain self-control through invoking his identity as "Tietjens of Groby": "Tietjens flattered himself that he cared nothing about kudos. He was still Tiejtens of Groby: no man could give him anything, no man could take anything from him. He flattered himself that he in no way feared death, pain, dishonour, the after-death, feared very little disease—except for choking sensations!" (76). While Christopher tries to overcome fear in this way, nauseous form again exposes Christopher's insurmountable limit in his self-

identification, linking his involuntary, self-purging mind to the symptom of "choking sensations," the latter of which results from extreme anxiety—"infinitely threatening" (68)—as well as from his lung problems due to gas attacks.

This formal staging of Christopher's nauseous mind complicates Barbara Farnworth's discussion of the connection between Christopher's mental self-analysis and William James's "model of self-awareness" (90). As Farnworth suggests, Christopher's meticulous self-monitoring of his mental states and activities echoes James's theory that "the proper subject of psychology is the introspective analysis of the 'states of mind' that we are conscious of in daily life and of the 'functions they perform for the organism'" (78). However, the increasingly intensifying feeling of form's nausea in the two war novels of the tetralogy questions the possibility of Christopher's self-analysis and introspection; while Christopher's mind can analyze its strengths and limitations even when it realizes how war impacts its performance and memory, it can only analyze it through self-revolt and self-negation. The feeling of nausea, then, exposes a fundamental impossibility of self-analysis. From the pre-war eversive formal explication of anxiety to the revolt against the pair of eyes from the uncanny dog, and finally to the fully everted, involuntary mind, Christopher's subjective consciousness becomes increasingly bifurcated and elusive. The escalation of nausea in Christopher's mind, then, captures his experience of history—of time and space—as self-contradictory and indigestible. As Christopher finally begins to realize in the third volume: "There will be no man who survives of His Majesty's Armed Force that shall not remember those eternal hours when Time itself stayed still as the true image of bloody War! . . ." (*AMCSU* 93).

At the end of the third volume, the narrative of Armistice Day does not offer a final resolution or release of tension in Christopher's mind. Instead, Christopher's consciousness

blends into the anonymous narratorial consciousness that is equally manic, ecstatic, and nauseous:

> Tietjens was stretching out his two hands from the waist. It was incomprehensible. His right hand was behind her back, his left in her right hand. She was frightened. She was amazed. Did you ever! He was swaying slowly. The elephant! They were dancing! Aranjuez was hanging on to the tall woman like a kid on a telegraph pole. The officer who had said he had picked up a little bit of fluff . . . well, he had! He had run out and fetched it. It wore white cotton gloves and a flowered hat. It said: "Ow! Now!" . . . There was a fellow with a most beautiful voice. He led: better than a gramophone. Better. . .
>
> *Les petites marionettes, font! font! font*! . . .
>
> On an elephant. A dear, meal-sack elephant. She was setting out on . . . (*AMCSU* 218)

It is unclear whose voice articulates "it was incomprehensible." The narrator's, Valentine's, and Christopher's perspectives converge at this point and then turn to the "you" in the line "Did you ever!" What tends to be nauseous here is not Christopher's mind but the narrative form itself, who, like the characters, is disoriented by the ecstasy on Armistice Day. In this convergence of characters and the narrator into a circus of voices, dancers, singers, animals, and objects, this ecstasy nonetheless ends on a devastatingly ironic French nursery rhyme with a voice that resonates between the narrator, Christopher, Valentine, and the fellow who sings: "*Les petites marionettes, font! font! font*!" This line reminds us that these happily dancing figures are not that different from small puppets as the British subjects controlled by the nation to fight, bleed, die, or barely survive. It also suggests a regression and retreat to something immature as the only way to turn away from the fresh memory of war and violence.

The tension between the nausea of form and Christopher's constant self-identification as the subject of history and the nation—"the backbone of England" and "Tietjens of Groby"—reveals Ford's distance from Christopher's philosophy of history, the latter of which is closer to, for example, Thomas Carlyle's emphasis on individualism and passion for historical heroes in

his lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worships, & the Heroic in History*.[10] Valentine in the third volume even has an explicit and brilliantly satirical phrase, "the dyspepsia of Thomas Carlyle," which precisely emphasizes the indigestibility of Carlyle's aesthetics and ideology (*AMCSU* 12). Indeed, the nausea of form resonates with the third volume's irony of Christopher's idea of hero-worship. For example, while Christopher considers the comment of him being "a law unto yourself" as a compliment and "hero-worship" (*AMCSP* 94), nauseous form exposes the irreducible contradiction and self-revolt in his consciousness that index the historical experience of anxiety caused by forces larger than himself. Another example is that the novel shows Christopher's obliviousness to his analogy between the corpse on the wire and "a Walter Scott Highland officer" who is "a tall melodramatic object, the head cast back to the sky" and who is "waving a sword that wasn't there . . ." (71). Or, in confronting the German soldier, Christopher slowly draws a trench-knife instead of a revolver. Aranjuez comments on his action (or rather inaction): "'Damn cool you were, sir. Damn cool. I never saw a knife drawn so slow'" (81). All these incidents hinge on Christopher's disjointed historical experiences (which the nausea of form has revealed in previous passages as his internal bifurcation and ideological impasse): hero vs. out-of-time individual, knife vs. gun, chivalry vs. modern warfare.

The nausea of form operating within Christopher's consciousness suggests that the experience of history—not only the experience of war—in *Parade's End* is neither just Christopher's self-consciously constructed linear trajectory nor historical materialism's *de facto* dialectical vision; rather, the nausea of form produces for the reader an aesthetic experience of history as paralysis. From pre-war England to trench war, the feeling of nausea in Christopher's visceral mind allows Ford to explore a notion of indigestibility or failed catharsis that exposes the impossibility of a coherent national history and linear temporality, an impossibility situated

in an increasingly normative and totalizing mood of anxiety in social and political spheres. The tripartite relationship between anxiety, nauseous form, and the indigestible experience of history is indeed in dialogue with numerous philosophical and literary works from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Sartre's philosophical novel *Nausea* is undoubtedly one of the most salient texts in which the protagonist shares Christopher's nauseous historical mind. Early on in *Nausea*, the protagonist, the historian Antoine Roquentin, claims that "The Nausea is not inside me: I feel it out there in the wall, in the suspenders, everywhere around me It makes itself one with the cáfe, I am the one who is within it" (31). At this point, Antoine experiences nausea as a feeling of something external, ubiquitous, and immersive, a feeling that resonates with Nietzsche's description of disorientation as nausea or seasickness.[11] Later, Antoine realizes that the Nausea "is no longer an illness or a passing fit: it is I" (170). Antoine thus seems to have reached an epiphany: nausea is no longer an external, ubiquitous phenomenon or experience of the world separate from the "I," but rather is "I"—"I" is always nauseous in its attempt to overthrow itself or overcome its threshold. This epiphany leads him to the possibility of freedom: "This moment was extraordinary. I was there, motionless and icy, plunged in a horrible ecstasy. But something fresh had just appeared in the very heart of this ecstasy; I understood the Nausea, I possessed it" (176). What Antoine experiences as ecstasy—and as *ékstasis*—is the potential for radical individual freedom: "I" possesses Nausea and "I" is the only obstacle to itself in ways that can entail a dialectic moment of paralysis and renewal, from "motionless and icy" to "something fresh." Maybe a crude way to put it is that Sartre seems to believe in a "good" Nausea—nausea as both a symptom of the limit of "I" and the generative force for overcoming the limit—whereas in Ford's tetralogy a "bad" nausea in Christopher's mind entails infinite self-contradiction barred

from any dialectical synthesis or potentiality. In this light, the aesthetics of nausea in Ford and Sartre both seem to capture a social and existential feeling of anxiety—the disorientation and uncertainty towards the "I"'s relation to the world and to history—but Ford's aesthetic is more playful, ironic, and skeptical than Sartre's.

What's more interesting is that in *Nausea* Antoine finally decides to write a novel instead of historical writings because "history talks about what has existed—an existant can never justify the existence of another existant" (237). Thus, Sartrean Nausea reveals the fictionality of a linear history—a chronology of the past, the present, and the future—since for Antoine and for Sartre the present moment for each existant is radically free and singular. In contrast, Ford's aesthetics of nausea shows that not only does history but also the notion of the "I" is a fiction, a problematic, incongruous fiction. Sartre's preservation of the "I" through nausea is made clearer in his reiteration of Husserl's rejection of "the digestive philosophy of empirico-criticism and neo-Kantianism and all forms of 'psychologism'" (3), which understands consciousness as absorptive:

> Husserl sees consciousness as an irreducible fact, which no physical image can render. Except, perhaps, the rapid, obscure image of bursting. To know is to "burst out towards," to wrest oneself from the moist, gastric intimacy and fly out over there, beyond oneself, to what is not oneself. To fly over there, to the tree, and yet outside the tree, because it eludes and repels me and I can no more lose myself in it than it can dissolve itself into me: outside it, outside myself. (*A Fundamental Idea* 4)

Through Sartre's reading of Husserl, we see that Sartrean nausea means the physical and mental construction of a paradox of proximity and overreach when one's consciousness attempts to digest the external world. This paradox means that one never arrives at or internalizes the object but always only halts at the threshold of an infinite closeness to the object, a closeness whose temporality is either futuristic or historical. Sartre seems to articulate this threshold as

simultaneously a moment of self-preservation, "I can no more lose myself in it than it can dissolve itself into me"; according to Sartre's understanding of Husserl, this simultaneity of threshold and self-preservation precisely makes consciousness possible—"for consciousness has no 'inside.' It is merely the exterior of itself and it is this absolute flight, this refusal to be substance, that constitutes it as a consciousness" (4). In *Parade's End*, Ford's eversive form shows that Christopher's nausea does not suggest a "default" or universal mode of existence as an individual, but rather points to a more concrete historical experience of anxiety (sexuality, class, gender, economics, etc.). The "I" that constitutes Christopher as the backbone of the nation and its history is negated but never recovered; it forever traps in the inassimilable excess without the Sartrean promise of "something fresh." Therefore, if the historian-turned novelist Roquentin attempts to renew his understanding of history by accessing the present moment of freedom through fiction, Ford seems to be the novelist-turned historian and a disillusioned Roquentin, showing that individual freedom itself is also a fiction contrived by the luring illusion of the human subject. Ford's aesthetics of nausea, then, suggests a rather skeptical view of the human subject and the possibility of accessing the present moment as well as history. But, at the same time, this bleakness is still intertwined with Ford's personal desire to capture the remainders of the fleeing present through the human mind, albeit a nauseous one: "[O]ur times are our own property in a sense that nothing else is or can be, for our own times are made up of the most intimate and most inviolable portion of a man—of his memory" (qtd. in Saunders 209).

The nausea of form in Ford's *Parade's End* not only precedes and complicates Sartre's philosophy and aesthetics of nausea in *Nausea*, but also moves away from the role of nausea as the affective or representational epiphenomenon in the modernist aesthetics of hunger, disgust, and abjection. In both Kunt Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890) and Franz Kafka's "A Hunger Artist"

(1922), hunger and starvation are major motifs that induce aesthetics of abjection, disgust, and deterioration. In terms of representation, the feeling of nausea in such aesthetics often appears as the secondary physical and mental reaction against the intake of food after a long period of hunger. The hunger artist in Kafka's short story, for instance, feels nauseous when he is presented with food after forty days of starvation in the cage. In terms of textual affect, nausea is often expected to be the reader's response to the narrative's depiction of deteriorating characters or disgusting settings. Samuel Beckett's post-WWII *Trilogy* perhaps extends this aesthetics to its extreme. Looking at the eversive form in Ford's *Parade's End*, however, I contend that the feeling of nausea carefully retained by the aesthetic form points to another mode of nausea, not as the secondary and consequential *reaction* or *resistance* to a sudden intake of indigestible food (metaphorically or literally) that attempts to satisfy hunger or lack, but as the primary or even the only possible *feeling and action of self-reflexivity* in confronting one's always already anxious mood in an uncanny, threatening world, a world where one is never offered any immediate intake of food as a concrete threat from alterity. The inassimilable *is* the "I" itself predicated on anxiety.

To further examine how the nausea of form functions as a textual environment and transmits the ubiquitous social mood of anxiety, the next section will turn to other characters in the tetralogy. It will illustrate that nauseous form appears not only in Christopher's interior monologue but also in a much larger intersubjective consciousness comprising several main characters, a consciousness upon which the tetralogy tends to build a collective memory and narrative of nationhood and historical continuity.

III. Collective Nausea, Contamination, and the Indigestible Narrative Time

Moving my focus beyond Christopher's nauseous mind, I examine in this section a broader tension between nauseous form and the tetralogy's "inward turn," a tension that my introductory chapter has described as the modernist novel series' fragility, anxiety, and irony of *form*'s desire for *Bildung* (development and self-cultivation). In the case of *Parade's End*, this desire manifests in the tetralogy's use of inward-turning forms (interior monologue and the stream of consciousness) to construct an intersubjective, resonating, developmental, and collective consciousness as an attempt to validate Tietjens's family lineage and England's historical continuity, as well as to sustain the emblematic relation between the two. The collective nausea of form in the consciousness of the Tietjenses and of Valentine, then, disrupts this formal attempt by exposing the continuation of the indigestible and inassimilable excess within the intersubjective world as a symptom of collective anxiety. This collective nausea also distinguishes Ford from Sartre; while Sartre uses the symptom of nausea to chart a narrative about the existential relationship of the individual to the collective, or that of the internal to the external, *Parade's End* supplements and complicates Sartrean nausea with collective and historically specific experiences of anxiety beyond a universal existentialist feeling of disorientation, angst, and self-revolt. In this section, I begin with how the nausea of form disrupts the tetralogy's macro construction of the Tietjenses' collective historical consciousness (Christopher-Mark-Michael) and the resonating ideology in Christopher's and Valentine's consciousness. Moreover, I read the characterization of Sylvia Tietjens as the ultimate excess of various forms' explication of ideologies across four volumes; occupying the most oppressed and marginalized position of the tetralogy, her fully everted and emptied-out interiority presents an excess that nauseous form cannot explicate sufficiently and has to give way to the representation

of ghosts or the supernatural. Finally, as we move towards the tetralogy's macro construction of the experience and representation of history and time beyond the scale of the local, formal mediation of individual or communal consciousness, I propose that we also have to take into account how a unique temporal dimension attached to nauseous form interacts with the tetralogy's macro narrative time. Hence, in the last part of this section, I draw upon Fredric Jameson's discussion of *récit* and Paul Ricœur's conceptualization of narrative time to delineate how nauseous form composes a contingent, inassimilable, and absolute "present time" that complicates the tetralogy's formal construction of the experience of history and time via inward-turning form (personal experience of history and time) and dialogical form (social experience of history and time; the first mode of "you" contrasted with nauseous form that I mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter).

The tetralogy's most explicit attempt to build historical continuity lies in the characterization of Christopher's son, Michael Mark Tietjens Jr., who seems to be able to inherit and extend perceptions and historical consciousness from both his father Christopher and his uncle Mark Tietjens. And yet when it comes to the thought of Valentine, Michael's consciousness turns to nauseous form just as Christopher's consciousness often does, which suggests Michael's implicit yet deeply rooted "inheritance" of Christopher's sexual and political anxiety. The resonating historical consciousness between Christopher, Mark, and Michael is most pronounced in Michael's interior monologue when he climbs up the hill in postwar West Sussex:

> Four counties ran out below his feet. To the horizon! He *showed him the kingdoms of the earth*. As great a view as above Groby, but not purple and with no sea. Trust Father to settle where you could see a great view by going up hill. *Vox adhæsit*. . . . "His feet were rooted to the earth." . . . No, *vox adhæsit faucibus* meant that his voice stuck to his jaws. Palate rather. His palate was as dry as sawdust! How *could* he do it! . . . A terrible thing! They called it Sex! . . . His

> mother had coerced him into this dry palate and trembling heels by the force of her sex fever. Dreadful good-nights they had had in her boudoir, she forcing and forcing him with arguments to go. To come here. Beautiful Mother! . . . Cruel! Cruel! (*LP* 57)

Michael's interior monologue contains several lines of historical and ideological continuation from Christopher and Mark. First, and most explicitly, his perception literally extends from Mark's at the beginning of *Last Post* where Mark's "view embraced four counties" (*LP* 9). Second, although Michael looks up to Mark as a paternal figure and prefers to be named after him, the continuation and resonance of ideology in Christopher's and Michael's consciousness are remarkable and anchored in the God-Christ / father-son relationship. Michael's interior monologue, for example, contains the line "He showed him the kingdoms of the earth," which evokes Satan's temptation of Jesus: "Then the devil led Him up to a high place and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 'I will give You authority over all these kingdoms and all their glory,' he said. 'For it has been relinquished to me, and I can give it to anyone I wish'" (Luke 4:5–6). Michael's perception of himself as a Jesus figure echoes Christopher's godly view in the pre-war Kentish grass field and explicitly harks back to Christopher's consciousness haunted by the death of O Nine Morgan in *No More Parades*: "For a moment he seemed to see . . . he actually saw. . . O Nine Morgan's eyes [. . .] The Lord giveth home-leave, and the Lord refuseth . . . Probably not blessed, but queer, be the name of God-Tietjens!" (*NMP* 86). As Christopher flatters himself as the backbone of England on "the land of hope and glory" and sees himself as a figure of God who determines the life and death of soldiers like O Nine Morgan, Michael considers himself as a Jesus figure and an improved version of Christopher, resisting the temptation from a figure whom both his father Christopher and his grandfather Mr. Tietjens fail to resist: Valentine Wannop. The continuity of vision and ideology in Michael's mind is also miraculously predicted by Christopher in *No More Parades*: "And God? A Real

Estate Agent, with Marxist views. . . . He hoped to be out of it before the cessation of hostilities, in which case he might be just in time for the last train to the old heaven. . . ." (*NMP* 97). Although Michael is a boy without an independent world-view, he does identify himself as a Marxist-Communist as "[a]ll Cambridge was" (*LP* 53). Third, the construction of God-Christ/father-son relationship ties to Michael's inherited imagination of nationhood from Christopher, as Michael's thought goes: "But what a lovely glimpse under the trees. Sweet-williams along the path. Light filtered by boughs. Shadow. Gleams in the little window-panes. Wall-stones all lichen. That's England. If he could spend a while here with Father. . . ." (*LP* 59–60). Michael's understanding of the pastoral landscape and country houses as the quintessence of England echoes Christopher's thought in the first long interior monologue in Kent: "This, Tietjens thought, is England!" (*SDN* 134). There is a nuanced discordance in this echo, though: Christopher situates himself *within* the parameter of "*This* is England" (my emphasis), whereas Michael is removed from the pastoral scene and considers "*That's* England" (my emphasis).

It is precisely the nausea of form in the next paragraph that exposes and magnifies what this subtle discordance or self-distancing has implied: Michael's anxiety about what his sexual desire might entail—the chaos and confusion of maternal and paternal figures.

> But what a lovely glimpse under the trees. Sweet-williams along the path. Light filtered by boughs. Shadow. Gleams in the little window-panes. Wall-stones all lichen. That's England. If he could spend a while here with Father. . . .
>
> Father had been matchless with horses. Women too. . . . What an inheritance was his, Mark Tietjens, junior's! If he could spend a while here. . . . But his Father slept with. . . . If she came out of the door. . . . She must be beautiful. . . . No they said she was not a patch on mother. He had overheard that at Fittleworth's. Or Helen Lowther. . . . But his father had had his pick! . . . If he chose then to sleep with . . .
>
> If she came out of the door he would faint. . . . Like the Venus of Botti . . . A crooked smile. . . . No, Helen Lowther would protect. . . . He might fall in love with his Father's . . . What do you know of what will happen to you when you come in contact with the Bad Woman. . . . of advanced views. . . . They said she was of Advanced Views. And a Latinist. . . . He was a Latinist. Loved it!

> Or his father might with Hel . . . Hot jealousy filled him. His father was the sort of man . . . She might . . . Why did over . . . People like mother and father beget children? (*LP* 59–60)

In the second paragraph of this passage, what cuts into Michael's consciousness ("That's England. If he could spend a while here with Father . . .") is his thought of Valentine: "But his Father slept with. . . ." Confronting this thought, Michael's mind turns to "you" just like Christopher's mind does: "He might fall in love with his Father's . . . What do you know of what will happen to you when you come in contact with the Bad Woman?" With the moral disgust towards the unthinkable taboo of falling in love with Valentine, Michael's nauseous mind nonetheless shows his sexual anxiety about his own uncontrollable and inassimilable desire similar to Christopher's. Michael's anxiety also hinges on family lineage in two aspects, uncannily resembling Christopher's: first, this anxiety derives from his conviction that Valentine, "the Bad Woman," is already extending the illegitimate line of the Tietjenses; second; it ties to the usurpation of the father-son relation similar to what happens between Christopher and his father Mr. Tietjens (who also thinks of marrying Valentine). Like Christopher's interior monologue—"And by God! Not a woman in the country who won't let you rape her after an hour's acquaintance!" (*SDN* 133), Michael's thought is formally presented as nauseous and unable to integrate his anxiety about falling in love with "the Bad Woman" into his thinking of inheritance, family lineage, and improvement.

The nausea of form in Michael's consciousness links with his self-hatred proximate to an existential level of self-destruction. While the paternal line seems always ambiguous for Michael, the maternal line now also begins to become profoundly confusing for him. In the passage above, when imagining what he would feel like when he saw Valentine—"If she came out of the door he would faint. . . . Like the Venus of Botti . . . A crooked smile"—his mind

contains an image of "a crooked smile" that previously appears in his thought of his mother Sylvia too, "[a] queer laugh, ending with a crooked smile" (*LP* 58). The conflation of the images of Valentine and Sylvia suggests that Michael regards both of them as seductive "bad women"; indeed, he grows up resentfully with the exposure to gossips and societal judgments of Sylvia: "He was his mother's son. . . . His mother was . . . He would kill anyone who said it. . . ." (*LP* 59). What's worse, while he believes "Helen Lowther would protect. . . ."—no matter what or whom he thinks she can protect—his obsession with Helen is just like his father's obsession with Valentine. In *No More Parades,* Christopher fantasizes kissing Valentine and compares her to a primrose (30); in *Last Post*, Michael fantasizes Mrs. Lowther's hair "like floss silk" and "her lips like cut pomegranates" (*LP* 58). These erotic pastoral images make Michael "warm all over, his eyes, wet and warm" (*LP* 58) and bring him to confront his "wafts of intolerable . . . oh, desire!" (*LP* 59). What's even messier is that investing in the conviction of his father's moral corruption, Michael has to consider the possibility that Christopher might "pick" Helen Lowther too—"Or his father might with Hel . . . Hot jealousy filled him. His father was the sort of man . . . She might . . ." All of these unthinkable thoughts of inter-generational, quasi-incestuous affairs in Michael's mind lead to his extreme despair of being the son of "[p]eople like mother and father": "Why did over . . . People like mother and father beget children?" The fundamental ambiguity of family lineage manifests clearly in Michael's use of "people like mother and father" as general categories as well as identifiable individuals; this ambiguity also implies his resentment towards being the inheritor of sexual desire and anxiety from his "over . . ." (over-sexed) parents. The nausea of form in his consciousness, then, serves as a formal explication of his disorientation and self-revolt derived from sexual anxiety, an anxiety that unsettles all of his identities and obstructs him from inheriting or reconstructing a coherent imagination of familial history. In other words,

the nausea of form reveals that nothing has been or can be improved by Michael. What is left to the Tietjenses as well as to the reader is collective nausea; in this inter-generational historical consciousness, collective nausea indexes a continual historical experience of anxiety as a larger social mood closely tied but not limited to war experience. This collective nausea, in turn, entails an experience of history as paralysis, aporia, and inaction. For Christopher, this indigestible experience of history is associated with the irreducible contradiction between his self-identification and self-destruction. Michael, on the other hand, does not even have access to Christopher's problematic subjective position as the heir to Groby and the steerer of England's history. His self-hatred on such a predestined, existentialist level ("Why did over. . . People like mother and father beget children?") bars his very action of self-identification with anything. The only thing he can identify himself with—or rather, follow mindlessly—is being a Marxist-Communist like everyone else in Cambridge.

