Allegories of Pathology

Post-War Colonial Expatriates and Imperial Neurosis in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* and Derek Walcott's *Omeros*

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In his seminal essay "The Negro and Pychopathology" (1952), Frantz Fanon calls upon us to "investigate the extent to which the conclusions of Freud or of Adler can be applied to the effort to understand the man of colour's view of the world" (141). A deeply personal response to his experiences of racism as a black Martinican in Lyon, Fanon's affirmation of the "man of colour's view of the world" was consonant with the radical developments of the time, notably the Bandung Conference (1955) and the Tricontinental Conference (1966) that gave political voice to representatives of Asia, Africa and South America.[1] Today, however, – more than half a decade after the publication of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) – the postcolonial subject has been firmly established in scholarly discourse. It is time to reimagine new possibilities for Fanon's exhortation. To do so, we need to rebalance Fanon's binary distinction and shift some of the focus back to the so-called 'white man.' Postcolonial studies tend to focus ei-

1 Held in 1955 during the Cold War, the Afro-Asian Conference or the Bandung Conference was an international platform from which delegates from Asian and African nations publicly and collectively articulated their condemnation of colonialism and neocolonialism as well as their solidarity as nations aligned neither with the US nor with the Soviet Union. Extending this Afro-Asian solidarity to the Americas, the 1966 Tricontinental Conference, also known as the Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, brought together delegates representing national liberation movements in thirty-five countries in the non-western world.

ther on the oppressed subaltern or the privileged postcolonial expatriate writer. The experience of the 'white man,' particularly the colonial administrator and Christian missionary, is often used in dialectic opposition to the colonized individual or postcolonial subject. As for the condition of the 'white postcolonial,' an expatriate living in the formerly colonized, now-independent country, it has only recently attracted the attention of scholars. Highlighting the extent to which "whiteness itself remains a largely unexamined category" in relation to colonialism and its aftermath, Alfred J. López pointedly asks, "*What happens to whiteness after empire?*" (4; emphasis in original).

The ramifications of this question being too vast to explore in the space of an essay, I will focus on the trope of the war injury as a means to problematise the white experience of postcolonial expatriation. In line with Fanon's insights into the psychopathology of colonialism, I examine the links between empire, war and neurosis from the prism of the post-war expatriate situation. I therefore counterpoint the experiences of three radically different post-war expatriates: the eponymous Odysseus, the archetypal expatriate; Nicole Warren, the extremely privileged American expatriate heiress of the Jazz Age in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* (1934); and Major Plunkett, the British expatriate living in the former British colony and now independent island-state of Saint Lucia in Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (1990). The latter two texts, in particular, are structured around the typically postcolonial strategy of the personal and national allegory as conceptualised by Fredric Jameson (see 69).[2] The international dimension of expatriation allows me to extend these critical categories into the domain of "transnational allegory" (Ramazani 1997). In *Tender is the Night* and *Omeros*, pathological disorders constitute an allegory of the white expatriate's sense of spatial and psychological dislocation. Having underlined this significant convergence between American expatriate writing and postcolonial aesthetics, I will underscore what I believe to be the fundamental point of divergence and the specificity of postcolonial literature: its preoccupation with time and historiography.

2 While I see the Jamesonian national allegory as typical of postcolonial poetics, I do not see it as necessarily limited to postcolonial literature. However, I do share Jameson's sense that the interpenetrating relationship between the libidinal and the political is explicitly thematized and staged to a degree uncommon to other bodies of literature.

POST-WAR NARRATIVES

The central importance of the figure of the expatriate in *Tender is the Night* and *Omeros* signals their intertextual affiliation to the *Odyssey*. All three narratives are set in a post-war context. The *Odyssey*, set in the aftermath of the Trojan War, follows Odysseus as he wanders around the Mediterranean before successfully returning to Ithaca. George de F. Lord helpfully summarises existing interpretations of the epic by dividing them into two categories: the allegorists, from the Augustan Heraclitus to Roger Ascham, who see in it a moral allegory of reason's triumph over temptation, and the realists including C.S. Lewis, who see it as an adventure story in which events are 'accidental,' 'external,' and devoid of ethical significance. To the realists one may add Eric Auerbach. In his famous study of Odysseus's scar (recognized by the old housekeeper Euryclea but concealed from Penelope), Auerbach posits that Homeric epic represents phenomena as "fully externalised" so that "nothing remains hidden and unexpressed" (23). As Euryclea washes Odysseus's feet, Homer describes the scene thus:

> The scar: he had forgotten that. She must not
> handle his scarred thigh or the game was up.
> But when she bared her lord's leg, bending near,
> she knew the groove at once.
> An old wound
> a boar's white tusk had inflicted, on Parnassos
> years ago. (XIX.456–462)

The back-story of Odysseus's scar is presented as a narrative digression on par with other narrative events, and not as, say, a psychological flashback that Odysseus could have had. This "Homeric style knows only a foreground, only a uniformly illuminated, uniformly objective present" (Auerbach 7). In contrast, George de F. Lord, writing almost a decade after the devastation of World War II, subscribes to Denton J. Snider's reading of the poem. For Snider, the *Odyssey* recounts the "estrangement" and "spiritual restoration" of Odysseus, "the wise man, who, through his intelligence, was able to take Troy, but who now has another and greater problem – the return out of the grand estrangement caused by the Trojan expedition" (qtd. in Lord 409).

Unlike Odysseus, whose exile is involuntary, Nicole Warren in *Tender is the Night* and Major Plunkett in *Omeros* are expatriates by choice. Like Odysseus, both are linked to visible, external signs of bodily penetration. A bloodstained bedspread in a Parisian hotel triggers a seemingly irrational outburst of horror on

the part of Nicole. After having helped her husband Dick move the corpse of a black man to another room, she locks herself in the bathroom. When Dick enters to check on her, she exclaims,

> "it's you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world – with your spread with red blood on it […] don't come into the bathroom, the only place I can go for privacy, dragging spreads with red blood on them and asking me to fix them." (125–126)

We learn that such outbursts are part of a recurrent pattern of behaviour. Witnessing Nicole's breakdown in the hotel bathroom, the young actress Rosemary recalls a previous episode: "now she knew what Violet McKisco had seen in the bathroom at the Villa Diana" (126). Finally, in *Omeros*, Major Plunkett, a retired British army officer, is still haunted by traumatic memories of World War II, during which he sustained a serious head wound. When serving under General Bernard Montgomery in the North Africa campaign of the Second World War, Plunkett is wounded in the head as he witnesses the death of his "chums, companions. Comrades-in-arms":

> They crouched, hands on helmets, while the Messerschmitt's gun
> stitched, in staccato succession, miniature palms
>
> along the top of a trench. He shot up. Again
> Tumbly pulled him down. "Just keep your bleedin' 'ead low!"
> Scott was running to them, laughing, but the only thing
>
> funny about him was the fact that one elbow
> didn't have the rest of the arm. (27)

Plunkett's suffering is compounded by his wife's inability to have a son. As a British expatriate who has relocated to the idyllic island of Saint Lucia, he becomes obsessed with the island's colonial history, in particularly the Battle of the Saintes, which inaugurated Britain's supremacy in much of the West Indies. Plunkett researches this battle extensively in an attempt to find meaning to war and the life he has devoted to it. In this sense, his expatriate location initially does not allow him to distance himself from imperial discourse. On the contrary, his nostalgic desire to reinscribe himself within a glorious imperialist narrative deprives him of lucidity. The causes of his neurosis are therefore multiple, linked to his traumatic experience in World War II, the loss of Britain's colonial gran-

deur and a resulting obsession with Eurocentric history, and the couple's childlessness.