In terms of the novel series form's desire for unity, continuity, and development of ideology by means of establishing an intersubjective historical consciousness, the tetralogy also uses Valentine's consciousness to supplement or validate Christopher's to the extent that her mind presents an almost contrived, artificial echo of Christopher's. Valentine's consciousness is first revealed extensively in Part One of *A Man Could Stand Up—*. In it, Valentine is frustrated with her unfulfilled sexual desire, yet she reasons that no one would marry her "because she was so clean and fit" (*AMCSU* 21). This is exactly how Christopher's nauseous mind describes her in *Some Do Not . . .*. Second, George Herbert as a symbol of Englishness and the representative of the Anglo-Saxon race appears in both minds: Christopher's nostalgic gaze turns to Herbert's parsonage Bemerton as "[t]he cradle of the race as far as our race was worth thinking about" (*NMP* 90), while Valentine expects to find "Herbert's Poems or his *Country Parson*" in

Christopher's house on Armistice Day and imagines Christopher as a Herbert figure, "He ought to be a Country Parson. He never would be now" (*AMCSU* 191). Moreover, Christopher even explicitly articulates this uncanny synchronicity between his and Valentine's consciousness, "'Her mind so marches with mine that she will understand'" (*AMCSU* 191).Valentine's mind also echoes Christopher's as her thought goes, "Men might stand up on hills, but the mental torture could not be expelled" (*AMCSU* 200).

This synchronicity, however, also happens to the nausea of form in their interior monologues and streams of consciousness. In *A Man Could Stand Up—*, the eversion of form exposes Valentine's nauseous mind on Armistice Day: "When you thought of Time in those days your mind wavered impotently like eyes tired by reading too small print" (*AMCSU* 27). This almost resembles Christopher's mind in the trench: both of their minds experience moments of self-revolt and negation; both experience the impossibility of self-analysis; both regard mind as having a pair of eyes. Second, when Christopher's nauseous mind mostly focuses on war experience since the second volume, Valentine's nauseous mind confronts the socio-political pressure and anxiety at home. She is conscious about how this intense social mood overwhelms her own torturing mind, "inhibiting—prohibiting—herself from thinking about herself" (*AMCSU* 29). Realizing that the war causes both physical and mental damages, Valentine feels physically nauseous as a symptom of moral disgust, "her physical interior turned within her" (*AMCSU* 200), parallel with Christopher's bowels turning over when he confronts the death of O Nine Morgan and thinks of Valentine. Eventually, as the tetralogy's philosophy of a teleological history hinges upon Valentine's characterization as an epitome of the continuity of the Empire—as she becomes Christopher's mistress and pregnant with his child in the last volume—their similarly nauseous minds constitute them both as the subjects of England who experience time and history

as paralysis. In another phrase Valentine uses to describe her life at the moment, "'state of suspended animation'" (*AMCSU* 29), the pun on "state" suggests both a suspended mode of being and "the state of exception" in wartime, an experience of history as forever suspension that never gets relieved in the last volume *Last Post*. Towards the end of the last volume, Valentine asks the dying Mark: "'How are we to live? How are we ever to live'"? (203). Mark replies with a nursery rhythm:

> He whispered:
>
> " '*'Twas the mid o' the night and the barnies grat*
> *And the mither beneath the mauld heard that*. . . ."
>
> An old song. My nurse sang it. . . . Never thou let thy child weep for thy sharp tongue to thy goodman. . . . A good man! . . . Groby Great Tree is down. . . ." He said: "Hold my hand!" (204)

I echo Eve Sorum's reading that this ending suggests "a narrative that neither confront nor move past the defining trauma of war," for "such a return to a prewar idyllic is impossible, and Mark recognizes this in his final proclamation, 'Groby Great Tree is down'" (163). At the same time, I contend that Mark's last words are not *the* end of the novel, because the lines after his words tend to be as crucial as his explication of the indigestible experience of history. After Mark's final words, the narrative goes on:

> She inserted her hand beneath the sheet and his hot hand closed on hers. Then it relaxed.
>
> She nearly cried out for Marie Léonie.
>
> The tall, sandy, much-liked doctor came through the gate.
>
> She said:
>
> "He spoke just now. . . . It has been a torturing afternoon. . . . Now I'm afraid . . . I'm afraid he's . . ."
>
> The doctor reached his hand beneath the sheet, leaning sideways. He said:
>
> "Go get you to bed. . . . I will come and examine you. . . ."
>
> She said:
>
> "Perhaps it would be best not to tell Lady Tietjens that he spoke. . . . She would have liked to have had his last words. . . . But she did not need them as much as I." (204)

After Mark's recognition of their impossible return to the past, the last few lines of *Parade's End* create a great sense of uncertainty regarding the Tietjenses' family heritage as well as the future of whom Christopher calls "the mother of empire"—Valentine. Besides Valentine's persistent anxiety about being an outsider to the Tietjenses and thus her need to hear Mark's last words as a form of inheritance, I also want to state the obvious: pregnant with Christopher's child and already feels "dizzy and sickish" earlier (172), Valentine is now holding Mark's hand in this scene, and Mark is dying from pneumonia—a contagious disease. This ending has planted an irreducible uncertainty and anxiety in the reader: what Valentine "inherits" from Mark Tietjens might not really be a way to move forward but visceral contamination and infection. The reader's anxiety is also heightened by the inclusion of the doctor's remark to Valentine that "'Go get you to bed. . . . I will come and examine you. . . .'"; from earlier passages, the reader has been informed that Valentine needs the doctor to bring her bromide (193), which was commonly used as a sedative for anxiety and other neurological symptoms.

Valentine's mind is also susceptible to invasive nausea and contamination. While the tetralogy tends to portray Valentine as enthusiastic, progressive, independent, and hard-working, Valentine's and Christopher's exactly paralleled nauseous minds expose her lack of agency. Although the eversive form in Christopher's consciousness shows the feeling of nausea as an index of his anxieties, the eversive form in Valentine's consciousness is too pervasive to be located within a specific moment of anxiety and ideological impasse. In other words, the nauseous form almost takes over her interiority. On this point, the narrative already gives us some clues. First of all, the narrator describes her interior monologue as coming from her "mental lips" (*AMCSU* 32), which suggests that her consciousness is always already turning outward. Second, the double meaning of "mouthpiece" (8) in the opening scene of *A Man Could*

Stand Up— where Valentine speaks into the telephone mouthpiece ("mouthpiece" denoting both a person speaking on behalf of the authority and a mechanic part of the telephone) further suggests her compromised interiority and subjectivity. At some point in Valentine's stream of consciousness, Christopher's nauseous mind, as well as the narrator's voice, almost controls her "mental lips":

> It was all very well to say that he was portentous, looming, luminous, loony: John Peel with his coat as grey, the English Country Gentleman *pur sang* and then some; saintly; God-like, Jesus-Christ-like. . . . He was all that. But you don't seduce, as near as can be, a young woman and then go off to Hell, leaving her, God knows, in Hell, and not so much as send her, in two years, a picture-postcard with MIZPAH on it. You don't. You don't!
>
> Or if you do you have to have your character revised. You have to have it taken for granted that you were only monkeying with her and that you've been monkeying ever since with WAACS in Rouen or some other Base. . . .
>
> Or course, if you ring your young woman up when you come back . . . or have her rung up by a titled lady. . . . That might restore you in the eyes of the world, or at least in the eyes of the young woman if she was a bit of a softie. . . . (*AMCSU* 39–40)

The passage starts with Valentine's reflection on her impression of Christopher, but soon the narrative turns to the second person, adopting a tone and diction that resemble Christopher's. Valentine's everted thought-speech in the second paragraph even becomes the mouthpiece of the narrator, who uses the double meaning of "character" ("you have to have your character revised") to describe both the change of Christopher's personality and the change of characterization as a compositional practice. Further, the third paragraph returns to Valentine's interior monologue that not only resembles Christopher's nauseous consciousness but also adds another layer of objectification of herself (from "you" to "your young woman," which refers to herself). Finally, the eversive form also makes Valentin's mental speech instructional. The narrative explicitly uses the second person to blend Valentine's instruction of girls in the school with her self-instruction: "*You mustn't* breathe rhythmically with your movements. No. No. *No!* .

. . *Don't* breathe out with the first movement and in with the second! Breathe naturally! Look at me! . . . She breathed perfectly!" (*AMCSU* 22). The nausea of form in Valentine's mental speech signals her lack of individually distinct interiority and reveals the collective nausea in Christopher and Valentine. In *Last Post*, her lack of agency becomes even more explicit, as her mind repeats, "And Christopher was always right" (179).

Before turning to the second part of this section, I want to end the discussion of collective nausea by detailing the tetralogy's characterization of Sylvia Tietjens. Although the narrative form does not grant Sylvia much room for interior monologue or stream of consciousness, her mind is presented by the narrative as fully everted due to the trauma of various sexual, religious, and political violence. My reading of her role in the tetralogy shows that she becomes the excess of both the tetralogy's Anglo-centric ideological closure / collectivity *and* its formal complexities: in terms of characterization, she is Anglo-Irish Catholic descended, a villainized outsider to the English characters, and an unfaithful wife to Christopher Tietjens; in terms of formal reorientations, her interiority barely exists in inward-turning forms, her memories and feelings are largely narrated by the third person narrator (except some momentary conflation of interior monologue with third-person narration in *Last Post*), and her main "interior monologue" is formally rendered as an outward-turning *dialogue* with the ghost of Father Consett in *No More Parades.*[12]

Sylvia's thinking mind is explicitly involuntary and impulsive, and her consciousness becomes external and dialogical. As an extreme form of the symptom of anxiety, her fully everted "interior monologue" reveals to us her trauma of sexual, political, and religious violence that the tetralogy's ideological emphasis on English and patriarchal identities and characterization tends to marginalize. To begin with, the narrative in *Some Do Not* . . . first gives

us a glimpse into the sexual violence Drake impose on Sylvia and the continual traumatic symptoms of her involuntary mind due to such violence. For example, when *Some Do Not . . .* reveals to us that "she [Sylvia] had certainly been taken advantage of, after champagne, by a married man called Drake" (*SDN* 185), the narrator mentions the impulsive and involuntary nature of her thinking and feeling: "And even now she had only to see the name of Drake in the paper—her mother's influence with the pompous front bencher of the Upper House, her cousin, had put Drake in the way of colonial promotions that were recorded in gazettes—nay, she had only involuntarily to think of that night and she would stop dead, speaking or walking, drive her nails into her palms and groan slightly" (185). The trauma of sexual violence haunts her, "ghost-like, at any time, anywhere" (186).

Later, Sylvia's involuntary and impulsive thinking mainly appears in *No More Parades* in an extreme form: confessing to the ghost of Father Consett. The use of the second person in Sylvia's confession is much less nauseous against her own mind than a symptom of her already out-of-mind state of trance—an emptied-out subject—in dialogue with the ghost. Such a fully everted mind outside herself retains the most painful memory of political violence in relation to sexual violence. In the middle of Sylvia's confession, her thoughts of English officers go on as follows:

> It was undeniably like something moving. . . . All these things going in one direction. . . . A disagreeable force set in motion by gawky schoolboys—but schoolboys of the Sixth Form, sinister, hobbledehoy, waiting in the corners of playgrounds to torture someone, weak and unfortunate. . . . In one or other corner of their world-wide playground they had come upon Father Consett and hanged him. No doubt they tortured him first. And, if he made an offering of his sufferings, then and there to Heaven, no doubt he was already in paradise. . . . Or, if he was not yet in heaven, certain of these souls in purgatory were yet listened to in the midst of their torments. . . . (*NMP* 150–1)

A few paragraphs later, her thoughts on Father Consett continue:

> What had they murdered him for? Hanged at the word of a half-mad, half-drunk subaltern, because he had heard the confession of some of the rebels the night before they were taken. . . . He was over in the far corner of the room. . . . She heard him say: they had not understood, the men that had hanged him. That is what you would say, father . . . Have mercy on them, for they know not what they do. . . .” (152).

If Christopher’s mind attempts to glue together a coherent and romanticized history of England, Sylvia’s everted mind constitutes its counterpart—trauma, stagnation, and political violence from the English—as an excess of such a history. For Sylvia, “the land of hope and glory” is a land of blood and ghosts, and “the backbone of England” that moves England’s history forward is in fact the “gawky schoolboys.” This daring critique in Sylvia’s confession also targets more concretely on Christopher’s lamentation for the death of O Nine Morgan and evocation of a collective comradeship which solicit the reader’s sympathy for Christopher’s ability to empathize. In the second volume, Christopher’s nauseous thoughts of O Nine Morgan go: “In this case it was because of one fellow, a dirty enough man, not even very willing, not in the least endearing, certainly contemplating desertion. . . . But your dead . . . yours . . . your own. As if joined to your own identity by a black cord. . . . (*NMP* 356). Against Christopher’s sentimental position based on the collectivity of identity, Sylvia’s critique of the schoolboys continue in her confession: “But, in heaven’s name what hypocrisy, or what inconceivable chicken-heartedness was this? They promoted this beanfeast of carnage for their own ends: they caused the deaths of men in inconceivable holocausts of pain and terror. Then they had crises of agony over the death of one single man” (*NMP* 178). A similar critique also appears in her earlier conversation with the ghost of Father Consett, in which she satirically compares Christopher with God: “Modelling himself on our Lord . . . But our Lord was never married. He never touched on topics of sex. Good for Him . . . (*NMP* 154). These lines again mock Christopher’s thoughts when he is haunted by O Nine Morgan’s death: “For a moment he seemed to see [. . .] O Nine Morgan’s eyes, looking at

him with a sort of wonder, as they had looked when he had refused the fellow his leave. [. . .] As you might look at God, you being very small and ten feet or so below His throne when He pronounced some inscrutable judgment! The Lord giveth home-leave, and the Lord refuseth . . . Probably not blessed, but queer, be the name of God-Tietjens!" (*NMP* 86).

If Sylvia's conversation with the ghost Father Consett mocks Christopher's Anglo-centric lamentation for England's collective cause in the war and his self-glorification, her unconscious confession of beating up the white bulldog helps us see how her subversion of Christopher's patriotic English mind closely ties to her trauma of sexual violence:

> "There's a pleasure in lashing into a naked white beast. . . . Obese and silent. . . . like Christopher. . . . I thought Christopher might. . . . That night. . . . It went through my head. . . . It hung down its head. . . . A great head, room for a whole British encyclopaedia of misinformation, as Christopher used to put it. . . . It said: "What a hope!" . . . As I hope to be saved, though I never shall be, the dog said: "What a hope!" . . . Snow-white in quite black bushes. . . . And it went under a bush. . . . They found it dead there in the morning. . . . You can't imagine what it looked like, with its head over its shoulder, as it looked back and said: What a hope! to me. . . . Under a dark bush. An eu . . . eu . . . euonymus, isn't it? . . . In thirty degrees of frost with all the blood-vessels exposed on the naked surface of the skin. . . . It's the seventh circle of hell, isn't it? the frozen one. . . . The last stud-white bulldog of that breed. . . . As Christopher is the last stud-white hope of the Groby Tory breed. . . ." (*NMP* 154)

The intertwined experience of sexual and political violence mainly manifests in three aspects in her confession to the ghost of Father Consett. First, as an ironic echo of the dog in Christopher's nauseous mind in the trench, Sylvia associates the bulldog with Christopher, and her beating of the bulldog becomes a displaced, albeit visceral, subversion and exposure of the unreliability, vulnerability, and foreseeable extinction of Christopher's historical mind—"A great head, room for a whole British encyclopaedia of misinformation," "In thirty degrees of frost with all the blood-vessels exposed on the naked surface of the skin," and "the last stud-white bulldog of that breed." Second, the physical abuse of the dog from which Sylvia gains pleasure simultaneously

derives from her displaced catharsis or revenge upon Drake, as the passage shows us that her trauma resurfaces in the image of "snow-white in quite black bushes" as the photo negative of her traumatic memory of "Drake's face, dark against the white things" (*SDN* 185). Third, *Last Post* further links Sylvia's abuse of animals and men in this passage to her childhood memories, bringing us even deeper into her psyche in a way that unearths more complex sexual and political trauma. In the last volume, she encounters the gardener Gunning, who triggers her memory of the gardener Mr. Carter in her childhood. As her recollection of Mr. Carter reveals, in contrast to Christopher's several returns to a romanticized, rural England, Sylvia's recollection of the countryside is imbued with the experience of violence that resurfaces in her adulthood in *Some Do Not . . .* and *No More Parades*:

> For it came back to her with sudden extraordinary clearness. The side of a greenhouse, down there in the west where she had been "Miss Sylvia, oh Miss Sylvia" for a whole army of protesting retainers, and that old, brown, gnarled fellow who was equally "Mr. Carter" for them all, except her father. Mr. Carter had been potting geranium shoots and she had been teasing a little white kitten. She was thirteen, with immense plaits of blond hair. The kitten had escaped from her and was rubbing itself, its back arched, against the leggings of Mr. Carter, who had a special affection for it. She had proposed—merely to torment Mr. Carter—to do something to the kitten, to force its paws into walnut shells perhaps. She had so little meant to hurt the kitten that she had forgotten what it was she had proposed to do. And suddenly the heavy man, his bloodshot eyes fairly blazing, had threatened if she so much as blew on that kitten's fur, to thrash her on a part of her anatomy on which public school-boys rather than young ladies are usually chastised . . . so that she would not be able to sit down for a week, he had said.
>
> Oddly enough it had given a queer pleasure, that returned always with the recollection. She had never otherwise in her life been threatened with physical violence, but she knew that within herself the emotion had often and often existed: If only Christopher had thrashed her within an inch of her life . . . Or yes—there had been Drake . . . He had half killed her on the night before her wedding to Christopher. She had feared for the child within her! That emotion had been unbearable! (*LP* 164)

With this and previous passages in mind, we can see several parallels of sadomasochism in Sylvia's relationship to the kitten, Mr. Carter, the white bulldog, Drake, and Christopher. The

earliest incident of such parallels the tetralogy shows is this moment of Sylvia's dispossession of the kitten's affection that induces her to want to torture Mr. Carter. Meanwhile, this passage also reveals an anti-authoritarian tendency in Sylvia that later carries into her critique of Christopher: Sylvia considers Mr. Carter as "autocratic" and is annoyed by this (164). This tendency simultaneously ties to class problems, though, as it seems to have bothered Sylvia that the "protesting retainers" would treat Mr. Carter and her equally: "who was equally 'Mr. Carter' for them all, except her father." Centred on desire, dispossession, torture, and class difference, all of Sylvia's interlinked anxieties are nonetheless quite ineffable for her conscious mind; while her out-of-mind state of trance in her confession to the ghost of Father Consett brings us closer to her traumatic experience, her conscious mind's immediate reaction is to deny: "She had never otherwise in her life been threatened with physical violence." After this denial, her recollection of Drake returns, leading to her expression of an ineffable feeling: "That emotion had been unbearable." Overall, my reconstruction of all the parallel sexual and political violence Sylvia experiences throughout the tetralogy aims to show that 1) the very need for such reconstruction means that the tetralogy already fragments and marginalizes her otherwise most crucial critique of the Anglo-centric and male-dominated narratives, especially those in the two "war novels"; 2) her fully everted mind, then, becomes the excess of both content and form as something fundamentally inassimilable to the tetralogy.

Her externalized or emptied-out interiority does not result in any form of catharsis or dialectical synthesis. In other words, on the levels of both form and representation, she constitutes an ultimate experience of history as paralysis in an extremely oppressed mode, a kind of "stuckness" in a liminal space that operates further in excess of other main characters' nauseous yet still *collective* historical consciousness. The in-between space of reality and

hallucination during her confession, then, can be read as an epitome of this liminality. Indeed, Sylvia's historical and political mind is at the same time fantastical; she "'spends nearly all her time in retreat in a convent reading novels of before the war'" (*SDN* 283), and her source of information about English history comes from her reading of, for example, the Duchess of Marlborough's letters to Queen Anne—with a quote focusing on explicitly sexual images (*NMP* 180). Her simultaneously historical and fantastical mind shows that she is not so much living in a time before the war as residing in a permanently liminal space between history and fiction. This ambiguous borderline of historical temporalities further manifests in the last volume before she meets the Tietjenses. As she reflects on the landscape in West Sussex: "It was Tom Tiddler's Ground; it was near a place called Gemmenich on the Fourth of August, 1914! . . . But just quietude: quietude" (*LP* 170). Tom Tiddler's Grounds is a game in which one player holds the ground and captures invaders. Simultaneously, the question of borders in the game harks back to the Scottish Bishopric Border song collected in Sir Walter Scott's *Poetical Works* that Ford uses as the epitaph for the novel: "Oh Rokehope is a pleasant place / If the fause thieves would let it be" (1). Sylvia also links the game to Gemmenich, which is located on the border between Belgium and Germany, thereby evoking the memory of the war. Multiple lines of temporality in the forms of historical memories, folksongs, and play converge upon Sylvia's mind as she enters Christopher Tietjens's property. The simultaneity of the histories of invasion and border-crossing, at once allegorical and real, fantastical and historical, leaves Sylvia an experience of history as disoriented and paralyzed; as she later hides her tears and says to Valentine: "'It's Father Consett in heaven that has done this. Saint and martyr, desiring soft things! I can almost see his shadow across these walls now it's growing dark. You hung him: you did not even shoot him though I *say* you shot him to save my feelings. . . . And it's you who will be going on

through all the years. . . .'" (*LP* 193). While trying to trigger Valentine's sense of guilt as an English woman and the mistress to Christopher, Sylvia's words reveal that she will always remain with the ghost of Father Consett and it is Valentine's responsibility to find a way forward.

My discussion of *Parade's End* in both sections so far has focused on the tension between nauseous form and the tetralogy's desire to construct a coherent history and unified imagination of the nation. Section One shows that while the tetralogy tends to impart England's historical trajectory through Christopher's historical consciousness, nauseous form exposes his anxiety through symptomatic nausea of the inward turning form, which entails in his historical mind an experience of history and temporality as self-contradictory and indigestible. Section Two so far has illustrated that although the tetralogy uses an inward-turning form to construct an intersubjective and resonating consciousness of historical continuity and nationhood, the collective nausea of form subverts this construction by exposing the simultaneous inheritance of and susceptibility to nausea and anxiety that only produce a further indigestible experience of history. Moving on to the last part of this section, I aim to address perhaps the most complicated aspect of nauseous form: its unique composition of a contingent, inassimilable, and absolute "present time" standing in tension with the tetralogy's formal construction of historical continuity or *telos*. The latter refers to the ways in which inward-turning form and dialogical form take the reader back to the past and simultaneously bring the past to the present moment, a two-way action that grants the tetralogy's event, plots, characters, and settings with foreclosed historicity. To make this argument more sensible, I draw on both Jameson's discussion of the *récit* and Ricoeur's theorization of narrative time to explain how nauseous form, inward-turning form, and dialogical form produce heterogenous experiences of time.

My approach to the dialogical form's production of temporal experience draws upon Fredric Jameson's discussion of the *récit* in his book *Antinomies of Realism.* In it, Jameson locates the fundamental difference between the tale (the *récit*) and the novel (the *roman*) in a temporal difference between "destiny" (irrevocability) and the "eternal present" (26) of impersonal consciousness through "showing" instead of "mere telling" (24–5). While Jameson delineates the distinction between the *récit* and the *roman* to serve his broader argument on the internal tension of realism, I want to single out his discussion of temporal experiences created by the *récit* in Benjamin's and Sartre's theories, which is especially pertinent to Ford's use of the second person "you" in dialogical form:

> Indeed, Benjamin makes it clear what so many examples of the "*unerhörte Begebenheit*" have in common: namely death. "Warming your hands on a death that is told" is the way he characterizes the récit; and if we feel that this is too bleak, we may substitute for death simply the mark of the irrevocable. This irrevocability adds a new dimension to Sartre's critique of the inauthenticity of the récit: the temporal past is now redefined in terms of what cannot be changed, what lies beyond the reach of repetition or rectification, which now comes to be seen as the time of everyday life or of routine. The irrevocable then comes to stand as a mark of one specific temporality which is separated off from another kind; and Goethe's definition may then be reread to designate, not strangeness or uniqueness, but precisely this shock of a marked time brutally differentiating itself from ordinary existence. (19–20)

Jameson reads Benjamin's observation of death as a common theme in the *récit* as a renewal of the *récit* as what Goethe calls "*unerhörte Begebenheit*"—which Jameson loosely translates and explains as "an unheard-of event or conjuncture, one thereby itself memorable and worthy of retelling" (19). Substituting the temporality of death with that of the irrevocable, Jameson then takes Benjamin's observation of the *récit* to challenge Sartre's contempt for the tale's inauthentic irrevocability and its creation of a "dead future" deprived of the potentiality of freedom (18). Jameson argues here that the irrevocable renewed by Benjamin marks itself as a final and singular temporal moment as a closed past-ness inassimilable to the repetition of time in

everyday life. In other words, this absolute *finality* defines the *récit* as an aesthetic form with a repeatable yet permanent past-ness that not only is indigestible to the dialectical potential in a Marxist sense but also creates the effect of temporal defamiliarization as shock; the irrevocability *of and in* the tale defamiliarizes the assimilable present and the predictable *telos* of future, both of which are perpetuated in the homogeneous and repetitive time of the everyday.

Bringing Jameson's discussion back to *Parade's End*, I suggest that Ford's dialogical form consolidates and further intensifies the absolute irrevocability of the *récit*. Take the dialogical form I mentioned at the very beginning of the chapter as an example again:

> When *you* came in the space was desultory, rectangular, warm after the drip of the winter night, and transfused with a brown-orange dust that was light. (*NMP* 9; my emphasis)

The narrator's use of the second person "you" makes this narrative a form of storytelling *par excellence*—the storyteller is literally *telling* the reader about the setting of the story. In the process of taking the reader back to the past events and simultaneously bringing the past to the reader's present time, this dialogical form of *telling* does not bridge the gap between the past and the present but consolidates it. This is because the dialogical nature of the second person in this passage suggests in the most definitive way a simultaneous communication and distance between the narrator and the reader, as well as an explication of the narrator's past-ness and the narrator's explicit attempt to introduce that past-ness to the present. Put it another way: the moment of the narrator's announced attempt to recover or transmit past historical experience to the present is the very moment of intransmissibility; it becomes the very moment of the formation of a pointed and marked past-ness that cannot be assimilated to the repetition of the everyday precisely because of its eruption from *and* coexistence with the homogeneous experience of the present. Following this logic, I understand the inward-turning form in *Parade's End*—interior monologue

and the stream of consciousness—as a formal mechanism that further establishes the irrevocability of the past by individuating past historical experiences.

By exposing the narrative form's discordance or limitation of inward- and outward-turning abilities, nauseous form problematizes the foreclosed past-ness and historicity constructed by dialogical and inward-turning forms. The reason why the second person "you" in nauseous form differs from the "you" in dialogical form is that the former disrupts narrative hierarchy and the storyteller's control of characters and storytelling. The "you" in nauseous form constructs a disoriented, target-less action of telling that leaves readers pondering to whom it is addressing. The moment of "you" in nauseous form is contingent, ambivalent, and in excess of the formal construction of individual interiority, foregrounding an absolutely present *feeling and action* of form's reorientation rather than *signifying an explicit telos* as dialogical form does (i.e. taking the reader back to the past). Nauseous form also undermines the inward-turning form's attempt at individuation by exposing individuals' internal bifurcation and destabilizing their coherent self-identification.

To further clarify how nauseous form composes an absolute "present time" as an ongoing feeling and action of reorientation, I bring in Ricoeur's theorization of narrative time in his essay "Narrative Time." In it, although Ricoeur primarily explores how the functions of plot help theorize a reciprocal relationship between narrativity and Heidegger's theory of time, he offers us a general vocabulary to talk about different levels of time in relation to narratives. For the purpose of explicating the tetralogy's formal construction of temporal experiences, I borrow one of Ricoeur's reformulations of Heidegger's theory of time in regard to narrativity: our "preoccupation" with time, a "within-time-ness" which precedes the representation of time. While Ricoeur considers this level of time most superficial, I regard it as the most productive

way to understand the temporality attached to nauseous form—I am now tempted to call it the surface reading of narrative time, but it should not be confused with the existing theories of surface reading. Ricoeur explains "within-time-ness"—the experience that we are "in" time—as our "preoccupation" with time: a physical and mental experience of "what we *do* with time" that should be distinguished from, though easily being assimilated to, the representation of time (which, as I understand it, mainly refers to explicit or quantifiable measurements of chronology: past, present, future; dates, hours, months, etc.) (172–6). Nauseous form composes an absolute "present time" of contingencies precisely in terms of how the narrative form and we, as readers, "*reckon with time*" (Ricoeur 173). Unlike Ford's dialogical form that creates the irrevocable past-ness of events and the act of storytelling—the irrevocable that Ricoeur also deems as a deeper time of "historicality" created by the recolletability of narratives (180)—nauseous form superimposes upon the entire tetralogy the narrative form's first-order and ongoing reorientations towards objectless and non-teleological future of possible inward- or outward-turn of form. Nauseous form prioritizes how form, characters' minds, the reader *feel time and act on/in time* in the mode of nausea regardless of the content and chronology of events. The nausea of form as a linguistically and syntactically performative event of pure happening thus generates a temporal dimension of an open "present time"—we can even say that it is form's actualization of Benjamin's "now time" (*Jetztzeit*) in the most symptomatic way possible, or form's indecisive, anxious openness to the transmission of historical experience—which is inassimilable to the representation of time as quantifiable past, present, and future, or to the dichotomy of chronology and a-chronology.

What has been or can be transmitted through the narrative form's ongoing nausea, then, is also an indigestible experience of narrative time. Rather than simply reading how *Parade's End*

explores the characters' and the narrator's experience of history and time as paralysis—a state of suspension, anxiety, and indecision from prewar to interwar years—the reader also faces the paralysis of narrative time created by the heterogeneous temporal dimensions of different modes of forms. On the one hand, dialogical form and inward-turning form in the tetralogy tend to construct the historicity of events and characters through the irrevocable. On the other hand, nauseous form reopens what these two forms have foreclosed as historical past and imposes the form's always present reorientation, nausea, and anxiety upon what has been deemed as the irrevocable. Of course, nausea is not the only feeling of form that contributes to such paralysis of narrative time. The coexistence of absolute past-ness and present-ness is in fact what reading for the feeling of form inevitably brings about to complicate a literary text's representation of history and time as well as its commonly perceived, hierarchical narrative temporalities. In the next chapter on Lewis Grassic Gibbon's use of syntactic rhythms, this absolute "present time" of the feeling of form will reveal itself more prominently, not in the Fordesque nausea, but in suffocation.

Notes

1. In "Bohemian Retrospects: Ford Madox Ford, Post-War Memory and the Cabaret Theatre Club," Nathan Waddell examines Ford's relation to the theatre, especially his experimentations with shadow plays.

2. For a more detailed chronology of *Parade's End*, see Peter Clasen and Max Saunders's Chapter 16, "Ford's Parade's End," in *The Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford*, Routledge, 2018, pp. 273–301.

3. "Delayed decoding" is a term coined by Ian Watt in his book *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*. Watt explains how it functions in Conrad's novels: "It served mainly to put the reader in the position of being an immediate witness of each step in the process whereby the semantic gap between the sensations aroused in the individual by an object or event, and their actual cause or meaning, was slowly closed in his consciousness" (270). In the case of Ford Madox Ford, I adopt "delayed decoding" loosely to refer to an epistemological gap between the immediate happening of an event and the belated revelation of the cause and nature of the event.

4. In "A Letter on Art in Reply to André Daspre," Althusser uses the word "internal distantiation" to describe the relationship between art and ideology: "Balzac and Solzhenitsyn

give us a 'view' of the ideology to which their work alludes and with which it is constantly fed, a view from which their novels emerged. They make us 'perceive' (but not know) in some sense from the inside, by an internal distance, the very ideology in which they are held" (1481).

5. Although the nascent theory of modern total war might be dated back to Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*, published posthumously in 1832, Clausewitz's concept of "absolute war" remains different from modern total war such as WWI. As Beatrice Heuser writes in the explanatory notes of *On War*, "where Clausewitz fully develops his contrasting concepts of 'absolute war', i.e. war 'absolved' from all physical constraints such as friction, limitations imposed by lacking resources, and above all, political limitations [. . .] 'Absolute war' is not the same as the twentieth-century concept of 'total war', involving the total mobilization of society, and following Ernst von Ludendorff and the National Socialists, aiming at the complete annihilation of the enemy population, if possible (implemented by the Germans in the genocide of the Jews, Sinti, and Romany)" (278).

6. By "Lukácsian," I mean a type of characters in historical fiction described in Lukács's *The Historical Novel*, such as Sir Walter Scott's heroes who "bring the extremes whose struggle fills the novel, whose clash expresses artistically a great crisis in society, intro contact with each other" (36). In other words, Lukács recognizes and celebrates in Scott's historical fiction a parallel between individual character development and historical transformation, between "personal destinies" and "determining context of a historical crisis" (41).

7. I use the term "historical consciousness" loosely to mean an individual or collective consciousness which both reflects on the past and brings it to the present. In the essay collection *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Peter Seixas's introductory piece has delineated the origin and development of this term. For him, the study of historical consciousness mostly serves as a synonym of "memory studies." My reading of *Parade's End* acknowledges but does not engage with "historical consciousness" in the way that it has been done within the rich fields of "historical consciousness studies."

8. It seems that Christopher, although correctly predicts the outbreak of WWI, fails to predict Russia's withdrawal from the war, which suggests his limited perspectives on international affairs.

9. In his book *Ford Madox Ford: Prose and Politics* (1981), Robert Green brilliantly points out that "The new immobility of war, the odd settlement of trench warfare and its lack of any apparent logicality, posed problems to the artist rendering it which had not been met by the author of, say, War and Peace" (145). The inward-turning Ford uses to render Christopher's war experience is one of the possible aesthetic and formal responses to this immobility of war.

10. As James Froude puts it, Carlyle's principle of the lectures is that "every advance which humanity had made was due to special individuals supremely gifted in mind and character, whom Providence sent among them at favoured epochs" (qtd. in Goldberg xxxv).

11. In "On Old and New Tablets" section from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche describes a feeling of ethical disorientation as nausea or seasickness: "And only now the great fright comes to them, the great looking-around oneself, the great sickness, the great nausea, the great seasickness. False coasts and false securities were taught you by the good; in the lies of the good you were born and bielded. Everything has been duplicitous and twisted from the ground up by the good" (171). Then in "The Convalescent" section, he writes about how Zarathustra's reaction to the thought of the eternal return after days of hunger as reoccurring nausea, "Oh

nausea! Nausea! Nausea!" (177). His question and exclamation that "For me—how would there be something outside me?" (175) also clearly precede Antoine Roquentin's in Sartre's *Nausea*.

12. Literary criticism on *Parade's End* has mainly focused on the characterization of Christopher Tietjens, war experience, historical representation, and Ford's practical politics. The discussion of female characters in the tetralogy appears to be sparse or marginal; Isabelle Brasme is among the few critics who provide focused readings of female characters and gender politics in the tetralogy. In "Articulations of Femininity in *Parade's End*," Brasme reads Sylvia as a figure of the New Woman who "resists any kind of satisfactory categorisation, particularly as regards her relationship to tradition and modernity" (180). However, beyond Sylvia's personalities, political ideology, and fashion styles that suggest such ambiguity of categorization, I contend that a series of traumatic experiences she has been going through not only contributes to this ambiguity, but also exposes marginalized gender and political positions as a critique of the patriarchal structure that makes categorization possible in the first place. The cause of her trauma and extreme anxiety—namely, sexual and political violence—has nonetheless escaped the centre of attention in critics' variously productive readings of *Parade's End*.

CHAPTER TWO: SUFFOCATION
Syntactic Rhythm and Atmospheric Histories in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair*

In Chapter One, I have discussed how the eversion of form—the narrative perspective's sudden reorientation to the second person within an inward-turning form—allows us to access the nauseous feeling of form in *Parade's End*. In this chapter, while I acknowledge that Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* also uses the second person in ways that are more complicated than dialogical,[1] I turn to another feeling of form in his trilogy: suffocation. Departing from Chapter One's focus on the shifts of narrative perspective, this chapter attends to suffocated form by looking at the gradual elimination of syntactic rhythm throughout the trilogy. I define "rhythm" broadly as "repeated pattern and sound" and "flow" ("rhythm, n." *OED*). To provide a vocabulary to discuss Gibbon's experimentation with form and style, I add "syntactic" to modify the definition of "rhythm": "syntactic rhythm" in this chapter refers to varied, patterned, or contingent flows of syntax created by the shifts between parataxis and unpunctuated clauses in Gibbon's texts. I prefer these loose definitions of rhythm because the modes and forms of rhythm in Gibbon's trilogy proliferate beyond the technical registers of rhythm in poetry and music. Although the question of "song" is undoubtedly essential to the trilogy—as the first volume is entitled "Sunset Song" and the trilogy contains musical scores and lyrics—what is at stake in Gibbon's approach to "song," I suggest, is articulated by the minister Stuart Gibbon's anti-polemical claim in the trilogy: "the Song had more meaning than one" (*Sunset Song* 63).

Unlike W. B. Yeats's "Sing whatever is well made / [. . .] Sing the peasantry" ("Under Ben Bulben" 327), *A Scots Quair* shows an increasing impossibility to sing: as the trilogy's settings move from rural landscapes to urban spaces, the text undergoes a gradual deterioration and elimination of syntactic rhythm towards extreme fragmentation and rhythmless styles. This chapter argues that suffocated form, manifested by the gradual deterioration and elimination of

syntactic rhythms in the trilogy, transmits a historical experience of atmospheric contamination and suffocation under the ecological and political violence of fossil fuel consumption, WWI gas warfare, and interwar chemical ammunition industries. Like the paradoxically (in)transmissible adjacency between nauseous form and the historical experience of anxiety in *Parade's End*, the relationship between suffocated form and the historical experience of atmospheric violence hinges on the adjacency of visceral feelings instead of causality. This relationality means that such historical experience often resides at the margin of the trilogy's storylines and characters' consciousness but permeates through the text's omnipresent syntactic intensities.

What's exactly the relationship between suffocate form and the gradual elimination of syntactic rhythm? Similar to my response in Chapter One to the question of whether "nausea" is merely a metaphor for eversive form (the short answer is no), here "suffocation" is more than an impersonating way to describe "a lack of rhythm." This is because the trilogy, especially the first volume, constructs vitalistic connections between syntactic rhythms and respiratory intensities, the latter of which are shared by characters, narrators, readers, and textual environments. Here is a brief example of how Gibbon uses syntactic changes to create textual environments that vibrate along with a character and an anonymous speaker's respiratory rhythms in *Sunset Song*:

> She'd thought, running, stumbling up through the moor, with that livid flush on her cheek, up through the green of the April day with the bushes misted with cobwebs, *I'll never go back, I'll never go back, I'll drown myself in the loch!* Then she stopped, her heart it seemed near to bursting and terribly below it moved something, heavy and slow it had been when she ran out from Blawearie but now it seemed to move and uncoil. (*Sunset Song* 111)

This passage describes Chris Guthrie, the heroine of the trilogy, running out from Blawearie and up through the moor. The first long sentence uses parataxis comprised of a few short clauses and phrases—"She'd thought," "running," "stumbling up through the moor," and "with that livid flush on her cheek. The use of parataxis here produces pauses and flows corresponding to Chris's

shortened and intensified respiratory rhythms in the process of running. The paratactic syntax suddenly halts at the moment when the narrative signals "Then she stopped"; the syntax then changes into a combination of longer and unpunctuated clauses, such as "her heart it seemed near to bursting and terribly below it moved something" and "heavy and slow it had been when she ran out from Blawearie but now it seemed to move and uncoil." The shift from parataxis to lengthy and unpunctuated sentences not only suggests Chris's physical exhaustion ("her heart it seemed near to bursting") but also registers her psychological feeling of heaviness ("below it moved something, heavy and slow it had been"), a feeling that results from her experience of a suffocating and abusive household. Moreover, this connection between syntactic rhythms and respiratory intensities points towards a fundamental affinity between rhythm and breathing at the origin of Western art and philosophy. As I have discussed elsewhere, Giorgio Agamben recuperates the nature of rhythmos (*ῥυθμός*) as a paradox of "a flow" (from the Greek *ῥέω*, "to flow") and "a split and a stop" (*The Man Without Content* 99), and he links the dynamics of rhythmos (*ῥυθμός*) to the verbal form of *ἐποχή—ἐπέχω*, "to hold back, to suspend, and to handover, to present, to offer" (100), which precisely accords with respiratory actions.[2] In addition, I should also clarify up front that the unpunctuated clauses in this passage are *not* what I call "suffocated form"; rather, they partake in syntax's holistic production of varied respiratory intensities. Suffocated form takes place when *the shift* between parataxis and unpunctuated sentences—or the dynamic syntactic play of "the rapid and the slow" (287), as Emile Benveniste recuperates the notion of "rhythm" from Plato—disappears altogether in later volumes.

What does suffocated form expose beyond the trilogy's already strenuous effort to present multiple contested ideologies and histories? As I further argue, through the change of syntactic rhythm, the trilogy both thematizes and formally encodes alternative histories of air,

histories that complicate the trilogy's three main strata of history—early civilization, the Norman Conquest, and the recent past from the prewar to interwar years. While these three chronologies shared by the theme of decay are informed by Gibbon's Marxism, Diffusionism, or a combination of the two, the trilogy's increasingly suffocated form indexes atmospheric histories predicated upon the mundane yet catastrophic crisis of not just *human* respiration but the very possibility of breathable air for the whole spheres of the living. Reading *A Scots Quair* through the lens of syntax's "breathability" reveals the trilogy's nuanced, slippery, and often ineffable engagement with the question and experience of "history" in the intersection of ecological and political violence in Scotland, and recuperates the technological and political manipulations of air that are currently missing in Gibbon scholarship on nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and Scottish Renaissance.

Like *Parade's End*, *A Scots Quair* seems to serve as a test field for various forms and styles: the (limited) use of Scots vocabularies, the frequent adoption of Scottish syntactic rhythms and grammatical structures, interior monologues and streams of consciousness, seamless shifts of narrative perspectives, the embedment of sermons, musical scores, and journalist forms, and realist depictions of Scottish landscapes and communities. This perhaps explains why scholarly commentaries on the trilogy's style and genre demonstrate divergent and sometimes even contradictory interpretations of Gibbon's treatment of nationalism, cosmopolitanism, class, and Scottish communities. For example, in *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts*, Margery Palmer McCulloch describes the trilogy's subgenre as *littérature engagée*; in particular, she considers Gibbon's use of Scots as a significant contribution to "the national dimension of the interwar revival" "[d]espite his commitment to revolutionary socialism as opposed to nationalism" (133). On the other hand, Scott Lyall compares Gibbon with Joyce, arguing that

Gibbon's early cosmopolitan style "remains in flux between conventional narrative and rivulets of modernist interiority" and "exteriorises ideas, not yet wholly assimilating these ideas in a fully matured style" (106). *A Scots Quair*, Lyall suggests, signals Gibbon's more developed stance of cosmopolitanism against Western metropolitanism and its underpinning linear time of progress, "a great chain of being" (107). As Lyall puts it, Gibbon achieves this by offering a cosmopolitan and "circular view of history reflected in style and plot," through which the trilogy's protagonist "Chris Guthrie, haunted by primitive ghosts, ends where she started in life, every chapter a time-loop back to the future" (108). In terms of class, Ramon Lopez Ortega carefully links Gibbon's style to the subgenre of working-class and proletarian fiction. He observes that *Grey Granite*'s use of "semi-colloquial structure, often built on an evocative indirect style and a peculiar distribution of the generic and self-referring 'you'" constructs "an antiphony whose voices proclaim deep social rifts" (152). This "plural style without the novelist's intrusion," according to Ortega, echoes the style of proletarian novels in the thirties, such as Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (152). The topic of class is closely related to that of Scottish communities in Hanne Tange's discussion, in which she links the increasing impossibility of unitary, communal narrative voice throughout the trilogy to the disintegration of the Scottish community due to modernization, political polarization, and class war: "Segget voices are individualized and competitive where in *Sunset Song* Chris and Kinraddie blended into one another. [. . .] This trend continues throughout *Grey Granite* where the narrative dissolves into disconnected paragraphs told from the contrasting perspectives of Chris, her son Ewan, Ma Cleghorn, the press, the police, the provost, and the workers" (255–58).

This quick survey of a few major interpretations of the trilogy's form and its politics shows that although debates on Gibbon's and the trilogy's politics have proven to be productive,

they seem to register the divergent ideologies of critical positions themselves as much as Gibbon's. I contend that the slipperiness and messiness of the trilogy's form,[3] as well as the impossibility of distilling a single political ideology from the trilogy, is in line with Gibbon's mixed skepticism and Marxism about any promotion of moral valence and provocation of political emotion in the 1930s. As Gibbon articulates through Chris's words, he is fully aware of the façades of the "ready-made"—"ready-made morals from the Unionist Club, or ready-made fear and excitement and thrill out of the pages of the *Daily Runner*" (*Grey Granite* 494). Therefore, I perform a mode of reading *A Scots Quair* that leaves more room for the agency and criticality of the trilogy's form to show how formal dynamics resist a unitary ideology and a predetermined emotional response to it. In other words, instead of trying to "tidy up" the messiness of form and its feelings or trying to demonstrate a certain correspondence between Gibbon's experimental form and a particular political position, I think and feel with how the trilogy's syntactic rhythm offers multifaceted and volatile aesthetic experiences. To be attuned to and *make sense* of such experiences, I re-situate *A Scots Quair*'s experimentation with form in the contexts of fossil fuel consumption, the trauma of WWI gas warfare, and environmental toxicity caused by ammunition industries in interwar Scotland. This recontextualization does not disregard the valuable debates on nationalism, cosmopolitanism, class, and Scottish communities in current scholarship; rather, it complicates the nature of national, regional, communal, and ideological boundaries by showing how atmospheric violence traverses and permeates to inflict conflicts and suffering. These much more slippery, ambiguous, or liminal stories matter because they are the very sites where English imperialism, class war, and ideological contestation function most intimately and persistently upon the breathing body while allowing themselves to

be (semi-)visible and withdrawn from the forefronts of political debates with which both the characters in the trilogy and Gibbon scholars have been preoccupied.

Gibbon's ecological awareness is certainly present in the trilogy's storylines and characterization. The most explicit critique of environmental crisis comes from Chae Strachan in the first volume, *Sunset Song*, in which he scorns people's ignorance in selling natural resources to make profit from WWI—"Folk had told him the trustees had sold it [the larch] well, they got awful high prices, the trustees did, it was wanted for aeroplanes and such-like things" (201). Facing devastating destructions of woods, Chae comments: "every soul made money and didn't care a damn though the War outlasted their lives; they didn't care though the land was shaved of its timber till the whole bit place would soon be a waste with the wind a-blow over heath and heather where once the corn came green" (202). Later, Miss Strachan realizes the impact of the booming logging industry on the farmland and compares it with German bombing: "then she [Miss Strachan] minded what Chae had said would happen when the woods came down, once the place had been sheltered and lithe, it poised now upon the brae in whatever storm might come. The woodmen had all finished by then, they'd left a country that looked as though it had been shelled by a German army" (212).