The *Odyssey*, *Tender is the Night* and *Omeros* thus present three very different expatriate 'types.' Odysseus, the war veteran of classical antiquity, frequently draws attention not only to the physical suffering he endured, but also to the alienation of exile: "Where shall a man find sweetness to surpass / his own home and his parents? In far lands / he shall not, though he find a house of gold" (IX.38–40). A far more explicit link between geographical expatriation and existential expatriation from the self is established in *Tender is the Night*. Nicole, in a moment of free indirect discourse, muses, "there was no home left to her, save emptiness and pain" (159). Moreover, as an 'American expatriate' in Europe moving in the glittering world of lavish parties and insouciant escapades, she would seem to share little in common with a 'postcolonial expatriate'[3] like Major Plunkett, whose life of ease in St Lucian society is the direct result of Britain's colonial domination of the island. Still, in *Tender is the Night*, there is a distinctly colonial dynamic in the economic relationship between the rich expatriate Americans in France and the native French, who appear almost exclusively in the role of subalterns as cooks, waiters, maid-servants, valets and hotel personnel. Their resentment against America's capitalist hegemony is particularly evident in the confrontation between Dick and Augustine, the maid-servant, who accuses him of being a "disgusting American" with "the voice of the commune" (286).[4] While the historical situations of an 'American expatriate' like Nicole and a 'postcolonial expatriate' like Plunkett are undeniably distinct, I argue that they are nonetheless comparable, specifically through the depiction of their experiences as narratives of neurosis.

3 Plunkett may also be called a 'colonial expatriate' by virtue of his connection to Britain, the former colonizing power in Saint Lucia. Yet, Walcott focuses on Plunkett's experiences as a white Britisher in a *postcolonial* context. Though he enjoys economic privileges bestowed by the disparities created by the colonial system, he also experiences cultural alienation as a resident who *wants* to be considered St Lucian but is not fully integrated in St Lucian society.

4 A proletariat uprising in 1871 in Paris. It resulted in a short-lived government – the Commune – that promoted radical socialism.

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WOUNDS

Unlike the purely physical manifestation of Odysseus's scar that appears not "out of the darkness of an unilluminated past" but is "set in full light," Nicole's and Plunkett's wounds are, to borrow Auerbach's terms, "mysterious and 'fraught with background'" (15). In *Tender is the Night*, the bloodstain becomes the visible manifestation of underlying psychological trauma. At the centre of the narrative is the act of incest between Nicole Warren and her father. This painful childhood experience constitutes the root cause of Nicole's neurosis. The traumatic origin of her psychic discomfort is displaced to a bedspread, presumably because of its association with the bedsheet of the original scene of incest. Nicole's doctors recognise that she has also dealt with her trauma through the classic psychoanalytic strategy of transference. She redirects her feelings vis-à-vis her father to another father-figure, the young doctor Dick Diver. As Nicole begins to improve, her doctor Franz Gregorovious exclaims to Dick: "It was the best thing that could have ever happened to her […] a transference of the most fortuitous kind" (134). Dick subsequently marries the wealthy Nicole because he is attracted to her, but also in order to medically treat her during her outbursts of neurotic behaviour. Reflecting on how the transference began yielding a positive change in Nicole's behaviour, Franz says to Dick, "[r]eally, it had become your case" (133). While Franz candidly acknowledges that his unit is "a rich person's clinic" (133), Fitzgerald nonetheless inserts an authorial comment of validation by describing it as "a refuge for the broken, the incomplete, the menacing, of this world" (135).

Omeros, too, follows a psychoanalytic story-arc of trauma, neurosis, identification of the disorder and treatment. Plunkett is treated in an army hospital for his head wound sustained in the North African campaign, but he must still recover morally. He tries to find meaning to war, but is increasingly disillusioned. Reflecting on the Latin expression "*[p]ro honoris causa*" or "for the sake of honour," he asks himself, "but in whose honour did his head-wound graduate?" (25; emphasis in the original). Plunkett's head-wound is part of the reason he has moved to St Lucia with his wife: "They'd been out here / since and the war and his wound" (25). However, Plunkett is haunted by the couple's inability to produce a child. Once in St Lucia, Plunkett finds new purpose through a kind of transference, born of a happy coincidence. As he researches St Lucia's history, he stumbles upon a namesake: a nineteen-year-old Dutch midshipman also named Plunkett who died during the Battle of the Saintes in 1782. This sea battle marked a key victory for the English, enabling them to definitively consolidate their colonial possessions in the Caribbean. The midshipman thus represents a