Yet, Chae was killed on Armistice Day towards the end of *Sunset Song*, and his prophetic and elegiac voice disappears along with the woods. Moving to an increasingly urban setting, first the small town Segget, then the city Duncairn, the trilogy's second and third volume show characters' failure to recognize the ecological disasters that Chae and Miss Strachan have pointed out because of their preoccupation with political and social reforms. In the second volume, while Robert Colquohoun also notices the sales of lands in Segget, he only focuses on if the historical memory and burden of these lands could make room for something new: "Robert

told that the hill had been recently sold and the lands on either side as well, and two different landowners bought the hill and set up those fences to show their rights—what were dirt like the old heathen forts to them? Symbols of our age and its rulers, these clowns, Robert said, and the new culture struggling to birth—when it came it would first have to scavenge the world" (*Cloud Howe* 405). His unconditional support for miners' strikes also suggests that he prioritizes political power over environmental problems associated with mining, even though he is immersed in a changing landscape the narrative has registered throughout the first and second volume. In *Grey Granite*, characters' preoccupation with class war and revolution further push into the margin the issues of atmospheric toxicity associated with Gowans and Gloag's, a company that quietly transforms itself from a smelter and steel factory to a chemical ammunition manufacturer.

Nonetheless, turning to syntactic rhythm and its increasing suffocation reveals the trilogy's overwhelming ecological and political concerns with the precarity of respiration. From the prevalent correlation between syntactic rhythm and respiratory intensity in *Sunset Song* to the deterioration of rhythm and the increase of rhythmless narrative fragmentation in *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite*, this formal change shows the gradual elimination of air and the increasing difficulty of breathing. Before I turn to specific syntactic rhythms in the trilogy, it is worth noting that the text already registers the context of atmospheric contamination and suffocation in subtle ways. First of all, mostly through Chris's momentary observation of landscapes and her surrounding environments, the reader sees gradually thickened and contaminated air from the "cobalt blue of the sky" (35) in Kinraddie to the mist-covered mills in Segget and finally to the "yellow fog" and "acid taste of an ancient smoke" (483) in Duncairn. Second, numerous events associated with the main characters in the trilogy expose the intertwined psychological, physical,

and political violence caused by the technology of gas. For example, *Cloud Howe,* the second volume of the trilogy, centres on Chris Guthrie's relationship to her second husband, Robert Colquohoun, who was "gassed by an awful gas that they made, and months had gone by ere he breathed well again, and the fumes of that drifting Fear were gone" (285–6). Robert's symptom of war trauma is never gone; it manifests as both "a black, queer mood" coming on him and his chronic lung problem. As Robert puts it, "the thing was a physical remembrance" (285). In the final volume, *Grey Granite*, the haunting memory of the gas warfare is replaced by a new social context of chemical ammunition industries in preparation for the next war. Ellen's romantic perception of the gas-ring and "the bubbling gas-flame" (639) in a comfortable domestic space is contrasted and ironized by the gas explosion at Gowans and Gloag's, a company that was "making new ammunition parts, bits of shells and gas-cylinders for Sidderley, the English armament people" (647). Turning to these liminal yet crucial details in the trilogy, I show that the trilogy's changing syntactic rhythm indexes more fully the relationship between suffocation and atmospheric violence than the trilogy's main storylines can do.

The second part of my argument in this chapter is that by transmitting the historical experience of atmospheric violence, suffocated form encodes alternative histories of air that complicate the representation of history in the trilogy. In the introduction chapter, I have argued that attending to the feeling of form in novel series means an inevitable encounter between contingency and *telos,* the latter of which is often intrinsic to the serial form. On the one hand, seriality is an ideal structure for Gibbon to unfold three strata of histories of decay in human civilizations simultaneously. Along with the major line of temporal progression from the prewar to the interwar years, two other historical time frames are running through the trilogy: one is signaled by the Standing Stones, or the Golden Age that Gibbon embraces as the lost liberty of

the human race according to his belief in Diffusionism; another is the history of the anglicization of the Scots (from the Norman Conquest to English economic imperialism). Below is a basic chronology of *A Scots Quair* that illustrates the predominant temporal strata in the trilogy's representation of Scottish history:

Sunset Song (1932)	Prelude, "The Unfurrowed Field"—the history from the Norman Conquest to the winter of 1911 in Kinraddie
	The main text, "The Song" (comprised of four parts, "Ploughing," "Drilling," "Seed-Time," and "Harvest")—the storyline progressing from the prewar years to the end of WWI in Kinraddie
	Epilude, "The Unfurrowed Field"—the end of WWI
Cloud Howe (1933)	Proem (similar to a prelude): introducing the history and geography of Segget
	The main text has four parts, "Cirrus," "Cumulus," "Stratus," and "Nimbus"—from Chris's family moving to Segget to the death of Robert (Chris's second husband); a linear timeline from the post-WWI setting to the General Strike and the failure of Robert's reform
Grey Granite (1934)	The main text has for parts, "Epidote," "Sphene," "Apatite," and "Zircon": Chris and her son Ewan move to Duncairn; a linear timeline up to the present day, contemporary with the publication of the novel

On the other hand, beyond constructing three strata of histories, the trilogy allows syntactic experiments to create contingent aesthetic experiences that register more diffusive and multifaceted histories of fossil fuel consumption, chemical warfare, and ammunition industries enabled by modernization and English imperialism. This irresolvable tension between atmospheric histories (encoded by the change of syntactic rhythm) and the representation of strata of histories (expressed by the trilogy's content and serial form) brings out another meaning of "rhythm" in geology: "Repetition of a regular sequence of components in a series of layers of sediment" ("rhythm, n" *OED*). I emphasize this meaning of rhythm not only because Gibbon himself, as well as the character Ewan the junior in the trilogy, is passionate about geological and

geographical studies,[4] but also because this meaning is congruent with Gibbon's construction of historical time frames as multiple layers of temporal sediments—or as the rhythm of history. What's more, as one of the sections below will show, while the rhythm of history on the level of plot remains consistent, the deterioration of syntactic rhythm connects with the trilogy's subtle hints at an increasing intrusion of fossil fuel infrastructure upon landscapes, and this surface intrusion is precisely undergirded by a subterranean, invisible disruption of geological rhythms in the process of underground extraction. In other words, the manifest symptom of this invisible disruption by extractivism precisely resides in the airborne, atmospheric feeling of suffocation on the level of syntactic rhythm.

While nauseous form in *Parade's End* stages the indigestibility of history, suffocated form in *A Scots Quair* brings the reader a highly volatile, slippery, and atmospheric aesthetic experience of history. Accordingly, the structure of this chapter draws upon a governing metaphor of cloud Gibbon uses in *Cloud Howe*—cirrus, cumulus, stratus, nimbus. Just like clouds that are made of similar materials but form different shapes with varied density, each section in this chapter focuses on the dynamics of syntactic rhythms in interrelated but not directly connected texts and historical contexts. The main threads running through this chapter are my inquiries into how increasingly suffocated form in the trilogy encompasses and transmits a hybrid historical experience of suffocation in aforementioned contexts, and how this feeling of form opens up an environmental history of air superimposed upon the trilogy's three strata—or rhythms—of history.

I. Syntactic Rhythm and Respiratory Intensity

As several critics have pointed out, in *Sunset Song* Gibbon's experimentation with form mainly falls on the use of syntactic rhythm and the use of the second person "you," which blends Chris

Guthrie's voice with a communal, narratorial voice.[5] I extend their attention to form to the close connection between bodily feelings—especially breathing—and syntactic rhythm permeating the novel's depiction of Chris's rural life in Kinraddie. Besides the brief example I offered at the very beginning of this chapter, here is another one from Part I, "Ploughing," in *Sunset Song*:

> He slavered at her, running towards her, and she screamed, though she wasn't over-frightened; and then she threw the basket clean at his head and made for Pooty's. Pooty himself was sitting just inside the door when she reached it, the louping beast was close behind, she heard the pant of his breath and was to wonder often enough in later times over that coolness that came on her then. For she ran fleet as a bird inside the door and banged it right in the daftie's face and dropped the bar and watched the planks bulge and crack as outside the body of the madman was flung against them again and again. (*Sunset Song* 59)

This passage describes how Chris escapes from "daftie" Andy—a character with mental illness, who is later taken into the asylum.[6] The passage begins in short, paratactical syntax, "He slavered at her, running towards her, and she screamed, though she wasn't over-frightened," which foregrounds the rhythm of shortened breath in the chase. Then the sentences grow longer and unpunctuated: "she heard the pant of his breath and was to wonder often enough in later times over that coolness that came on her then," and "For she ran fleet as a bird inside the door and banged it right in the daftie's face and dropped the bar and watched the planks bulge and crack as outside the body of the madman was flung against them again and again." The escalation of respiratory intensity through the prolongation of syntax becomes all the more explicit as the narrator points out "she heard the pant of his breath," which explicates syntactic rhythm's connection with the intensity of breathing. It is worth noting that the narrative adopts such rhythms consistently throughout *Sunset Song* not just as a formal rendering of respiratory intensities but as an integral feature of the narrative form itself. This holistic and atmospheric feature of *Sunset Song*'s rhythm precisely demonstrates the visceral connections between characters and their surrounding environments, as well as between the reader and the textual

environment. Chris's own belated realization of this vitalistic connection in the second volume articulates the universal vibratory rhythmicity beautifully: "from the earth's beginning *you yourself* had been here, a blowing of motes in the world's prime, earth, roots and the wings of an insect long syne in the days when the dragons still ranged the world – every atom here in your body now, that was here, that was you, that beat in your heart, that shaped your body to whiteness and strength" (*Cloud Howe* 316–7).

The primarily physical intensity of breath embodied by syntactic rhythm also leads to Chris's experience of sexuality and self-consciousness in Part II, "Drilling." For instance, Chris's sexual awakening takes place in the experience of heightened inhalations of the autumn wind:

> . . . a waft of the autumn wind blew in, it was warm and cool and it blew in her face with a smell like the smell of late clover and the smell of dung and the smell of the stubble fields all commingled. She leant there breathing it, watching the moon with the hills below it but higher than Blawearie, Kinraddie slept like a place in a picture-book, drifting long shadows that danced a petronella across the night-stilled parks. And without beginning or reason a strange ache came in her, in her breasts, so that they tingled, and in her throat, and below her heart, and she heard her heart beating, and for a minute the sound of the blood beating through her own head. And she thought of the tink lying there in the barn and how easy it would be to steal down the stairs and across the close, dense black in its shadows, to the barn. (*Sunset Song* 76–77)

Various smells brought by the wind amalgamate in the unpunctuated syntax of the first sentence, "it was warm and cool and it blew in her face with a smell like the smell of late clover and the smell of dung and the smell of the stubble fields all commingled." The smells and other senses awaken Chris's sexual desire, a moment rendered by the sudden shortening of clauses and by parataxis, "in her breasts, so that they tingled, and in her throat, and below her heart." While in the previous passage the intensity of breath is mainly outward-turning (Chris tries to escape Andy), in this passage the sudden intensification of breath signaled by the change of rhythm shows a crucial moment of Chris's immanent connection to her body and desire: it is a moment

of synchronicity between the breathing of form, her respiratory rhythms, the beat of her heart, and her sensation of the stir of desire. However, the connection between syntactic rhythm, breath, and sexuality soon takes on a darker turn. After her mother's death, Chris suffers from a constant horror that her father would come to her room and force himself upon her: "And she heard his breath come quick and gasping and the scuffle of his hand on the sneck of the door" (78). Later in the novel, breath also functions as an index to personal identity—Chris first remembers Ewan before she knows his name, "Sweet breath he had had anyway" (96). In a word, these examples show that syntactic rhythm constitutes respiratory intensities central to *Sunset Song*'s depiction of rural Scotland and the characters living in it.

Further, the meaning of "song" is crucial to *Sunset Song*'s use of syntactic rhythm. As the anonymous, communal voice reminds us, the new minister Stuart Gibbon (probably a self-deprecating and comic double of Lewis Gibbon) tells the crowd in Kinraddie that "the Song had more meaning than one" (63). Although he refers "the Song" to the *Song of Solomon,* this line unveils the novel's attempt to allow multiple "songs" running through the narrative without unifying them. The contrast between syntactic rhythm—on the level of the novel's form—and various song lyrics or sheet music—in the form of documentation—suggests that Gibbon is thinking about the transmissibility of textual rhythms and musicality beyond simply reproducing Scottish traditional melodies. For example, the vitalistic correspondence between the narrative's syntactic rhythm and the visceral feeling of breathing contrasts with Andy singing "Bonnie Wee Thing" earlier (58), a song written by Robert Burns.[7] The song only soothes Andy temporarily, whereas the intensity of rhythm continues to be integral to the description of his actions, the environment he is immersed in, and other characters he encounters. At Chris and Ewan's wedding, after a series of songs sung by their friends (including *The Flowers of the Forest*,

which appears again at the end of the novel), Chris contemplates: "it came on Chris how strange was the sadness of Scotland's singing, made for the sadness of the land and sky in dark autumn evenings, the crying of men and women of the land who had seen their lives and loves sinks away in the years [. . .] The gladness and kindness had passed, lived and forgotten, it was Scotland of the mist and rain and the crying sea that made the songs" (166). Chris's understanding of songs as something more elemental than lyrics and words about hardship in Scottish rural life matches Gibbon's privilege of syntactic rhythm over Scottish folk lyrics in the novel. In "Literary Lights," a frequently citied critical essay by Gibbon, he also explains that the formal experiment in *Sunset Song* attempts to "mould the English language into the rhythms and cadences of Scots spoken speech, and to inject into the English vocabulary such minimum number of words from Braid Scots as that remodelling requires" (*Scottish Scene* 137). Gibbon's intention to de-anglicize Scottish literary narratives focuses on syntactic dynamics far more than on using Scottish words to replace English ones; as Hugh MacDiarmid also comments, "Gibbon's rhythmic prose [. . .] was the only medium in which he could have effected his great purpose" (ix). Therefore, it is not hard to see Gibbon's preference for visceral and vitalistic syntactic rhythms over Scottish traditional songs documented in the novel; through Chris's words, he seems to suggest that while the actual lyrics and melodies might be wiped out eventually by time and history, while the land-based communities might be erased by modernization, the connection between the breathing rhythm and the body will retain Scotland's vigor.

However, towards the end of *Sunset Song*, the synchronicity between syntactic rhythm and characters' respiratory intensities gradually gets lost when the setting of rural landscapes in Kindraddie changes during WWI. Although the song *Flowers of the Forest* is evoked again at the

very end (the novel even includes the music sheet), the image of puzzled young ploughmen who have "no understanding or caring" of the song (255) suggests the unbridgeable generation gap and the intransmissibility of the historical experience attached to the song—the experience of "the sadness of the land and sky" Chris has felt at the wedding (166). This bleak ending anticipates the simultaneous breakdown of syntactic rhythm and that of communities in the second volume *Cloud Howe*.

II. The Deterioration of Rhythm and the Intrusion of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

In *Cloud Howe*, the syntactic rhythm that previously connects characters' respiratory intensities with their other bodily feelings and the environment they are immersed in either breaks down into fragmented syntax or belongs to a sarcastic and conservative communal voice in Segget. In this section, I trace how the breakdown of rhythm encodes the disruptive presence of fossil fuel infrastructure in post-WWI Scotland.

In the opening passages of Part I, "Cirrus," the breakdown of syntactic rhythm coincides with the image of the intrusion of paraffin lights:

> She turned round then and looked down at Segget, pricked in the paraffin lights of dawn. They were going out one by one as the east grew wanly blind in the van of the sun, behind, in the hills, a curlew shrilled – dreaming up here while the world woke, Robert turning in his bed down there in the Manse, and maybe outreaching a hand to touch her as he'd done that first morning two years ago, it had felt as though he wakened her up from the dead . . . (*Cloud Howe* 274)

Chris is now married to her second husband Robert Colquohoun and moves with him to the small town Segget. Chris's early impression of Segget already registers the presence of fossil fuel infrastructure manifested by paraffin lights, whose inflammable fuels are distilled from petroleum or shale oil. The sense of hostile intrusion is clear in the passage, as the word "pricked" conveys a sense that Chris feels provoked by paraffin lights and the atmosphere of the

town poked by artificial lights. Further, “pricked” links to the subsequent description of the east part of the town going “wanly blind.” The emphasis on the hostile intrusion of artificial lighting transforms Chris’s impression of Segget into a subtle counternarrative to the commercial rhetoric that naturalizes and promotes the superior brightness of paraffin lights in the interwar period (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Welsbach Oil Lamps 1927, http://www.fulltable.com/VTS/t/tcat/welsbach/a.htm

And as the town is going blind, Chris’s and the reader’s sights give way to a piercing sonic sensation from the curlew’s shrill. Coinciding with this series of sharp or hostile “piercing”—first visual, then aural—this passage’s syntax breaks down into an irregular and fragmented style. While the first sentence in this passage still retains some rhythmic intensity and rhymes of “round,” “down,” and “dawn,” the syntax after this sentence grows increasingly disorienting—such as the confusion of geographical directions of “front” and “behind” in “as the east grew

wanly blind in the van of the sun, behind, in the hills." The syntax is then further disrupted by the sudden insertion of the dash, and what comes after the dash appears to be even more fragmented and ambiguous. Why is the grammatical subject of "dreaming up here while the world woke"—presumably Chris (or the curlew?)—missing? What are the temporal frames of Chris's consciousness / memory after the dash amidst the shifts of tense between gerund ("dreaming" and "turning"), simple past ("woke"), subjunctive ("maybe" and "as though"), and past perfect ("it had felt")? What has been left out after the ellipsis? Does the ellipsis suggest her willing suspension of consciousness / memory or her limits of processing something ineffable? Although similar shifts of syntactic structures take place throughout *Cloud Howe* and signal more than just the intrusion of fossil fuel infrastructure, my reading of the parallel between the intrusion of paraffin lights and the breakdown of rhythm here aims to show the increasingly rhythmless, suffocated form as symptomatic of the atmospheric and visceral impacts of fossil fuel infrastructure upon Segget.

As syntactic rhythm continues to deteriorate in *Cloud Howe*, the image of paraffin lights seems no longer prickly: the syntax, as well as the landscape the syntax composes, starts to accommodate such images. In the opening passages of Part II of *Cloud Howe*, "Cumulus," oil lamps induce a sense of drowsiness in accordance with a weary and less rhythmic syntax:

> Crossing the steep of the brae in the dark, by the winding path from the Manse to the Kaimes, Chris bent her head to the seep of the rain, the wet November drizzle of Segget. Then she minded a wall of the Kaimes still stood, and ran quick up the path to stand in its lee. That gained, she stood and panted a while, six months since she'd been up here in the Kaimes – only six months, she could hardly believe it!
>
> It felt like years – long and long years – since she'd worked as a farmer's wife in Kinraddie. Years since she'd felt the beat of the rain in her face as she moiled at work in the parks. How much had she gained, how much had she lost? – apart from her breath, she had almost lost that!
>
> She felt the wall and then leant against it, wrapped in her ulster, looking at Segget, in its drowse of oil-lamps under the rain. Safe anyhow to go home this

> time. . . . And she smiled as she minded last time she had climbed to the Kaimes, and Segget had seen her go home – by the tale they told all Segget had seen her and stared astounded, a scandalled amaze – (*Cloud Howe* 300)

The first paragraph in this passage still preserves some paratactical features to render Chris's respiratory intensities when she is running in the rain. However, several dashes are introduced into the syntax to replace parataxis, which signals Chris's physical limits as well as her ensuing retreat into an interior space. Resting against the wall and looking at Segget again, Chris now perceives oil lamps with another sensation: not feeling "pricked" by their lights but feeling a sense of drowsiness that resonates with "the seep of the rain," "wet November drizzle," and her own physical exhaustion. These sensations are then complemented by the use of ellipsis and more dashes in the last paragraph: both punctuations here create a sense of prolongation to slow down and interrupt the rhythm of syntax, thereby indicating on the level of form a further normalization and integration of the drowsiness of the oil-lamps into Segget's natural environment and Chris's inner consciousness. On the whole, from rhythmic sentences in *Sunset Song* like "And without beginning or reason a strange ache came in her, in her breasts, so that they tingled, and in her throat, and below her heart, and she heard her heart beating," to a more weary, fragmented, and slow-paced sentence in *Cloud Howe* like "Safe anyhow to go home this time. . . . And she smiled as she minded last time she had climbed to the Kaimes, and Segget had seen her go home –" the dramatic change of syntactic rhythm signals a parallel between Chris's increasing individuation—as dash and ellipsis often signal her retreat into interior space—and the increasing presence of fossil fuel products in a landscape that is gradually losing its lively rhythm as well.

At the expense of losing its rhythm, *Cloud Howe*'s syntax and its depiction of Segget gradually accommodate and aestheticize the image of oil-lamps into a feeling of domestic

comfort. However, zooming into the actual domestic space in the novel, the reader will see that such space oddly retains the ultimate tension between fossil fuel infrastructure and the natural environment, and this tension is again registered by the change of syntactic rhythm. For example, this tension emerges from the scene of Chris lighting up coal fire at home after the Segget Show:

> The stove's red eye winked as she opened the flue, and raked in the embers and set in fresh sticks; and on these piled coals and closed up the flue. In a little she heard the crack of the sticks, and went up the stairs to her room and Robert's, and took off her dress and took off her shoes, not lighting a light; the moon was enough. The mahogany furniture rose-red around, coloured in the moonlight, the bed a white sea, she sat on the edge and looked out at Segget, a ghostly place, quiet, except now and again with a bray of laughter borne on the wind as the door of the Arms opened and closed. Far down in the west, pale in the moon, there kindled a star that she did not know. (343)

The contrast between two different syntactic structures appear in the transition from the coal-heated downstairs living room to the moonlit bedroom. In the first half of this passage, the imageries of the stove and coals are rendered in a processual syntax punctuated by commas and semicolons: "The stove's red eye winked as she opened the flue, and raked in the embers and set in fresh sticks; and on these piled coals and closed up the flue." Transitioning to the second half, however, the description of Chris moving away from the coal fire and immersing herself in the moonlight suddenly shifts to a more rhythmic parataxis: "The mahogany furniture rose-red around, coloured in the moonlight, the bed a white sea, she sat on the edge and looked out at Segget, a ghostly place, quiet, except now and again with a bray of laughter borne on the wind as the door of the Arms opened and closed." From the processual and rhythmless syntax to the sudden burst of syntactic rhythm, the change of style unveils that domestic space is not homogenous but divided by the use of energy: the bedroom, without heating and lighting, becomes a "natural" environment fused with moonlight ("the bed a white sea"), whereas the coal fire downstairs makes the living room a more "factitious" habitat. Indeed, the limits and costs of

domestic heating in the 1930s often created similarly heterogenous spaces within a household: warm living rooms and kitchens are for socializing, whereas bedrooms are often cold and only used at night.[8]

Figure 3. “The Stove,” by Duncan Grant, 1936

What is also interesting about the syntactic change and the contrasting images of coal fire and moonlight in this passage is that Chris is drawn to the vitalistic, rhythmic intensity of the moonlit bedroom regardless of its coldness; the second half of the passage echoes both the image of Chris’s sexual awakening and self-consciousness in the moonlight in *Sunset Song* (77) and the rhythm at the moment of her awakening. Gibbon’s creation of the synthesis between the environment of the moonlit room, holistic syntactic rhythms, and Chris’s wakened consciousness inevitably points towards C. G. Jung’s “The Personification of the Opposites,” in which Jung

problematically associates a female consciousness with the moon, "Its light is the 'mild' light of the moon, which merges things together rather than separates them" (179). At the same time, Gibbon's treatment of moonlight and rhythm is more sophisticated than confining to archetypes, as the trilogy shows a crucial difference between the two moonlight scenes: under the moonlight Segget is "a ghostly place," whereas "Kinraddie slept like a place in a picture-book, drifting long shadows that danced a petronella across the night-stilled parks" (77). This difference implies the futility and emptiness of re-evoked rhythms in *Cloud Howe*: such rhythms could no longer bring embodied vitality and musicality to Chris or to Segget. Later in *Grey Granite*, the depiction of the domestic use of coal gas and paraffin conveys a sense of further deterioration and contamination: the indoor lighting becomes "the sickly flare of the gaslight" (*Grey Granite* 579).

In the meantime, the natural environment in Segget does contain a sense of coldness in *Cloud Howe*, which plays out on larger spatial scales through the contrasting images of the furnaces in the mills and the frost in Segget:

> Chris started and moved, she nearly had frozen, leaning up here while the night went on, she thought to be down in her bed, she supposed. The rain had cleared and the stars had come out, frost was coming – there, bright down in Segget, was a mantling of grey where the hoar was set, sprinkled like salt on the cant of the roofs. Beyond them there rose a red, quiet lowe, from the furnaces stacked for the night in the mills.
>
> She stamped her feet and drew up her collar, watching that coming of the frost below. [. . .]
>
> *A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.*
>
> She raised her eyes and looked where the frost lay bright in the west, where the evening star wheeled down to midnight to lead her feet home. (371)

The image of furnaces foreshadows the miners' strike, and frost symbolizes economic depression, hostility, and stagnation within the Segget community. Moreover, the furnaces are visual records of a hellish, coal-fueled industrial space imposed upon the frosty natural landscape of Segget. The symbolic and material contrasts between furnaces and frost complicate the

meaning of the biblical line "A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night" (Exodus 13:21), which is first quoted by Robert in his sermon to promote social reform and has been lingering in Chris's consciousness since. Connecting the images of furnaces and frost to this line, the passage indicates Chris's skepticism about Robert's campaign for reform: if, according to the Bible (and Robert), both the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire guide the Israelites (in this context the folks in Segget), the contrast between furnace and frost in her perception indicates her nuanced attention to two rather antagonistic and polarizing forces of guidance—the workers and the middle-class conservatives. What's also crucial about Chris's complication of Robert's sermon is her attunement to a sense of material reification and condensation—frost as a crystalized form of water vapor (as opposed to the cloud) and furnaces' glow (lowe) as the result of coal burning. This sense of reification and condensation is also subtly registered in the syntax of the first paragraph in the passage: while the first paratactical sentence in this paragraph corresponds to Chris's physical moments ("Chris started and moved, she nearly had frozen, leaning up here while the night went on, she thought to be down in her bed, she supposed"), the second sentence introduces dash into its syntax to replace parataxis in order to stage a moment of suspension and inaction: "The rain had cleared and the stars had come out, frost was coming – there, bright down in Segget, was a mantling of grey where the hoar was set, sprinkled like salt on the cant of the roofs." To step back and look at the titles of all three volumes in the trilogy, the reader will find that they echo the material condensation and elimination of air, from the idyllic and energetic song in *Sunset Song*, to the gradual accumulation of heavier clouds in *Cloud Howe*, and finally to *Grey Granite*. Through Chris's perception of furnace and frost, the novel is able to link naturalistic reification to a reified social polarization that is precisely undergirded by the implicit cause of coal mining in the first place. That is, this material reification of coal fueled

furnace and frost provides the novel with a vocabulary to express the totalizing social condition of polarization that otherwise eludes representation and conceals the ecological root cause of extractivism. Hence, Chris's perception also ironizes Robert's idealist reform plan: it brings the reader to see the ideological, economic, and ecological antagonism in Segget and foreshadows the doomed failure of Robert's campaign even before he fully launches it. As I will discuss in later sections, *Grey Granite* further links furnaces to air pollution, such as the image of "a sick yellow furnace-glow, unstill, staining the sky on the morning's edge" (492); furnaces are also capitalized in the final volume as "Furnaces" to signify allegorical and material machines run by fossil fuels and by political forces from the English. "A pillar of fire," of course, also foreshadows the gas explosion at Gowans and Gloag's, a company that manufactures military chemical gasses in *Grey Granite.*

The examples above show that the gradual disappearance of syntactic rhythm and respiratory intensities indexes the increasing intrusion of latent fossil fuel infrastructure that has previously appeared as merely peripheral in the first volume. For example, the syntactic rhythm of parataxis remains uninterrupted with the image of the coal:

> But Mistress Melon had kindled a brazier with coal, it crackled fine, well away from the straw, Rob tuned up his fiddle, Chae squeaked on his melodeon, it began to feel brisk and warm even while you stood and near shivered your sark off. (*Sunset Song* 159)

Or, the image of the oil-lamp is just a passing image amidst the greater intensity of a combination of parataxis and unpunctuated syntax that creates a sense of urgency:

> She didn't wait to hear more than that, but ran to the kitchen and groped about for the box of matches and lighted the little lamp, it with the glass bowl, and then found the littlest lantern and lighted that, though her fingers shook and she almost dropped the funnel. Then she found old shoes and a raincoat, it had been father's and came near to her ankles, and she caught up the lamp and opened the kitchen door and closed it quick behind her just as the sky banged again and a flare of

> sheet lightning came flowing down the hill-side, frothing like the incoming tide at Dunnottar. (*Sunset Song* 133)

The fact that these images of coal and oil-lamps reside at the very margin of the narrator's focal point in *Sunset Song* indicates that although fossil fuel products and appliances exist in rural Scotland, they have not worked their way into Chris's consciousness and her perception of surrounding environments. To follow up on my earlier discussion of how the breakdown of rhythm encodes Chris's gradual individuation in parallel with her increasing attunement to the presence of fossil fuel infrastructure, I suggest that this double movement of formal changes also indicates her alienation from the Segget community, whose collective voice modifies the syntactic rhythm of *Sunset Song* with sarcastic or hostile tones, such as "Folk said the next thing you'd find him [Robert] keen on would be shifting the Kaimes for a seat in his yard, ay, if the creature went on at this rate he'd soon have all Segget on his hands to fight" (*Cloud Howe* 357). Standing outside the Segget community and its hostile storytelling of Robert's "daft-like reform" (356), Chris retreats into her interior space as the only reliable source of beliefs and ethics; her ecological consciousness emerges along with her political skepticism in this individuated and isolated space.

III. Environmental Toxicity: Coal and Shale Oil Industries in Interwar Scotland

To further explicate how the increasingly suffocated form transmits a historical experience of atmospheric toxicity and breathlessness, I turn to the historical context of coal and shale oil industry in interwar Scotland: decades before the Great Smog of London in 1952, air pollution due to fossil fuel utilization was already an issue in the 1920s. According to the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry* in 1925 (hereafter the 1925 report), "The burning of coal in its raw state [. . .] leads to the pollution of the atmosphere by the discharge of products of

combustion, a result detrimental in many ways to the public interest" (22). The 1925 report also includes a few excerpts of reports regarding air pollution from 1921 by the Departmental Committee that "was appointed on the Abatement of Smoke and Noxious" in 1914. These reports, however, were delayed by the war (23), which already reminds the reader of Chae's critique in *Sunset Song* that everyone privileges war profits over environmental catastrophe. The following passages are part of the excerpts from 1921 that are included in the 1925 report:

> "We are satisfied that domestic smoke, which is produced by the burning of raw coal, causes serious danger to health and damage to property.
>
> "Moreover, the burning of raw coal is, from the national point of view, a wasteful proceeding. Not only are the valuable by-products of tar oils, ammonia, sulphur, and cyanogen compounds lost, but in addition, a large proportion of unconsumed fuel escapes in the form of soot owing to inefficient appliances.
>
> * * * * * * * *
>
> "Statistical evidence shows a close relation between the death-rate and the atmospheric conditions; the number of deaths from pulmonary and cardiac diseases is shown to increase in direct proportion to an increase in the intensity and duration of smoke fogs. The cause underlying high mortality in towns, which is known to follow the wake of fog, must operate continuously, though in a lesser degree, on the health of an urban community.
>
> It is hardly necessary here to enlarge upon the great importance of sunlight to the general health or upon the deleterious nature of any factor which diminishes that sunlight. The health of urban communities is most injuriously affected by the loss of sunlight due to coal smoke. It has been estimated that, broadly speaking, 20 per cent. more sunlight is experienced in the country than in a smoky town." (qtd. in *Report* 23)

These excerpts offer an underexamined context to understand the correlation between the elimination of rhythm and the intrusion of fossil fuel infrastructure in *Cloud Howe* through the degeneration of breathing. The report confirmed that burning raw coal led to increasing air pollution indoor ("domestic smoke") and outdoor ("smoke fogs," "loss of sunlight") and consequential health problems in the 1920s, although in the postwar and interwar settings of *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe* burning coal in the fireplace is still a daily routine and practice for the characters. The toxicity of domestic smoke mentioned in the first paragraph also casts new

light on the suffocation of syntactic rhythm in the depiction of Chris's household, where the image of coal fire does not retain the rhythmic syntax like the moonlit bedroom does. These excerpts also specify how urban regions were affected more severely by poor air quality and the lack of sunlight, both of which impose atmospheric violence upon the human body—one directly attacking respiratory systems, and the other affecting the body more holistically. *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* together show that Gibbon's trilogy is highly aware of air contamination and supplements scientific reports with lived social experiences of increasingly suffocating feelings due to various kinds of fossil fuel consumption. It is also worth noting that before the innovation of coal fireplaces and stoves, wood-fueled domestic heating technology could also cause respiratory problems ("The Toxicology of Inhaled Woodsmoke" Zelikoff at al.); the historical transition from wood to coal fireplace, therefore, hinged on economic reasons instead of health concerns and environmental toxicity: this transition mainly resulted from the increasing scarcity of wood when the industrial uses of natural resources continued to expand in nineteenth-century North America and Britain (Brewer 28–31), a phenomenon which Chae has witnessed in *Sunset Song* as the gradual disappearance of woods. In *Grey Granite*, environmental pollution and atmospheric toxicity are rendered as more acute from the very beginning:

> All around her the street walls were dripping in fog as Chris Colquohoun made her way up the Gallowgate, yellow fog that hung tiny veils on her eyelashes, curled wet, and had in her throat the acrid taste of an ancient smoke. Here the slipper-slide of the pavement took a turn that she knew, leading up to the heights of Windmill Place, and shortly, out of the yellow swath, she saw come shambling the lines of the Steps with their iron hand-rail like a famished snake. She put out her hand on that rail, warm, slimy, and paused afore tackling the chave of the climb, breathing deeply, she could hear her heart. The netbagful of groceries on her arm ached – she looked down through wet lashes at the shape of the thing – as though it was the bag that ached, not her arm . . .
>
> Standing still so breathing that little while she was suddenly aware of the silence below – as though all the shrouded town also stood still, deep-breathing a minute in the curl of the fog – stilling the shamble and grind of the trams, the purr of the buses in the Royal Mile, the clang and swing of the trains in Grand Central,

> the swish and roll and oily call of the trawlers taking the Forthie's flood – all pausing, folk wiping the fog from their eyes and squinting about them an un-eident minute—(*Grey Granite* 483)

From Chris's distant observation of "the paraffin lights of dawn" in Segget (*Cloud Howe* 274) to her physical movement and perception in this passage, she is now fully immersed in a contaminated, muggy, and breathless urban space. The yellow fog that reminds the reader so much of Prufrock, the street walls that are "dripping," "the acrid taste of an ancient smoke," the "slimy" iron hand-rail, and the "oily call of the trawlers"—all of the imageries here show that Duncairn is not simply dirty but emanates a particular aesthetics of the thickened, contaminated air, the greasy machine, and the slimy texture of petroleum. Amidst these imageries, the reader catches the image of a breathless and exhausted Chris, who is carrying her groceries and struggling to climb the steps. Correspondingly, the syntactic rhythm produced by the first few paratactical sentences starts to collapse into a more fragmented syntax punctuated by dashes and ellipsis, signifying her physical exhaustion and breathlessness to the degree of numbness, "The netbagful of groceries on her arm ached – she looked down through wet lashes at the shape of the thing – as though it was the bag that ached, not her arm . . ." Moreover, Chris's numbness connects to sound as much as to air; in the second paragraph, the disappearance of syntactic rhythms corresponding to Chris's breathlessness also leads Chris and us to a momentary immersion in a vacuum of silence. Not only do imageries suggest inertia but also the dashes literally cut off the imageries and rhythms of "the shamble and grind of the trams, the purr of the buses in the Royal Mile, the clang and swing of the trains in Grand Central, the swish and roll and oily call of the trawlers taking the Forthie's flood."

Returning to *Cloud Howe*, I further suggest that the suffocation of syntactic rhythm brings to the forefront complicated layers of historical violence that contribute to atmospheric

toxicity yet remain absent in these reports. In other words, the increasingly suffocated form emits multi-temporal and convoluted experiences of suffocation instead of just biological asphyxiation. For instance, the suffocation of syntactic rhythm also shares adjacency with a historical experience of economic and social "suffocation" under English imperialism, economic depression, and the decline of Scottish coal and shale oil industries in the interwar period. While the 1925 report only mentions in passing the Scottish Board of Health regarding the miners' health condition in the mines' baths (200), and while the Board itself only just started to produce annual reports since 1919 (*The Lancet* 199), the miners and other laborer (like those in *Cloud Howe*) had been a significant source of labor in coal and shale oil industry in Britain long before the war.[9] The social contexts of economic depression and miners' struggles are present in Chris's skepticism about Robert's campaign in *Cloud Howe*. Retreating to her inner thoughts, which are again registered by the dash's breakdown of syntax, Chris meditates on "that nameless doubt that was hers – doubt of the men and method that came to change the world that was waiting change – all the mixed, strange world of the Segget touns, with its failing trade and its Mills often idle" (401). Disrupting the rhythmic flow that has been adopted by the Segget communal voice, Chris's fragmented thought here defamiliarizes the textual environment to foreground the buried yet significant skepticism about the possibility of strike. Before moving on to a more detailed discussion of the miners' strike and Robert in relation to form, I interrupt the rhythm of this chapter by showing how the atmospheric histories of physical, social, and economic suffocation in relation to fossil fuel consumption confront one of the trilogy's historical strata of decay—the corruption of the Golden Age.

IV. Two Geological Time Frames: Standing Stones and Mining

Beside the chronological and teleological main storyline from pre-war Kinraddie to postwar Segget, the presence of the Standing Stones runs through the narrative to signal a much longer, although still linear, historical timeline. To take Gibbon's investment in Diffusionism into account, I read the Standing Stones as a symbol of the Golden Age,[10] which the narrator describes as the following: "The Standing Stones pointed long shadow-shapes into the east, maybe just as they'd done of an evening two thousand years before when the wild men climbed the brae and sang their songs in the lithe of those shadows while the gloaming waited there above the same quiet hills" (*Sunset Song* 65). For Gibbon, as well as for Chris, the Standing Stones are not just paleolithic monuments to human freedom, regeneration, and the natural harmony of rhythms: they are a haunting testimony to the decay of ultimate freedom since the emergence of early civilizations. In *Sunset Song*, Chris first feels an uncanny closeness to the Standing Stones, and she treats them as a shelter away from her suffocating household and heavy domestic labour in Kinraddie. However, she later recognizes in *Cloud Howe* that the Standing Stones embody "all the pageant of history since history began up here in the windy Mearns Howe" (*Cloud Howe* 370). Echoing Gibbon's version of Diffusionism, Chris understands this pageant of history as a history of decay and corruption from its very beginning, "the ancient rites of blood and atonement where the Standing Stones stood up as dead kings; the clownings and cruelties of leaders and chiefs; and the folk – her folk – who kept such alive – dying frozen at night in their eirdes, earth-houses, chaving from the blink of day for a meal" (*Cloud Howe* 370). This history of decay, of course, continues through another stratum of history, namely the Norman Conquest and anglicization, till the interwar setting in the trilogy's final volume.

This haunting historical stratum of decay is complicated by a more slippery, atmospheric, and omnipresent history of suffocation that points towards a longer and pre-human geological time frame of fossil fuels. If the Standing Stones signify the decay of a *human* history and the onset of human disruptions of geological rhythms—as the stones were also quarried—the trilogy's syntax registers an expansive and accelerated disruptions of pre-human geological rhythms through the present intrusion of fossil fuel infrastructure and the experience of suffocation. Emanating from the consumption of dead organisms in oxygen-deficient undergrounds thousands of years ago, this airborne history of contamination and suffocation transforms a pre-human history embodied by fossil fuels into the most up-to-date industrial rhythms of breathless modernization. This airborne history requires an entirely different temporal measurement because it is always both omnipresent and ancient in *A Scots Quair*: if the Standing Stones construct one living, geological time of degeneration much longer than Scottish national history, then the environmental history of air attached to fossil fuels constructs another living, geological time that operates on models departing from decay and progress altogether. That is, the continuation of this environmental history hinges on the *intensities* of condensation and acceleration as much as quantitative or numerable measurements. The changing syntactic intensities manifested as gradually suffocated form precisely transmit this atmospheric history through a measurement of density (the images of cloud again become the most effective visual metaphors here). In a word, this history of air demands a different qualitative measurement: it is a history embodied by multifaceted psychological, physical, and social experiences of suffocation instead of by a unitary philosophy of history. Ewan, Chris's son, eventually articulates a notion of History closest to this: "A hell of a thing to be History! – not a student, a historian, a tinkling reformer, but LIVING HISTORY ONESELF, being it, making it, eyes for

the eyeless, hands for the maimed!"(*Grey Granite* 620). Yet, Ewan soon becomes disillusioned and turns to an extreme pessimism that "*we've just to go on with it, right to the end, History our master not the servant we supposed . . .*" (*Grey Granite* 640).

Chris, on the other hand, continues to play a central role in imparting the tension between the ancient human history signaled by the Standing Stones and the human violence upon a longer history registered in her emerging ecological awareness. Besides the parallel between her individuation and the increasing presence of fossil fuel infrastructure in her consciousness, her constant actions of climbing the mountains (reaching the Standing Stones) and the staircases (in urban space)—as well as the social and symbolic meaning of climbing in terms of class mobility—evoke another form of climbing that remains unarticulated in the trilogy: climbing ladders in coal mines, which is a major form of labor for women working in the mines (Figure 4).

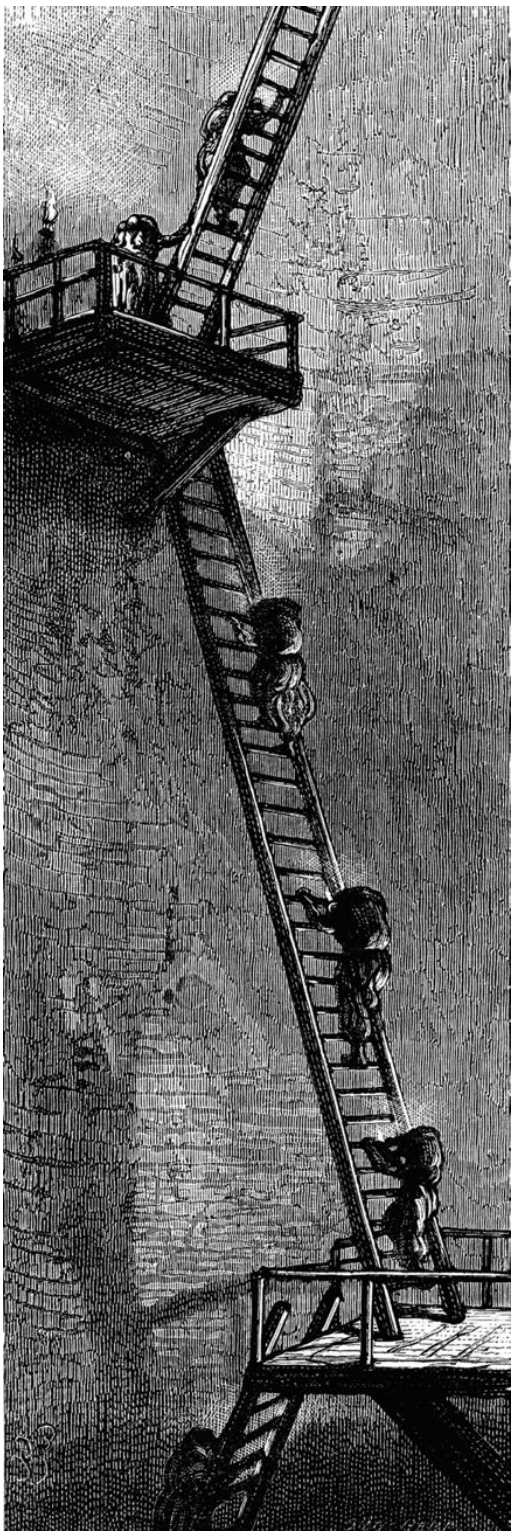

Figure 4. Women climbing ladders to carry coal up a mineshaft. Scotland, early nineteenth century. Wood engraving from L. Simonin “Mines and Miners,” London, c1865

While the specific depictions of women's labor in coal mines—and the spaces of coal mines altogether—are missing in the trilogy, moments like "she [Chris] saw come shambling the lines of the Steps with their iron hand-rail like a famished snake. She put out her hand on that rail, warm, slimy, and paused afore tackling the chave of the climb, breathing deeply, she could hear her heart" (*Grey Granite* 483) both visualize and use syntactic rhythms to evoke the absent image of climbing in the mines, especially when *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite* foreground miners and other factory workers. The breakdown of syntactic rhythm in the trilogy, then, indicates the disruption of the geological time frame attached to fossil fuels not only through the intrusive images of fossil fuel appliances on the "surface" of the landscape and the text, but also through fusing Chris's physical rhythm with syntactic rhythm in ways that are *open* to variously social, industrial rhythms of mining the trilogy's representation does not register.

The absence of the specific images of mining and its violence upon geological strata, however, also creates a dramatic irony: while Robert (and sometimes Chris too) remains preoccupied with finding the right direction for reform by rethinking human and social history, it is in fact the unbroken structure of fossil fuel energy consumption, indexed by the text's atmospheric history of suffocation, that serves as the ultimate economic base and perpetuates the labor / class division that fails social reforms in Segget. This irony supplements a version of Marxism—or Communism—that Gibbon portrays but does not fully commit to; if the trilogy suggests Gibbon's unique version of Marxism in some way, it is a Marxism to which ecological violence is a latent yet integral part. This complication of a historical *telos* that is often intrinsic to Marxism is nowhere more prominent than in Robert's experience with social reforms in *Cloud Howe*.

V. The Trauma of Chemical Warfare and the Suffocation of Political Futurity

Chris is not only right about Segget's economic depression in her observation of Segget's failing trade but also invites the reader to look more closely at the multifaceted relationship between the suffocation of syntactic rhythm and the "mixed, strange world of the Segget touns" from another angle of suffocation: the trauma of chemical warfare. Even in *Sunset Song*, while the trauma of WWI mainly manifests in Ewan's symptom of aggression, from Chris's perspective his trauma manifests as a feeling of suffocation: "It had been like struggling with someone deep in a nightmare, when the blankets are over your head and you can barely breathe, awful she should come to think that of Ewan" (221). In *Cloud Howe*, these psychological and physical feelings of suffocation become a central symptom of war trauma in the characterization of Robert Colquohoun, Chris's second husband and the new minister of Segget. Like Christopher Tietjens in *Parade's End*, Robert also has a lung problem due to WWI chemical gas war: "He [Robert] said that the thing was a physical remembrance [. . .] she found out that near the end of the War he'd been gassed by an awful gas that they made, and months had gone by ere he breathed well again, and the fumes of that drifting Fear were gone" (*Cloud Howe* 285–6). In the episode of the Segget show, Robert's lung problem worsens after his impressive hammer throw in the game, "Then she saw his hanky as he took it away from his lips; it was red. He said *Oh, nothing. Gassed lungs, I suppose. Serves me right for trying to show off*" (330). The gassed lung eventually costs Robert's life; after the failed strike and the death of Chris's newborn baby, he dies on the pulpit during his final sermon in the novel, "And then a bright crimson thing came on his lips, and down at the kirk's far end a loon screamed" (472).

By fundamentally shaping his understanding of God, Robert's chronic trauma of WWI gas warfare has greatly impacted his agenda for political and social reforms in post-war Segget:

"And sometimes the shadows of that time came back, though his lungs were well enough now, he was sure, though 'twas in the months of his agony he'd known, conviction, terrible and keen as his pain, that there was a God Who lived and endured, the Tortured God in the soul of men, Who yet might upbuild the City of God through the hearts and hands of men of good faith" (286). Although Robert still retains the name and rhetoric of God, the physical and psychological trauma of war leads him to the faith in "the Tortured God in the soul of men," the self-made, wounded men who are able to bring changes and build utopia by their own hands. As his ideology begins to overlap with the working class represented by Jock Cronin, the disagreement between Robert and the middle class in Segget deepens. As one of Robert's speeches makes explicit,

> *There are changes coming – they are imminent on us – and I once thought the folk of some teaching would help. Well, it seems they won't – the middle class folk and the upper class folk, and all the poor devils that hang by their tails; they think we can last as we are – or go back – and they know all the while they are thinking a lie. But God doesn't wait, or His instruments; and if in Segget are the folk of the mills, then, whatever their creed, I'm on their side*. (370).

Here, Robert's speech explicitly expresses his alliance with the working class, and his emphasis on the urgency of such alliance is expressed through the language of militarism: "But God doesn't wait, or His instruments." "God's instruments" refers to the working class folks—the chosen men—in Segget, as well as to fire and sulfur as the instrument of divine judgment (pp. 2171) reminiscent of war machines. The language of militarism embedded in the phrase of "God's instruments" resonates with his obsession with the images of "the sweat and the blood of men" (288) and "Tortured God in the soul of men" (286) in other sermons; such a language signifies that Robert's war trauma slips into his religious and political ideology and undergirds the future direction of his reform. The frequent use of dashes, then, textually marks Robert's

irregular breath as the physical symptom of war trauma, reminding the reader of the inerasable physical impact of war upon Robert's politics.

How does the gradually rhythmless and suffocated form transmit Robert's experience of war trauma and the political ideology shaped by such trauma? As *Cloud Howe* mainly uses Robert's speeches and sermons to impart his developing alliance with the working class, the style and syntactic rhythm used to present his speeches and sermons change through the course of the novel to signify a growing ideological schism between Robert and Segget's middle class. This schism is located in the contrast between the rhythmic, communal, and philistine voice, which mediates or retells some parts of his sermons, and his own rhythmless and polemical speeches, which are rendered in dashes, different typographies, and fragmentation. Thus, the deterioration of rhythm should be understood in terms of both the gradual replacement of rhythm with fragmented form and *the changed use of rhythm* in the second volume to express hostility, stigmatization, and philistinism. This formal contrast between the rhythmic and the rhythmless produces a twofold effect: 1) it continually registers Robert's worsening lung problems and increasing difficulty of breathing during his speech because the major symptom of WWI chemical gas's attack on the lung is causing drowning / suffocation by one's own fluid in the lung (Coleman 18); 2) it stages a growing discordance between his and the middle-class community's political positions. Put differently, the suffocation of syntactic rhythm in his speeches and sermons transmits a war veteran and reformist's experience of physical and psychological suffocation, and its tension with rhythmic form suggests an ideological separation rooted in the long-lasting visceral violence of war.

When first applying for the position of minister in Segget, Robert's sermon on Samson is almost all retold from the anonymous communal voice, which retains the syntactic rhythm of *Sunset Song*:

> For he took his text from a chapter in Judges, his sermon on Gath and the things that that Jew childe Samson did, how at last the giant was bound to a pillar, but he woke from the stupor and looked round about, and cried that the Philistines free him his bonds; and they laughed and they feasted, paying him no heed, sunk in their swing-like glaurs of vice. Their gods were idols of brass and of gold, they lived on the sweat and the blood of men, crying one to the other, *Behold, we are great, we endure, and not earth itself is more sure. Pleasure is ours, and the taste of lust, wine in our mouths and power in our hands;* lash was heard on the bowed slave's back, they had mercy on neither their kith nor their kin. (288)

Besides the content of the sermon, the major reason why Robert is hired is his appealing voice: "and folk heard the voice of the Reverend Colquohoun like the wind they'd hear up under the hills, fine and safe as they listened below" (289). As the communal voice mainly attends to the tone and musicality of Robert's voice—or its Pathos and Eros—his rhythmic sermon is harmonized with and assimilated into the communal voice's syntactic rhythm similar to that of *Sunset Song*. The direct quote of Robert's own words (italicized in this passage) mentions pleasure, lust, and power in an equally paratactic and rhythmic way, and is used by the communal voice to emphasize agreement.

In another sermon that Robert delivers after he moves to Segget, the communal voice again emphasizes "his clear, strong voice." However, a clearer separation between Robert's voice and the communal voice already takes place in this sermon. On the one hand, the reader hears Robert's own words, "*We will begin the worship of God by the singing of hymn one hundred and forty. 'Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days, pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.' Hymn one hundred and forty*" (322), and "*Let us see that we clean our pit-corner in Segget, there is hatred here, and fear, and malaise, the squabbling of drunken louts in*

the streets, poor schools, worse houses – we can alter all these, we can alter them NOW, not waiting the world" (323). Both speeches are italicized in the text, and one of them is interrupted by a dash. On the other hand, the reader hears the communal voice's retelling of the following part of Robert's sermon:

> And Robert told of the uses the thing had once had, in the hands of the carles of the ruined Kaimes; and the siege and the fighting and the man who had held it, desperate at last in the burning lowe as King Kenneth's men came into the castle: and the blood that ran on this ruined blade for things that the men of that time believed would endure and be true till the world died; they thought they were fighting for things that would last, they'd be classed as heroes and victors forever. And now they were gone, they were not even names, their lives and their deaths we know to be foolish, a clamour and babble on little things. (322–323)

While the rhythmic communal voice is able to recognize, accommodate, and retell this part of the sermon on the past history (ruined Kaimes, King Kenneth, etc.)—which again formally echoes *Sunset Song*—the voice cannot accommodate Robert's speech about the present imperative to "*clean our pit-corner in Segget*" and "*alter all these, we can alter them NOW, not waiting the world.*" The narrative soon explicates this ideological schism between Robert and the middle class: "That sermon fair raised a speak in the toun, as soon's they got out Peter Peat said Faith! they'd fair made a mistake in getting this childe. You wanted a sermon with some body in it, with the hell that awaited the folk that were sinners, and lay on the Kaimes their unwed queans [. . .] A clean little toun as ever there was, no, no, folk wanted no change here" (323).

This disagreement gradually deepens and leads to the Segget middle-class community's utter disapproval of Robert's sermons and speeches; accordingly, Robert's words are further fragmentated and interrupted. For example, on Armistice Day, the only words by Robert himself that have been preserved in the text are the line from the Bible, "*A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night*":

> No, no, the Reverend Colquohoun spoke plain, some liked it that way, you were damned if you did: and he asked the mercy of God on a world unawakened yet from a night that was past. And he said that God had made neither night nor day in human history, He'd left it in the hands of Man to make both, God was but Helper, was but Man himself, like men he also struggled against evil, God's wounds had bled, God also had died in the holocaust in the fields of France. But He rose anew, Man rose anew, he was as undying as God was undying – if he had the will and the way to live, on this planet given to him by God. *A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night* – they had hung in the sky since the coming of men, set there by God for the standards of men, clouds and the shining standards of rain, the hosts of heaven for our standard by night . . . A trumpet had cried and unsealed our ears; would it need the lightning to unseal our eyes?
>
> And after a bit you stopped listening to that, you didn't know much about preaching and the like, but was that the way a minister should speak? (357)

The ellipsis in the passage suggests that the audience's attention to Robert's speech is lost; as the communal voice admits, "No, no, the Reverend Colquohoun spoke plain, some liked it that way, you were damned if you did," and "after a bit you stopped listening to that." The audience's observation of the changes in Robert's voice and his ways of talking shows both the audience's disagreement and Robert's weakened health due to his gassed lung after he coughs blood in the Segget show. Therefore, Robert has been "suffocated" in a double sense: his speech has been silenced by the community's rhythms and his voice has been physically choked by his lung. The audience here is doubled too—it is both the Segget crowd and the reader; the audience's negative reaction to Robert's sermon is a metacommentary on *Cloud Howe*'s gradually weakening aesthetic experience of the strong and omnipresent rhythms of *Sunset Song*.

Towards the end of the novel, after the strike fails and Chris's newborn baby dies, Robert becomes "as quiet as a cow with his blethers of Jesus and brotherhood and Love and the Sacred Heart that will bleed for men" (467). This foreshadows Robert's imminent death after his continually worsened lung problem, the loss of his faith in reform, and his indulgence in the hallucination of the Christ figure. The final sermon in the novel uses its content to demonstrate

his desperate, residual utopianism and adopts a highly fragmented form to show his irregular breathing and suffocation:

> The minister gave out the psalm, but so low you hardly heard the words that he said; and you spent so long looking up the passage that the singing was over afore you had found it. Syne the minister was praying, you bent your head, a fell dreich prayer and only half-heard. But then as he finished and gave out his text folk fairly louped in their seats as he spoke, his voice had a ring like a sudden bell:
>
> *My text is from the twenty-third chapter of St. Luke, verse forty-two: AND HE SAID UNTO JESUS, LORD, REMEMBER ME WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM.*
>
> *It is nineteen hundred years since that cry was heard, it is sixteen hundred years since the holy Catholic Church was established in temporal power. In the early days after the death of Christ* [. . .]
>
> *LORD, REMEMBER ME WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM.*
>
> *In Segget a week ago tonight, in this Christian village, a man and a woman were driven from their home and had no place to lay their heads. In the night a rat came and fed on their child, eating its flesh in a sacrament of hunger –*
>
> *LORD, REMEMBER ME WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM.*
>
> [. . .]
>
> *AND THE SUN WAS DARKENED, AND THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS RENT IN THE MIDST.*
>
> *So we see, it seems, in the darkened sun, in the rending veils of the temples and kirks, the end of Mankind himself in the West, or the end of the strangest dream men have dreamt – of both the God and the Man Who was Christ, Who gave to the world a hope that passes, and goeth about like the wind, and like it returns and follows, fulfilling nothing. There is no hope for the world at all – as I, the least of His followers see – except it forget the dream of the Christ, forget the creeds that they forged in His shadow when their primal faith in the God was loosed – and turn and seek with unclouded eyes, not that sad vision that leaves hunger unfed, the wail of children in unending dark, the cry of human flesh eaten by beasts. . . but a stark, sure creed that will cut like a knife, a surgeon's knife through the doubt and disease – men with unclouded eyes may yet find it, and far off yet in the times to be, on an earth at peace, living and joyous, the Christ come back—*

> His voice had sunk near to a whisper by then, so that folk in the back of the kirk couldn't hear, all the kirk sitting and staring in silence. Then he started again, he said, very clear, and once again, slowly, terrible to hear, as a man who cried from his soul on a friend who had passed beyond either helping or help:
>
> *LORD, REMEMBER ME WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM!* (469–472)

The communal voice finally gives way to Robert's own speech. The first paragraph in this excerpt shows that Robert, although hardly being able to speak due to his lung problems, uses the last bit of strength he has left to preach with the voice "like a sudden bell"—his swan song, the final warning for Segget, the tolling of the church bell. The typographical difference of lower and upper cases indicates different volumes of Robert's voices: the lowercase shows his deep-toned, solemn, and quieter sermon on the grotesque and tragic news about the rat feeding on the baby, whereas the uppercase signals Robert's stronger voice of incantation. Amidst such incantations, his sermon becomes increasingly fragmented with a weakened voice; the use of several dashes and ellipsis indicates his difficulty of breathing and speaking. Eventually, "his voice had sunk near to a whisper" and he dies on the pulpit.

In previous sections, I have argued that the suffocation of syntactic rhythm encodes the atmospheric histories of a geological time frame of fossil fuels as alternatives to the chronology of degeneration signaled by the Standing Stones. This section turns to how Robert's physical and psychological trauma of chemical warfare in the past—the "physical remembrance" transmitted by suffocated form—stands in constant tension with Segget's new political futures Robert envisions and determines to fight for. This temporal tension between the persistent trauma rooted in the past and the utopian gaze at a better future is irresolvable, as *Cloud Howe* shows that trauma serves as the very incentive for Robert's campaign and the cause of his militarism and his impatience with class problems in Segget. The irony of this is that the same trauma—physical

and psychological suffocation—impedes his full ability to preach, to attract and mobilize the audience in Segget, and to be patient with another reform after the strike fails. This impasse—or rather, a "cruel attachment" to trauma as simultaneous motivation and cause for failure[11]—also aggravates due to Robert's physical degeneration and its ensuing psychological effects of growing impatience and a sense of imminent finitude: "*But God doesn't wait, or His instruments"* (370). God doesn't wait; neither does death.

Robert's personal history of difficult breathing and final suffocation generates a time frame of doomed finitude in opposition to the trilogy's use of Robert as an agent—like *Parade's End*'s treatment of Christopher Tietjens—to impart the possible future for Scotland. This history of imminent finitude—the idea that any moment of exhalation can be the last one—does not only belong to the realm of the personal or the provincial; the interwar period itself, as I have discussed in Chapter One, is always characterized by a futurity that is simultaneously haunted by the past catastrophe and dictated by the anxiety about another mass extermination of life in the near future. On the whole, the post-war setting of the middle volume in *A Scots Quair* registers temporal convergence, convolution, and tension through the characterization of Robert; on the level of form, this tension most prominently resides between the increasingly suffocated form of Robert's speech and the continual use of syntactic rhythm by the hostile middle-class communal voice in Segget.

VI. Gaslighting and Explosion: Syntax's Mimetic Functions and the Buried History of Interwar Ammunition Industries

The suffocation of syntactic rhythm aggravates in *Grey Granite*; any residual rhythm that has been previously produced to render respiratory intensities is no longer idyllic or pastoral in the novel's setting and textual environment of polluted air. *Grey Granite* is by default a suffocated

text as well as a text that tells stories about the escalation of physical and psychological suffocation. The aging Chris who constantly experiences physical exhaustion, the contamination of air, the severe economic depression of the 1930s, and the explosion of Gowans and Gloag's, a company that manufactures chemical gasses for the next war—through all of these aspects the novel shows the fundamental futility of syntactic rhythm's previous attempt to connect itself to the body and the environment. Before the publication of the first two volumes, Gibbon was already skeptical about using the rhythms of *Sunset Song* to render an industrialized and interwar Scottish townscape. Describing his own writing in an odd and detached perspective of the third person, he writes: "His scene so far has been a comparatively uncrowded and simple one – the countryside and village of modern Scotland. Whether his technique is adequate to compass and express the life of an industrialized Scots town in all its complexity is yet to be demonstrated" (137). Although *Grey Granite* still preserves the residue of syntactic rhythms through the anonymous communal voice, the novel adopts intense narrative fragmentation and frequently disrupts syntactic rhythms on such a holistic scale that it becomes impossible to demonstrate all the textual evidence for the suffocation of rhythm. Culminating in the final volume of *A Scots Quair*, the elimination of rhythm in syntax is simultaneously an ultimate alienation of *form* from content, as the novel's form can no longer use syntactic rhythm to mediate and hold content together when the political context and content of the final volume press an increasing (bio)power upon its ability to arrange the novel's content. As a result of such a weakening of form, the narrative's growing opacity and fragmentation also indicate the trilogy's formal transition from deteriorating syntactic rhythm towards syntax's final subjugation to a visual, mimetic function in accordance with the plots of political gaslighting and factory gas explosion. Thus, this section moves beyond the previous mode of reading for the gradually suffocated form

and instead approaches the historical experience of contamination and suffocation through syntax's mimesis of atmospheric opacity and violence in terms of gaslighting and explosion.

"Gaslighting" is now commonly known as a term for psychological manipulation through tactics such as misdirection and lying, but the term's earliest usage in Patrick Hamilton's play *Gas Light* (1938) refers to a specific form of psychological control and counter-control through the changing brightness of the gaslight due to insufficient pressure of gas in the house. Therefore, I use "gaslighting" in a double sense of psychological and material manipulation to describe how formal fragmentation in *Grey Granite* visually, textually, and epistemologically obscures what is happening with the coal-fueled chemical ammunition company Gowans and Gloag's. Further, I examine how extreme formal fragmentation also constitutes felt ripples and aftermath of Gowans and Gloag's final explosion. As Hanne Tange argues, the formal fragmentation of the novel speaks to both "a society where communication across political, social and economic boundaries is no longer possible" and "a representation of the impact of modernization" (258). The main goal of my following discussion is to complicate this general thread about modernization by focusing on 1) how form relates to the combined violence of fossil fuel consumption and the military use of poison gas and 2) how this relationship indexes the buried history of environmental toxicity and complicates the representation and philosophy of history in the final volume.

Echoing the prevalent imageries of muggy and polluted air in *Grey Granite*, the escalated fragmentation of form produces an experience of contamination and gaslighting to obscure what is actually controlling the pulse of Duncairn—a company called Gowans and Gloag's. At the beginning of the novel, the reader is simply told that Gowans and Gloag's is one of the "[s]melters and steel manufacturers" (486), the only company where Chris's son Ewan is able to

find a job during the economic depression. In the thick of tales, gossip, and fragments of divergent individual perspectives, the narrative embeds some details about this company: "Gowans and Gloag made metal containers, bolts and girders and metal trestles, fine castings for sections of engine castings [. . .] Gowans had flourished just after the War, high wages and bonuses dished out to all, pap for the proletariats" (503). Later, the narrative mentions in passing that the company is now producing new tools, "Things were fair kittling up at Gowans and Gloag, a lad had to keep nippy with the new tools that came, packing and storing and wondering about them, damned queer frames for new castings, too, nobody kenned what the bits were for" (575). Soon Ewan reveals to his co-workers that the company "is making new ammunition parts, bits of shells and gas-cylinders for Sidderley, the English armament people" (647). Ewan uses this factor to mobilize the workers in the company to start a strike; to do so, he chooses to evoke the workers' and the interwar reader's memory of WWI gas attacks:

> But if he had any guts at all he'd join the whole of Gowans and Gloag in a strike that would paralyse the Works. Gas-cylinder cases: he hadn't been at the War, none of them had, but they'd all read and heard about gas-attacks. Here was an account by a hospital attendant that he'd copied from a book:
>
> I RECEIVED AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE HOSPITAL TO BE IN ATTENDANCE IMMEDIATELY. I HURRIED THERE AND ALMOST AT ONCE THE STREAM OF AMBULANCES WITH THE UNFORTUNATE PRISONERS BEGAN TO ARRIVE. AT FIRST SCORES, THEN LATER HUNDREDS, OF BROKEN MEN, GASPING, SCREAMING, CHOKING. THE HOSPITAL WAS PACKED WITH FRENCH SOLDIERS, BEATING AND FIGHTING THE AIR FOR BREATH. DOZENS OF MEN WERE DYING LIKE FLIES, THEIR CLOTHES RENT TO RIBBONS IN THEIR AGONY, THEIR FACES A HORRIBLE SICKLY GREEN AND CONTORTED OUT OF ALL HUMAN SHAPE—(576)

Ewan's (and Gibbon's) source of this document is the former Belgian spy Marthe McKenna's memoir *I Was a Spy!: The Classic Account of Behind-the-Lines Espionage in the First World War* (1932), with a foreword by Winston Churchill. The book was also adapted into a popular

thriller *I Was a Spy* in 1933. The memories of gas attacks recorded in this book, as well as the figure of Marthe McKenna, were very much present in the public's mind in the 1930s. The cryptic and mediated nature of Ewan's copied passage from a book about espionage double the obscurity and opacity of the narrative here, reminding the reader that the secrecy of Gowans and Gloag's new production line also intricately links with the narrative form's political gaslighting. By embedding bits of information about Gowans and Gloag's in the highly fragmented, polyphonic narrative, the text produces opacity that demands the reader, just like Ewan, to conduct meticulous investigations into what the company is up to. Typography also plays an important role in the narrative's play of opacity and visibility. This passage visually foregrounds the documentation of gas attack symptoms in uppercase, highlighting a historical memory that supplements the uppercase incantation of Robert's final sermon and also undermines the utopian futurity of Robert's revolutionary rhetoric: this is a historical memory that escapes both syntax's gaslighting and suffocated form's incapability to articulate its trauma. Through the tension within volatile narrative forms and contrasting typographies, the novel demonstrates the tension between Ewan's explicit evocation of WWI gas warfare, his secret organization of the strike, and the cryptic development of Gowans and Gloag's new political agenda backed by the English. Meanwhile, by quoting war narratives from *I Was a Spy*, the novel also indicates Ewan's boyish heroism in his attempt to secretly organize a strike like a secret agent in war. The strike is short-lived: Ewan is betrayed by a picket near the Gowans gates (602) and brutally tortured by the police. After Ewan is released from jail, he is traumatized and disillusioned.

In form's continual fragmentation and its composition of multiple individual perspectives with inconsistent tones, the narrative gives away that "Gowans were to install a gas-loading plant soon [. . .] Bolivia and Japan were in a hell of a stamash to get arms: and Gowans were dancing

in tune" (620). An anonymous voice, apparently from the perspective of a worker at the company, tells the reader that they have a new wing called "Chemicals" "where the business of loading the cylinders with gas was to start in another week or so" (647), which requires workers with special training. Up to this point, the reader is gradually seeing that formal fragmentation creates an experience of gaslighting in accordance with the plot about the secret transformation of Gowans and Gloag's from a smelter and steel factory to an English-sponsored chemical ammunition manufacturer. While everyone else in the novel is caught up in the debates over political ideologies and nationalism in Duncairn, Ewan invites the reader to pay attention to what and who is actually controlling the city: interwar military chemical weapon competitions undergirded by a fossil fuel-based capitalist system, a system backed by English imperialism.

Eventually, Gowans and Gloag's sudden explosion pushes the company to the novel's foreground. From the pressure of political propaganda and the concealment of the real sponsors behind the company's transformation to this ultimate physical violence upon the citizens in the city, the political and material weight continues to press upon the final volume's storytelling to the extent that the novel's form and syntax now fully function as a visual mimesis of content. The narrative after the explosion breaks down into small fragments to register the rippling aftermath of the explosion and the feeling of social disembodiment. This is what highly fragmented form looks like on the page:

> The *Tory Pictman* got the news from Duncairn over the telephone, clear-the line, from Mr. Piddle *he-heing*! like fun: all about the charred bodies, the explosion, the women weeping, the riot that broke out against the Gowans house up in Craigneuks when the windows were bashed in by Reds. And the *Pictman* printed a leader about it, full of dog Latin and constipated English, but of course not Scotch, it was over-genteel: and it said the affair was very regrettable, like science and religion experiment had its martyrs for the noble cause of defending the State. The treacherous conduct of extremists in exploiting the natural grief of the Duncairn workers was utterly to be deplored. No doubt the strictest of inquiries would be held—

The Reverend Edward MacShilluck preached from his pulpit next Sunday and said the catastrophe was the Hand of Gawd, mysteriously at work, *ahhhhhhhhhhh, my brethren, what if it was a direct chastisement of the proud and terrible spirit of the times, the young turning from the Kirk and its sacred message, from purity and chastity and clean-living?* And Craigneuks thought it a bonny sermon, and nearly clapped, it was so excited; and the Reverend MacShilluck went home to his lunch and fell asleep when he'd eaten it and woke with a nasty taste in his mouth and went a little bit stroll up to Pootsy's room, and opened the door and peeped in at her and shoggled his mouth like a teething tiger—

Jim Trease said to Ewan they hadn't done so bad, twenty new members had joined the local, damn neat idea that of Ewan's to have the Gowans windows bashed in. Ewan was to take Kirrieben for the weekend meetings, he himself Paldy and Selden Footforthie. And be sure and rub in the blood and snot well and for God's sake manage a decent collection, he'd be getting in a row with the E.C. in London, they were so far behind with the Press contribution.

Eh? Of course the Works had been well-protected, that kind of accident would happen anywhere. But Ewan had been right, that was hardly the point, he could rub in if he liked that there had been culpable negligence. . . . Eh, what was that? Suggest it had all been deliberately planned to see the effect of poison-gas on a crowd? Hell! Anyhow, Ewan could try it. But for God's sake mind about the collection—

Alick Watson said in his barrack-room: *See what's waiting us in the next war, chaps? Skinned to death or else toasted alive like a winkle in front of a fire, see?* And the rookies said *Christ, they all saw that*, what was there to be done about it? And Alick said to organize and stick up for their rights, would they back him today down in the mess if he made a complaint about the muckingmeat? They could force they swine to feed them proper, no fear of that if they'd stick together, no need to knuckle-down to the bloody NOCS. And if a war came and the chaps in the companies were well-organized: what the hell could the officers do to them then?

Norman Cruickshank lay in the hospital and didn't say a word, quiet and unmoving, half of his face had been eaten away by the flame.

Jess would never see Bob again. She thought at his graveside, decent in her black, *Young Erchie's been awful kind to me. Maybe the furniture me and Bob's bought will do if he's really serious, like.* . . . But she mustn't think of that, even with her Trouble, poor Bob that had been so kind and sensible even though he'd once mixed with those dirt, the Reds—

> Ellen Johns said, sick, it was horrible, horrible, *but, Ewan, you know that THAT was a lie. It was sickening of you to suggest that they let loose the gas deliberately. . . . Ewan, it's just cheating, it's not Communism*! (656–58)

This moment transforms form's gaslighting effects into an ultimate visualization of explosion and disembodiment. But before I read this formal fragmentation more closely (or as closely as I can in such opacity and utter disembodiment), it is worth clarifying that although the explosion of the company certainly can be read as symbolic of revolution, the incident is a material one with real historical resonance. Although the company itself is not a gas plant, Gibbon was aware of the violence caused both by fossil fuel infrastructure and gas-fueled factories in the public's everyday experience, as his description of the company's explosion bears uncanny similarities to numerous gasworks explosions since the mid to late nineteenth century. For example, in the November 4th issue of *The Illustrated London News* in 1865, a report illustrates the violent impacts and spectacles of a gasworks explosion similar to those of the explosion in *Grey Granite*:

> A gasometer on the works of the London Gaslight Company at Nine Elms, holding a million cubic feet of gas, exploded on Tuesday afternoon, and a large building called the 'meter house', near the gasometer, was completely blown down, killing several on the spot and injuring many others [. . .] Houses in the neighborhood were shattered, windows blown out and doors shaken off the hinges, and in many instances, the furniture in them completely wrecked. Both gasometers were filled with gas when no.1 exploded with the sound of a park of artillery, shattering the massive iron roof and filling the air all round with flames. The second gasometer caught fire and burnt with great fury. [. . .] Those who saw the explosion describe it as one vast upheaving of flame shooting high in the air, with a burst with which shook everything around. People nearly a mile off where thrown violently down, and persons who were in houses in streets adjacent to the works received some severe burns from the heat of the flames. (*The Illustrated London News*, November 4th, 1865, p. 31)

The description of the explosion's impact provides great insights into our understanding of the explosion of Gowans and Gloag. First, this report documents the scale and impact of this explosion, which are almost comparable to bombing, "a large building [. . .] was completely

blown down," "Houses in the neighborhood were shattered, windows blown out and doors shaken off the hinges," "exploded with the sound of a park of artillery, shattering the massive iron roof and filling the air all round with flames," and "a burst with which shook everything around." Second, the report shows that most of the adjacent areas of the gasworks is affected by ripples of violent vibration and the heat of the flame—both of which are transmitted materially through air—instead of being directly blown apart by the explosion itself. Both points here suggest that people in these adjacent areas are often physically impacted through vibration and heat long before realizing what has happened. What's more, although this gasworks explosion happened decades before the setting of *Grey Granite*, similar incidents did not stop happening despite the improvement of factory safety regulations and technology, but only changed locations and forms as the fossil fuel infrastructure continued to expand throughout the twentieth century. The 1928 Holborn gas explosion in the UK, for instance, has its contemporary transmutation in 2015 (Figure 5 and 6).

Figure 5 Holborn gas explosion, 1928, https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/blog/2013/12/20/1928-a-massive-gas-explosion-rips-along-holborn/

Figure 6. Holborn fire due to electric fire with gas and water pipelines, BBC News, 1 April 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-32150554

In *Grey Granite*, the explosion of Gowans and Gloag's encapsulates the violent impact of such incidents on the somatic and visual sensations of the affected crowd, first through imageries, then through formal fragmentation. This is how the narrative describes the accident:

> It was as though a great hand had battered, broadnieved, against the houses that packed Footforthie. Windows shook and cracked, the houses quivered, out in the streets folk startled looked up and saw the lift go suddenly grey. Then, bellytwisting, the roar of the explosion.
>
> Folk tore from their houses and into the streets, pointed, and there down by Gowans and Gloag's in the afternoon air was a pillar of fire sprouting a blossoming to the sky, it changed as you looked and grew black and then green, blue smoke fringe – God, what had happened? Next minute the crowd was on the run to the Docks, some crying the fire had broke out in a ship, but you knew that that was a lie. And John – Peter – Thomas – Neil – Oh God, he was there, in Furnaces, Machines – it was and it couldn't be Gowans and Gloag's. (655)

Like the newspaper report from *Illustrated London News*, this passage captures the impact of the explosion in terms of its violent vibration and the crowd's delayed realization of the fire after the explosion. The public has little clue about what has happened, "some crying the fire had broke out in a ship"; the anonymous voice in the crowd then says, first with uncertainty and then with

belated despair and disbelief, “it was and it couldn’t be Gowans and Gloag’s.” Then there comes the second explosion “rounding into the Dockside way you found the place grown black with folk, bobbies were already crying to keep back, forward the left of the Works like a great bulging blister [. . .] And as they did that the blister burst in another explosion that pitched folk head-first down on the ground, right and left” (655–56). What’s unique about Gowans and Gloag’s is that the company is both powered by coal and producing poison gas cylinders in preparation for the next chemical warfare. This is why the flames change from black to green—an image of the mixture of coal and poison gas such as chlorine. Gibbon’s depiction of the explosion synthesizes the violence of fossil fuel infrastructure and the trauma of gas warfare that the affected crowd in the novel, as well as his contemporary audience in the 1930s, were able to feel collectively and acutely.

As I have quoted at length earlier, the narrative after the explosion breaks down into small fragments to stage the rippling aftermath of disembodiment across the tattered community in Duncairn. These fragments not only stage the final blow upon the already disembodied community and the fragmented sensory experience of the narratorial voice but also function as a material gaslighting that further obscures what causes the explosion and who is behind it. These small fragments show a dazzling shift between various contradictory views in parallel and equal fragmentation, without giving away any particular leaning or indication of truth: The *Tory Pictman* focuses on blaming the communists who bash the windows of the company after the explosion, emphasizing the necessity for strict investigation (656); the Reverend Edward MacShilluck preaches that the explosion “was the Hand of Gawd” (656)—a kind of divine judgment to punish the youth’s turn away from the church; the communist Jim Trease praises Ewan, “damn neat idea that of Ewan’s to have the Gowans windows bashed in” (656), and Ewan

plans to say that the cause of explosion is the company's "culpable negligence" or the government's deliberate plan to test "poison-gas on a crowd" (657); Alick Watson is preoccupied the indication of this violent explosion in the next war, "no need to knuckle-down to the bloody N.C.O.'s. And if a war came and the chaps in the companies were well-organized: what the hell could the officers do to them then?" (657); Norman Cruickshank ironically becomes another Robert without participating in the war; wounded by the explosion, he is lying the hospital, "quiet and unmoving, half of his face had been eaten away by the flame" (657); Jess is mourning the death of Bob; Ellen Johns disagrees with Ewan's theory of government's gas testing, and she thinks that using this as an excuse for revolt is not communism but "cheating" (658). Later, it is only through *Daily Runner* that the reader learns "[t]here had been several strange and unexplained phenomena in the blowing up of the new wing of Gowans and Gloag's" and "no definite charge might be laid at any door" (664). The reader also learns that the police are still following Trease and Ewan, "They'd never let up on young Tavendale since he'd shown up the explosion at Gowans and Gloag's as the work of the Government testing out gas to see its effect in a crowded shed" (667). By digging up—or "mining"—these fragmented details and views about the possible cause of the incident from each individual, the reader is able to see that this time formal gaslighting intensifies into extreme fragmentation and completely obscures the truth. Is it merely an accident, government's gas testing, or Ewan's conspiracy of blowing up the company and pinning it on the government so that he can launch a communist revolution? The novel does not give any clear answer.

What the reader does know—or see—in opaque and inconsistent narratives shrouding the event of the explosion is precisely how formal fragmentation textually and visually foregrounds obscurity to the extreme degree of explosion and disembodiment. Although the capitalized words

"Furnaces" and "History" in the novel suggests the allegorical meaning of the company's explosion as a disruption of history—especially when the narrative describes the fusion of the two keywords as "the whooming furnace of History"(653)—the final volume announces form's relationship to the buried history of interwar atmospheric violence as much as its ideological position against capitalism. Although Ewan's theory of the government's gas testing cannot be proven true in the novel, the simultaneous possibility and unknowability of this cause—just like espionage—precisely characterize the behind-the-door continuation of poison gas research and chemical warfare, especially in marginalized, colonized, and disputed regions in post-war Europe and North America. In *A History of Chemical Warfare*, for instance, Kim Coleman details how the UK, the US, and other countries established research missions for further developing the military use of poison gas and continued to use gas in regional warfare. According to Coleman's account, the RAF under Winston Churchill's permission used chemical weapons to oppress the Iraqi rebels during the 1920 revolt in Iraq, which was administered under British control (44). The Geneva Protocol 1925 could not stop the use of chemical warfare; in 1935 Italy used gas in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in East Africa (46), and since 1937 Japan had used chemical weapons in China (50). The political and geographical marginality of these regions where imperial forces used poison gas for fast oppression, conquest, and occupation speaks back to the peripherality of the Scottish communities in *A Scots Quair* (Ireland also suffered from civil war, and its political turbulence has not stopped since). Even when the trilogy's setting moves to Duncairn, an industrialized city instead of a small, remote village, London as a geographical reference is still far away as a distant backdrop of the novel, except for the mention of a hunger march to London towards the very end of the trilogy. The fact that various rumors of the government's gas testing have gained political currency and become one of the possible causes of the explosion suggests

the Scottish community's self-perception of being sacrificeable at the margin of the British empire: the community in Duncairn, or those in Segget and Kinraddie, would always be the first to be tested and damaged as the necessary cost of national defense. On the whole, all the buried or ineffable histories of atmospheric violence discussed in this chapter explicate the political and ecological violence manifested by the suffocation of syntactic rhythm.

Notes

1. In his 1966 foreword to Ian S. Munro's *Leslie Mitchell*, Hugh MacDiarmid quotes at length Kurt Wittig's accurate observation of Gibbon's use of the second person "you": "This is the culmination of the inherently dramatic character of Scots, for all the time somebody is imagined to be speaking—or letting his thinking become audible—though his identity may not be specified. One consequence of this dramatisation of the ego and its mind is the peculiar fact—which have seen, for instance, in Hogg or Galt or Neil Munro—that a person can view himself as 'you'; another is the intense animism or demonism that colours the resultant subjective vision of reality" (qtd. in MacDiarmid viii). Ramon Lopez Ortega describes the use of "you" in *A Scots Quair* in terms of "a peculiar distribution of the generic and self-referring 'you'— both in modified direct and indirect speech" (152). Gibbon's use of "you" also links to Hanne Tange's argument that some parts of *Sunset Song* are "clearly told from the point of view of protagonist Chris Guthrie, others by an anonymous Kinraddie voice, but ever so often, the two perspectives blend into one," and this style "reflects the innate character of Kinraddie" (251). Timothy Baker comments on the distancing effect of the "you": "The second-person colloquial voice that Gibbon uses throughout the novel, especially in relation to Chris, has a distancing effect here: the reader is shown Kinraddie not as it is, perhaps, but as it is perceived, and it is slightly alien" (51).

2. See Yan Tang, "Atmospheric Violence: Samuel Beckett's Aesthetics of Respiration," *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory,* 30.2, p. 105.

3. Critics do not agree on this observation; according to Timothy Baker's helpful survey of several generations of criticism on the trilogy, the trilogy has been assessed by numerous critics as realistic (46). Baker, on the other hand, claims that "Despite Mitchell's clear schematic organization, his work is remarkably non-cohesive. [. . .] Mitchell not only presents a variety of ideological perspectives, but also investigates the extent to which fiction can be a suitable means for ideology at all" (47). See Baker, "The Romantic and the Real: James Leslie Mitchell and the Search for a Middle Way," *Journal of Modern Literature,* vol. 36, no. 4 (2013): 44–61.

4. In *Lewis Grassic Gibbon*, Ian Campell records Gibbon's "bourgeoning interest in cilivisation, social history, anthropology, archeology" after he joined the Army in 1919 and travelled to the Middle East (16). In *A Scots Quair*, Chris's son Ewan is interested in geology and archeology as well.

5. See note 1.

6. Critics have not addressed the characterization of Andy in the novel. Gibbon seems to foreground Andy's animalistic features not entirely in a mocking or ableist way, but rather shows Andy's unspeakable sorrow, "because she saw he was weeping she ran back to him" and "she saw his face like that of a tormented beast" (*Sunset Song* 59).

7. *A Scots Quair* has treated Robert Burns ironically. For example, it portrays Ake Ogilvie as someone who thinks "himself maybe a second Robert Burns" (*Cloud Howe* 327). Provost in Segget quotes Robert Burns to the Arms: "What was it the poet Robert Burns had written? – an ancestor, like, of the Hoggs, Rabbie Burns. A man's a man for a' that, he wrote, and by that he meant that poor folk of their kind should steer well clear of the gentry and such, not try to imitate them at all, and leave them to manage the country's affairs" (*Cloud Howe* 439).

8. See Priscilla Brewer's *From Fireplace to Cookstove* and Lawrence Wright's *Home Fire Burning.*

9. Although the 1925 report addresses the health issues of miners in separate chapters under Part III, "Employers and Employed," those issues mainly fall in the categories of work accidents and industrial illness instead of more prevalent atmospheric violence. Another historical context neither *Cloud Howe* nor the 1925 report mentions is that besides the failed strike in *Cloud Howe*—whose major cause was the strike leaders' betrayal, "they'd been feared that they would be jailed, the leaders, they had sold the Strike to save their skins" (416)—English-Scottish economic tension in energy industries also resulted from the amalgamation of Scottish shale oil companies into British Petroleum (BP). After BP's new interest in the Persian Gulf for the import of cheaper oil that largely reduced Britain's previous reliance on the Scottish shale oil, a series of amalgamations took place in the 1920s and the 30s. The Scottish Oil Agency Ltd., for example, was first created in 1918 as the distributing and selling organization of Scottish Oils Ltd and the distributor in Scotland for the Anglo Persian Oil Company Ltd (BP). In 1932 the Agency was sold to Shell-Mex & BP Ltd ("Scottish Oil Agency Ltd").

10. In his essay "The Antique Scene," Gibbon delineates his Diffuionist approach to understanding the history of Scotland from "Golden Age hunter" to the Kelt and the Northumbrian Angles (*Scottish Scene* 92–3).

11. Here I borrow Lauren Berlant's theory of "optimistic attachment," a cruel attachment to the very thing that prevents one from flourishing (24).

CODA: FUTILITY

In previous chapters, I have used Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* and Lewis Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* as case studies to demonstrate my methods of reading for the feeling of form. In Chapter One, I trace how Ford Madox Ford's nauseous form—inward-turning forms turning inside out—transmits an ineffable yet visceral experience of anxiety in the contexts of WWI and post-war reconstruction. The nausea of form, I argue, enables us to experience this anxiety as the indigestibility of a coherent national or personal history, an experience that supplements what the tetralogy cannot articulate sufficiently only through plots or events. In Chapter Two, I turn to how Lewis Grassic Gibbon uses a gradually suffocated form—encoded by the changes and deterioration of syntactic rhythms—to expose alternative, volatile environmental histories of air in the contexts of the invasion of fossil fuel infrastructure, gas warfare, and interwar chemical ammunition industries. In this chapter, I conclude my project on the feeling of form by looking at two writers' experimentation with style and seriality in the second half of the twentieth century: Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957–60) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled* (1995).

I suggest that while Ford's and Gibbon's novel series create rather strong, aggressive, or violent feelings of form, Durrell and Ishiguro tend to use experimental styles to generate weaker or more depleted feelings of form. In short, these two works index what Fredric Jameson calls "the waning of affect" (10) under a postmodern condition where "the liberation [. . .] from the older *anomie* of the centred subject may also mean [. . .] a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling" (15). What is left, as Jameson argues, is an "impersonal" and "free-floating" (16) feeling. Reading the weaker and

more depleted dynamics of form in *The Alexandria Quartet* and *The Unconsoled*, I demonstrate that these two works both exemplify and complicate "the waning of affect."

On the surface, the *Quartet*'s baroque and lush aesthetics seems to be the very opposite of weak affect, yet the frequent recurrence of ellipses across Darley's first-person narrative and the omniscient third-person narrative suggests form's mild discomfort, unease, and hesitation in creating a completely baroque Alexandria. This formal symptom enables us to experience the excessive style of the *Quartet* as a mode of overcompensating for what is lacking, reticent, or repressed in ellipses: wounded masculinity and European heteronormativity. At the same time, ellipses as sites of form's felt symptoms are weak and futile: because they encode the coexistence of articulation and silence, overflow and lack, their fundamental undecidability impedes our ethical judgment of the characters' or the narrators' choices and actions. The unease of form, then, allows us to catch a glimpse of what's beyond the constructed totality of European heteronormative ideology: silence.

In the case of *The Unconsoled*, it is almost impossible to trace any formal dynamics due to its plain and repetitive syntactical style. This depletion of the feeling of form, however, becomes a counter-mood to the depiction of monstrous affect in community formation which the novel precisely critiques. Moreover, although *The Unconsoled* is a single-volume novel, its depleted form—"flat form" as I call it—creates a bizarre and extreme form of seriality that leads to infinite repetitions of minor differences, and this form in turn cancels its own seriality as the boundary between progression and recursion becomes increasingly blurry.

Ultimately, I suggest that reading for the weak or depleted feeling of form in Durrell's and Ishiguro's works prompts us to rethink aesthetic feeling's relationship to European heteronormative ideology and the ethics of community-building. It also prompts us to rethink

these texts' relation to history and historical representation. Alongside the rise and development of historiographic metafiction, these two texts show that the so-called "end" and "return" of history manifest not only as a reconfiguration of ideology and knowledge but also as changing modes and possibilities of experiencing histories.

I. *The Alexandria Quartet*: Unease and the Affect of Heteronormative Ideology

I have to make two confessions about Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*. First, there seems to be some dissonance between how I feel about the *Quartet* and what critics have said about it. While the majority of recent literary criticism on the *Quartet* is positive, reading the *Quartet* has provoked many negative feelings in me: the excessively baroque style, the ubiquitous misogyny among the male characters, the "bury your gays"[1] trope of marginalizing and killing characters of queer desire, the emphasis on female physical perfection as well as the ableist tendency in depicting physical disfiguration, just to name a few. With the exception of Joseph Boone, numerous scholars tend to de-escalate the *Quartet*'s conspicuously orientalist and romanticized description of Alexandria and its inhabitants through either Durrell's use of epistemological skepticism or his biography.[2] Yet, despite these accounts of a multidimensional or self-inflicted Durrell, which I do value, my discomfort with the *Quartet* persists. My second confession is that after reading Durrell's daughter Sappho Jean Durrell's journals and letters published in *Granta*, it is impossible for me to ignore a new layer of implications that I now detect in *the Quartet*. A line such as "A daughter is closer than a wife" (377) from *the Quartet*'s second volume *Balthazar*, for example, resonates eerily with one of Sappho's journal entries: "Because none of the women he [Lawrence Durrell] has had since Claude died ever measured up to her, he has been placing more and more of the wife's role on me and he is always aggressive towards wives. [. . .] Now he is aggressive, using the psychology of hostile silences or bitchiness.

He is a master in the art of psychological destruction" (Sappho Durrell, 1 May 1979). Although the *Quartet*'s use of irony and skepticism seems to undermine its orientalist, misogynistic, and romanticizing tendencies, such alarming connections between the textual and the contextual / biographical makes me reconsider to what extent the quarter's narrative is, in fact, sincere.

These two confessions seem to be self-contradictory: the first one shows my hesitation to rely on Durrell's aesthetics or biographical details to discard my negative experience with the *Quartet*, whereas the second one suggests my willing incorporation of Sappho's journals into my reading of the *Quartet*. However, what underlies this superficial contradiction in the method of reading is the same nagging discomfort with the narrators' excessive romanticization of (European) heteronormative desire and physical perfection, *regardless of* the use of irony or queer characters. I relate this excess to the text's effort to overcompensate for what it does not or cannot fully articulate: namely, the bruised masculine ego, the inaccessibility of non-European cultural and political spheres, homosexuality, and incest. Specifically, I locate the explicit manifestation of these two simultaneous poles—lack and excess—in the narrative's constant use of ellipsis to register what is both incomplete and overflowing. In this sense, the *Quartet*'s prevailing ellipses do not simply signal pauses in a character's or a narrator's speech but encode moments of hesitation and omission on a more universal level of formal mediation. Such moments take place in both Darley's first-person baroque style of narration (*Justine*, *Balthazar*, and *Clea*) and the third-person narration (*Mountolive*), where the narrators do not / cannot fully express erotic desire or their comprehension of political situations in Egypt. It is important to note here that the relationship between "do not" and "cannot" resides on a spectrum of varied intensities, not on two distinct epistemological planes. As ellipsis in the *Quartet* designates

hesitation and omission, the most extreme case of such rhetorical strategies and psychological symptoms is the ultimate inability to know one's self and its relation to the other.

Centred around this understanding of ellipsis, my argument is that the *Quartet*'s narrative form uses ellipsis to transmit its unease in mediating socio-political reality and individual interior space. "Unease" refers to an ambivalently discomforting feeling of dissonance, which sustains itself via the feeling subject's simultaneous inability to fully understand the source of dissonance and an awareness of "something going awry." Unease is also related to the "uncanny," or the feeling of not quite being at home. I use "unease" to describe the feeling of form in the *Quartet* for two major reasons. First, Darley and the anonymous third-person omniscient narrator are vaguely aware of external reality or interior flux of desire and emotions, yet their contingent shifts to elliptical style expose moments when they are either unwilling or unable to express overflowing desire or emotions. In this case, unease, as a form of anxiety, is much weaker than the nausea of form in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*: while nauseous form indexes anxiety through explicitly aggressive dynamics of turning inside out, unease registers a more futile or passive symptom of uncertainty and disorientation. Darley, in particular, is too self-absorbed to confront his own delusional and romanticized gaze at himself, others, and the society in Alexandria. In other words, an increasing degree of narcissism from Christopher Tietjens to Darley correlates with the weakening of discomfort in anxiety and the strengthening of delusion.[3] While an acute experience of incoherent national identity and subjectivity induces Christopher's "mental nausea," Darley's narcissism only leads to mild feelings of unease in his romanticization of Alexandria and the others in his circle.

Before I proceed to my further arguments, I want to use a few quick examples to demonstrate how elliptical style exposes form's unease in creating interior spaces or mediating external events:

> So that the taste of this writing should have taken something from its living subjects – their breath, skin, voices – weaving them into the supple tissues of human memory. I want them to live again to the point where pain becomes art. . . . Perhaps this is a useless attempt, I cannot say. But I must try. (*Justine* 20)

> The triumphs of polity, the resources of tact, the warmth, the patience. . . . Profligacy and sentimentality . . . killing love by taking things easy . . . sleeping out a chagrin. . . . This was Alexandria, the unconsciously poetical mother-city exemplified in the names and faces which made up her history. Listen. (*Balthazar* 234)

> Was it really by now so obvious that this nation-wide exercise in political diabolism would end by plunging Europe into bloodshed? The case seemed overwhelming. But there was one hope – that Attila might tum eastwards and leave the cowering west to moulder away in peace. If the two dark angels which hovered over the European subconscious could only fight and destroy each other. . . . . There was some real hope of this. (*Mountolive* 454)

In the first passage, writing from an isolated island, Darley (the reader does not learn his name until the second volume) is contemplating how to best recount what has happened in Alexandria, and his decision is to recreate a living and visceral past. However, his thoughts suspend at the moment when he reveals his intention to let characters "live again to the point where pain becomes art." The problem here, as the *Quartet* will imply later, is that while he claims to want "them"—Justine, Nessim, Balthazar, and Clea—to relive their pain and transform it into art, it is in fact his own inexpressible pain and bruised ego that determine the content and tone of *Justine*, Balthazar, and Clea. The ellipsis that signals this suspension in Darley's thoughts, then, exposes his own pain as both an inexpressible gap of self-knowledge and an overflowing, masochist desire for reliving a life with Melissa and Justine. This vengeful desire is closely tied to Darley's wounded ego in his sexual relationship with both women: his unease about Melissa's multiple lovers and sexual experience manifests in the constant use of ellipsis in *Justine*, and his jealousy

and frustration—two mental states that he is rarely aware of—resulting from Justine's manipulation of him are also encoded in the elliptical style in *Balthazar*.

In the second passage above, Darley's gaze turns outward to an upper-class party hosted by Nessim in the Yacht Club. The repeated use of ellipsis in this passage suggests that Darley in fact cannot formulate a coherent or clear picture of Nessim's social circle because he is not one of them. Clueless, he is brought into Nessim's circle only because Nessim needs to make sure Darley is not a loose end in his political intrigues. Darley's hesitant and fragmented description of the atmosphere of the upper-class social environment forms a sharp contrast with his self-congratulatory and "savvy" tone in portraying a baroque cityscape just outside the Yacht Club:

> The sinking sun which had emptied the harbour roads of all but the black silhouettes of the foreign warships had nevertheless left a flickering greyness [. . .] The sprouting tier of guns on the Jean Bart moved slowly – tilted – and then settled back into brooding stillness, aimed at the rosy heart of the city whose highest minarets still gleamed gold in the last rays of the sunset. The flocks of spring pigeons glittered like confetti as they turned their wings to the light. (Fine writing!) (*Balthazar* 234)

While Darley is able to use his usual mode of baroque style—"black silhouettes," "sprouting tier," "brooding stillness," "rosy heart," etc.—to describe the "scenery" outside the Club (warships aiming at the city!), he cannot use the same style to mediate and romanticize the political schemes brewing inside the club. Different from the baroque style, ellipses indicate that such political spheres are fundamentally inaccessible for Darley. At the same time, amidst Darley's empty descriptions such as "the triumphs of polity," ellipses create a textual environment for excess and for Darley's projection of his own experience, "killing love by taking things easy . . . sleeping out a chagrin," an experience which does not really apply to any other characters in the novel.

Further, ellipses also take place outside Darley's self-absorbed romanticism. In the third passage, the third-person narrator's free indirect speech shows that Mountolive's ethical

predicament: on the one hand, he hopes the war (World War II) will never affect Europe; on the other hand, this hope is not based on his genuine distaste for war, but only for a war that could affect *him* (and England). The ellipsis, then, implies a moment of hesitation as Mountolive's thought plunges into a simultaneously unspoken (unethical) and preferable scenario of Russia and German destroying each other. Yet, this momentary pause only shows Mountolive's mild discomfort in thinking that way; his chain of thoughts is then amended by a self-confirmation that "There was some real hope of this." Taken together, these quick examples illustrate that ellipses across the *Quartet* register various moments of personal, political, and ethical impasse (a simultaneous lack and excess), and such impasses are sites to trace form's unease in creating coherent psychological interior and mediating political reality in Egypt.

Form's unease allows us to experience how European heteronormative ideology operates on the levels of both aesthetic feeling and knowledge. On the one hand, the narrators' (and form's) unease, shown as their reticence or inexpressibility in the elliptical style, transmits a historical experience of European epistemological bias and limits in encountering the non-normative in the 1930s. This experience is doubled in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as Durrell published the *Quartet* against the backdrop of the Suez Crisis. On the other hand, the *Quartet*'s aesthetic experience of baroque excess in "the Orient" (*Justine* 18) also results from the same normative ideology of the European subject. Thus, the levels of feeling and knowledge do not cancel each other out, but rather point to the same problem of European heteronormative ideology. This means that I read against the grain of several critics' arguments that the *Quartet*'s "superficial" orientalism is undermined or challenged by a "deeper" structure of epistemological skepticism.[4] Because lack and excess are symptomatic of the same ideology—which are encoded by the weak symptom of elliptical style—I doubt that the *Quartet* is able to perform immanent

critique or self-critique. When heteronormative ideology becomes the totality of the *Quartet*, the question of authorial intention—irony or sincerity—also becomes undeterminable. This is similar to what Edward Said describes when he writes that "[i]mperialism and egoism have been subsumed into a comfortable solipsism" in Joseph Conrad's writing (*Joseph Conrad* 155). This solipsism manifests in Durrell's rejection of history by experimenting with a different form of the novel series. As Durrell writes in the Preface to the *Quartet*:

> This group of four novels is intended to be read as a single work under the collective title of The Alexandria Quartet; a suitable descriptive subtitle might be 'a word continuum'. In trying to work out my form I adopted, as a rough analogy, the relativity proposition. The first three were related in an intercalary fashion, being 'siblings' of each other and not 'sequels'; only the last novel was intended to be a true sequel and to unleash the time dimension. The whole was intended as a challenge to the serial form of the conventional novel: the time-saturated novel of the day. ("Preface")

By challenging the "serial form of the conventional novel," Durrell simultaneously rejects the novel series' inherent preoccupation with how to represent historical events, processes, and intergenerational drama. As Darley says in the *Quartet*, "What I most need to do is to record experiences, not in the order in which they took place — for that is history — but in the order in which they first became significant for me" (*Justine* 97). What is left in Durrell's *Quartet*, then, is a weak feeling of unease amidst overflowing aesthetic affect of romanticized oriental landscapes, obsession with female physical perfection, and a dominating heterosexual presence. While Ford's *Parade's End* and Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* both produce strong feelings of form (nausea and suffocation), Durrell's *Quartet* produces instead a weak feeling of form, which is symptomatic of a strong European heteronormative ideology as it turns away from history. This is also a tendency that postmodernism might risk.

II. *The Unconsoled*: Flat Form, Detachment, and A Critique of Affective Community

In *The Unconsoled*, the first-person narrator Ryder wakes up every morning feeling exhausted and suffers a weird form of amnesia. Everything and everyone he encounters appears to be familiar yet oddly estranged. What constructs this uncanny atmosphere *par excellence* is an extreme flat form. By "flat form" I mean narrative forms and styles that are syntactically simple, repetitive, and devoid of formal dynamics such as Ford's or Gibbon's uses of form. This flat form creates an ultra-lucid representation of reality, yet this reality consists of bizarre or absurd images and scenes without stylistic dynamics and intensities.[5] The plainer the style gets, the more lucidly bizarre a scene becomes. What interests me most about this flat form is that it provides a counter-mood to the monstrosity of affect in community-building that the novel critiques. It is not that feelings and affects do not exist in the novel; rather, the reader experiences a *dissociation* of the form's depleted dynamics (the absence of aesthetic feelings created by form) from the novel's extremely lucid description of excessively rich feelings. I want to highlight up front a concrete example of this mode of dissociation provided by the novel itself. Leo Brodsky, a former conductor and alcoholic in recovery in the novel, exemplifies the detachment of feelings from the thinking and feeling subject: "But then just every once in a while, on certain mornings, a particular mood would descend on him. He'd be there reading at the table and then this forlorn look would come over him. You'd notice him sitting there, staring off into space, sometimes with tears welling in his eyes" (110). Like Brodsky, I constantly experience feelings descending upon and overwhelming me through the novel's *description* of characters' emotional states in ways that are unconnected to my aesthetic experience created by the flat form. Ryder, like me, experiences variously complex and intense feelings, but those feelings are disembodied, contingent, and detached from interiority or interpersonal relationship.

The citizens within various communities in the city are also bound by excessive collective emotions devoid of genuine and personal attachment to one another. Like them, I feel discomfort, confusion, sorrow, and other emotions, but the extreme solipsism created by the novel's self-reflexivity obstructs my ethical response and attachment to the text.

In this light, although *The Unconsoled* seems to depart from the modernist "new art emotion" of coldness and indifference (Moody), I situate the novel loosely within what critics have termed as "metamodernism" because Ishiguro achieves this mode of detachment by pushing modernist form's concern with the mind and consciousness to the limit case of a borderless mind susceptible to depersonalized and amplified feelings.[6] More importantly, Ishiguro's aesthetics of detachment expose new challenges for the ethics of alterity stemming from the "other minds" problem that modernist form tries to grapple with, and critiques the monstrous politics behind affect's unexamined, privileged role in community formation and collective action. In the novel, the continually amplified and free-floating feelings without interior or exterior attachments perpetuate and aggravate the crisis of community.[7]

Along with the flat form devoid of dynamics, the novel's ability to depict feelings without the feeling subject also relies on its odd narrative perspective. The entire novel is narrated by Ryder, a *first-person* omniscient narrator and the protagonist of the novel. Ryder is able to access scenes, events, conversations, and other characters' memories that he cannot possibly know under the normal logic of time and space. This narrative perspective reveals the latency of the narrator in a conventional third-person omniscient narrative, cancels out the latent narrator's distance from characters and plots, and shapes the novel into a form of ultimate self-reflexivity: it is a novel about Ryder and created by Ryder himself, and Ryder is narrating in the first person and third person simultaneously. In other words, Ryder's personal *formalization* of

the world that he inhabits is the impersonal *form* of the novel itself. In this way, the novel returns to and dramatizes the modernist concern with the mind without subscribing to the depth of the mind or the locus of consciousness. Unlike Ishiguro's previous novels where narrators repress memories and feelings, *The Unconsoled* exaggerates the modernist "inward turn" to the point where Ryder's projective mind is simultaneously turned inside out as the totality of narration external to his mind.[8] This, indeed, is a more dramatic representation of a nauseous mind like Christopher Tietjens's. Such a limit case of the coexistence / mutual cancellation of the interior and the exterior allows Ishiguro to expose and theorize how free-floating feelings without attachments and ethical commitments perpetuate the crisis of community in the novel.

The Unconsoled foregrounds and produces detachment on multiple levels, all of which take place through the depersonalization and amplification of feelings without attachments. On the level of the reader-text relationship, because we can never be sure if other characters are real or just Ryder's projections (or both), the solipsism produced by the undecidable state between Ryder's empathy and narcissism prohibits us from having any attachment and ethical response to the text. On the level of characterization, Ryder's detachment often takes place in the mutual reinforcement between intense feelings and spatial disorientation. His childhood memory of "training sessions" is an illuminating metacommentary on this mode of detachment.

> My 'training sessions' had come about quite unplanned. I had been playing by myself out in the lane one grey afternoon – absorbed in some fantasy, climbing in and out of a dried-out ditch running between a row of poplars and a field – when I had suddenly felt a sense of panic and a need for the company of my parents. Our cottage had not been far away – I had been able to see the back of it across the field – and yet the feeling of panic had grown rapidly until I had been all but overcome by the urge to run home at full speed across the rough grass. But for some reason – perhaps I had quickly associated the sensation with immaturity – I had forced myself to delay my departure. [. . .] The strange mixture of fear and exhilaration I had experienced as I had stood there transfixed in the dried-out ditch was one that I was to come to know well in the weeks that followed. For

> within days, my 'training sessions' had become a regular and important feature of my life. (171)

During each "training session," Ryder resists his urge to run home and delays his departure; soon he is captured by the combined sensations of fear, panic, and thrill, and is able to prolong his delay further and further. Ryder's early masochism shows that his detachment from home derives from the proliferation and amplification of feelings through a gradually intensifying spatial disorientation and disconnection. Ryder's detachment from Sophie and Boris, who seem to be his wife and son according to his belated and partial recognition, also manifests as spatial disorientation in moments when Sophie and Boris literally disappear or are blocked from his vision. On the level of form, Ryder's mentation of amplified feelings and increasing detachment synchronizes with the disorientation of narrative perspective: while the first-person omniscient narrative is able to transgress individual mental and physical boundaries as an almost perverse or violent mode of empathy, the novel's self-reflexivity denies any spatial orientation between the narrator and the character, thereby rendering focalization impossible.

Ryder's problem of detachment is never resolved in the novel, although he is able to feel anger, sympathy, and other emotions towards Sophie and Boris—or towards his projections of them. As Sophie tells Ryder near the end of the novel, "Leave us. You were always on the outside of our love" (532). Although Boris breaks away from Sophie and tells her, "No, no. We've got to keep together" (532), Ryder eventually loses sight of them as they get off the tram. Sophie's words, "You were always on the outside of our love," further demonstrate that detachment results from the absence of an ethics of love and commitment regardless of Ryder's and our ability to feel variously intense emotions. Meanwhile, Ryder's failure to find a permanent home in the city, in spite of his reputation as a world-famous pianist, also reflects the

monstrosity of collective free-floating feelings without genuine attachments within various communities.

Take the episode of Porter's Dance. Although Ryder is almost moved to tears when he receives overwhelming hospitality from the hotel porters' community, such warmth is in fact conditioned by a chilling collective expectation from the porters. As one red-nosed porter tells Ryder, "once we'd seen you were all right, once you'd explained you were far from home and were looking for some company, we'd have welcomed you. We wouldn't have received you so differently from the way we did just now, once we'd seen what a good sort you were" (395). The conditional tense signaled by "once" in the porter's lines suggests the enormous pressure and expectation the community imposes upon Ryder. Gustav, the old hotel porter and Ryder's father-in-law (or a partial doubling of Ryder's older self), soon becomes the victim of such pressure from a collective emotion of pride devoid of an ethics of personal attachments and care. Choreographed by hotel porters, the Porter's Dance is a performance of carrying cardboard boxes as if they were suitcases. But when it is Gustav's turn to get on the stage, people start to pass him real suitcases, and each one is heavier than the last. No matter how painful Gustav appears during his performance, the audience is cheering him to carry more suitcases, shouting "Good old Gustav!" (404) and applauding fervently. As the glue of the porters' community, Gustav maintains the highest professional standard and dignity of hotel porters at the expense of personal pain and sacrifice not only during this dance but in everyday work. This episode, then, epitomizes the morbidity of free-floating, collective feelings without attachments in the porters' community: as the community's collective pathos of ecstatic *schadenfreude* overflows during Gustav's extremely painful dance, not a single porter stops for a second to care about Gustav's

real suffering. This dance costs Gustav his life; just hours after his performance, he feels extremely unwell and dies the next morning.

In parallel to the monstrosity of free-floating, collective emotions within the porters' community, the collective hospitality of the city's middle- and upper-class political groups betrays their hypocrisy and cruelty. For example, during an evening gathering hosted by the Countess and attended by the mayor and other representatives of the civic council, no one at the gathering recognizes Ryder except the Countess and the hotel manager, and hence no one cares to talk to him. However, as soon as the Countess directs everyone's attention to Ryder and identifies him as a famous pianist, Ryder is suddenly overwhelmed by the crowd's excessive hospitality: "the people at my table had quickly engulfed me and were trying to shake my hand," "I was aware of people all around me, gasping with pleasure, greeting me and holding out their hands," "I could see a crowd gathering at my back with many people pushing and standing on tip-toes" (145). In the episode of Christoff's lunch gathering at a small café, the intellectual and artistic community shares a similar monstrosity of excessive collective emotions. The young artists and intellectuals, who were Christoff's protégés and have now become his colleagues and friends, are eager to hear Ryder's understanding of modern musical form. After the crowd decides to favor Ryder's theory of unrestricted aesthetic form over their mentor Christoff's theory of order, pattern, and facts, they start to laugh at Christoff and one former protégé even slaps him. While trying to get out of the angry crowd, Ryder sees "Christoff's bewildered, frightened face" and "then an angry circle settled around him and he ceased to be visible to me" (203).

Although these communities declare a shared sense of crisis—as they desperately need someone like Ryder to be the city's next cultural icon and man of accountability—their own

cruelty, their lack of attachment and its ethics of genuine hospitality, and their constant imposition of crushing weight on the person of such potentials produce the crisis in the first place. By showing the perpetuation and aggravation of the city's crisis, Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled* exposes the limits of affect's (often mystified) centrality to community formation and collective action when individual subjectivity and the very possibility of the ethics of attachment are on the verge of complete dissolution. The novel's flat form, then, creates a counter-mood to contrast the absurdity and monstrosity of affect with the form's minimalist aesthetic feeling.

III. A Few Final Words: Limits of Method

Durrell's and Ishiguro's texts show that behind the weakened and depleted feelings of form is the excess of heteronormative ideology and social pressure of conformity devoid of ethics. They also show that reading for the feeling of form has its limits: when literary texts experience the waning of affect—the condition of a dissolving centre of the subject and the self—our attempt to trace the feeling of form as the experience of ideology and histories also becomes increasingly futile. As a result, my approach to reading *The Alexandria Quartet* and *The Unconsoled* relies on tracing the weak and almost absent feeling of form to show the political and ethical problems of ideology's stronghold—so my strategy here is a kind of affirmation through negativity. This is also not without real implications for the contemporary political environments amplified through social media: ideology never truly vanishes; it just operates on a new level of overwhelming affects to the extent that any critical position trying to dismantle and critique it requires extreme sobriety, like the counter-mood that Ishiguro's formal technique creates. To end my dissertation on an uncanny note, I want to highlight a parallel between the experience of literature and that of history in the second half of the twentieth century: John Barth wrote "The Literature of

Exhaustion" in 1967 and offered a companion piece called "The Literature of Replenishment" in 1984; Francis Fukuyama published "The End of History?" in 1989 and then wrote another piece in 2012 called "The Future of History." History has never left us.

Notes

1. The "bury your gays" trope refers to cultural products such as literature, TV shows, films, and other media that kill queer characters. In the *Quartet*, Scobie is killed by English sailors; Clea and Justine's relationship is never truly acknowledged by Darley; Toto is killed by Narouz. Balthazar is the only gay character in the *Quartet* that survives and takes up an important role in the narrative, but he is presented by Darley more as a religious figure than a person with homosexual desire.

2. Durrell was born and raised in India until eleven years old, partly inherited an Irish identity from his mother, associated himself with anarchists, and self-identified as an expatriate. For more details, see Gordon Bowker's *Through the Dark Labyrinth: A Biography of Lawrence Durrell*, James Gifford's *Personal Modernisms*, and Durrell's own writing in *From the Elephant's Back.* Within the existing Durrell scholarship, the major criticizing voice on the *Quartet*'s treatment of sexuality and race comes from Joseph Boone's *Libidinal Current: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism*, in which he closely examines the hyper-masculinity in Durrell's intimate correspondence with Henry Miller and the problematic convergence of sexual and oriental fantasy in Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*.

3. In *Writing in the Margins*, Marilyn Adler Papayanis identifies the source of Durrell's "imperial aesthetics" in his concept of "Heraldic Universe"—a "special signature and preoccupation with a mystical unity resting behind phenomena and lives, which he delineates through a confluence of Eastern metaphysics and Western physics" (41). She further notes Richard Rine's description of Durrell's emphasis on a purely inward-turning self: "In this insistence on self as the only knowable entity, and the elucidation of worlds in which the self is at once king and only inhabitant, we see a quite different approach to the novel than that of Proust or Joyce whose concern is with the outer world and with history. In . . . Durrell . . . the elements of time and place, whatever form they take, have no meaning unless they can be Þrst measured against the yardstick of pure self" (qtd. in Papayanis 41).

4. In "Reading Orientalism and the Crisis of Epistemology in the Novels of Lawrence Durrell," James Gifford argues that "Superficially, *The Alexandria Quartet* is an Orientalist text in that it stirs ideas of the mystical Muslim world which one must admit exists primarily in the Western mind. However, this superficial image evoked for mood, is quickly usurped by an Orient which is completely unknown" (3). My contention is that the "mood" evoked by "this superficial image" coexists with the epistemological limits of European heteronormative ideology—excess and silence are two sides of the same coin. In *Writing in the Margins*, Papayanis's thoughtful reading of Durrell's imperial aesthetics also bears the risk of rhetorical justification through words such as "even" and "although." For example, she writes, "His text celebrates diversity and Levantine cosmopolitanism, even as it indulges in the coarsest of Orientalisms" (45).

5. Carlos Villar Flor argues that the profound sense of absurdity in the novel is created by Ishiguro's oneiric technique, reminiscent of Kafka and Beckett" which "suggest[s] images of non-communication and familial anxiety" (168). I cite Flor here to suggest that reading the novel is indeed an anxiogenic experience, and this readerly experience is so overwhelming that it creates a maximal contrast with the near zero-degree dynamics of form itself.

6. For definitions and major discussions of "metamodernism," see David James and Urmila Seshagiri, and Robin van den Akker et al. The exaggeration of the modernist "inward turn" means: 1) the degrees and modes by which modernist forms render interiority—such as interior monologue or streams of consciousness—are no longer sufficient to address the contemporary fragmentation and dissolution of the subject; 2) *The Unconsoled*'s engagement with modernism suggests that modernism's legacies not only seep into contemporary novels as aesthetic feelings but also reanimate an exaggeration of the modernist mind that generates such feelings in the first place.

7. I do not intend to invoke various developmental psychologies of attachment, but rather emphasize the question of ethics. This notion of attachment is a counterpart to Wendy Brown's concept of "wounded attachments"—a political emotion of *ressentiment* that only leads to reaction instead of action, an emotion that is indeed shared among some citizens in the novel (52)—as well as to Lauren Berlant's theory of "optimistic attachment," a cruel attachment to the very thing that prevents one from flourishing (24).

8. It is also possible to read *The Unconsoled* as a "neuro-novel"—a novel that features a first-person narrator who suffers a certain neurological disease (such as Jonathan Lethem's *Motherless Brooklyn* and Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love*), which, according to David James, "triggered the stylistic experiments of early-twentieth-century literary impressionism" ("Modernist Affects and Contemporary Literature"). In *The Unconsoled*, Ryder does seem to be suffering from an odd form of amnesia. Yet, the novel's form determines that it cannot be classified exactly as the neuro-novel: the self-reflexivity of the novel normalizes an entire world of alternative logic as well as the oddity of form without giving way to any backdrop of another normative reality that contrasts with the narrator's neurological disorder.

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