patriotic sacrifice that served a purpose, as opposed to the horrific slaughter of World War I, notably the Battle of the Somme, in which Plunkett's father lost his life (see 87). While Plunkett never articulates this contrast between the Battle of the Saintes' patriotic finality and the Battle of the Somme's futility, the chilling reference to his father in a description of a genealogical tree Plunkett is having drawn up is telling: "One pod was the Somme's. / It burst with his father's lungs" (87). Major Plunkett sees in this midshipman a glorious version of himself as well as the son he never had. His newfound passion for history becomes a neurotic compulsion as he pours over details concerning cannons, ships, wind direction and other aspects of the "battle's numerological poetry" (91). Like Nicole, Plunkett initially seeks refuge in a false 'cure' through an unhealthy transference. While Plunkett transfers his desire for a son to the young midshipman, Nicole resorts to a transference of feelings from one father-figure (her biological father) to another (Dick). Indeed, the father-child relationship is a major structural principle of both narratives. The leitmotiv of "Daddy's girl" and failed fathers is central to *Tender is the Night* (see Prigozy; Ullrich) while the replication and reversal of father-son genealogies proliferate across *Omeros* (see Hamner 54–58, 62).

THE WOUND OF WAR: PERSONAL ALLEGORIES OF CIVILIZATIONAL DISORDER

Nicole's and Plunkett's neuroses are also symptomatic of broader social crises. The shadow of World War I is never far from the dazzling party-life of expatriate hedonism. For example, Nicole's father uses his clout to bring her to Europe for treatment on an American battle-ship during World War I; earlier in the novel, Rosemary, the young starlet, and Dick, along with others, visit the site of the Battle of the Somme. E.W. Pitcher succinctly foregrounds the convergences between Nicole's life and World War I:

> Her father brings her to Europe on an American battleship in November of 1917, and she is committed at Dohmler's clinic in February 1918. In October-November of 1918 there is a favourable crisis in her malady (the Armistice is negotiated in Europe), and early in 1919 she is ready to be demobilized with the rest of those who have been to war. Of course, Nicole's 'war' is internal, but the parallels are too striking to be coincidental. (76)

Nicole's psychological disorder is thus symptomatic of the collective trauma of American expatriates in Europe living in the aftermath of the First World War.

Moreover, she is born in 1901 and is thus "the representative of the twentieth century, the child of the modern age" (76). Such temporal 'coincidences' between Nicole's private life and the American Century recall those in postcolonial works such as Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), in which Saleem Sinai is born at the midnight-hour of India's independence. Moreover, the roots of Nicole's disorder can be traced to an act of incest occurring at the same time as the outbreak of the war. David Ullrich sees a revealing parallel between Nicole's 'betrayal' by her father and the collective 'betrayal' of the idealistic young men sent to the battlefield by the older generation: "A young girl being seduced by her father at home in Lake Forest, Illinois, in 1914 is the equivalent evil of a young boy being seduced by his patriarchs into being slaughtered in his homeland in trench warfare" (61–62). The fact that Nicole's father brings her to Europe on an American battle-ship also links the psychological violence of incest with the collective violence of the war.

Nicole's initial recovery is clearly connected to the Armistice of World War I, as reflected in the kinds of letters she wrote Dick: "The letters were divided into two classes, of which the first class, *up to about the time of the armistice*, was of marked pathological turn, and of which the second class, running from thence up to the present, was entirely normal" (135; emphasis added). As Ullrich eloquently explains, "Fitzgerald merges interpersonal and political dramas; the act of sexual violence in its most malignant form, incest, is equivalent to political violence in its most evil form: war" (60-61). For Ullrich, incest is a psychosexual 'metaphor' for pathological political violence.

I would like to expand Pitcher's and Ullrich's lexicons of symbolical 'representative' and 'metaphor' by linking them to the postcolonial concept of national allegory as theorised by Fredric Jameson (1986). "Third-world texts," Jameson famously argues, "necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*" (69; emphasis in the original). However, Nicole's mixed parentage (her father is American, her mother European) makes her a personification not only of the American nation, but of the American expatriate location. Similarly, her neurosis is less an expression of American national experience than one of transatlantic violence and trauma, particularly the complications of America's entanglements abroad. As Judith Kitchen puts it, "the recent war […] had devastated most of Europe and taken the lives of countless American soldiers. America's history, now, was implicated in European fate" (51). Nicole's symbolic significance, therefore, is not limited to that of a "national allegory," but in fact becomes what Jahan Ramazani has called a "transnational allegory" (412) when describing the trope of the

wound in *Omeros*. Transnational allegory, Ramazani posits, disrupts the "unproblematic referentiality" of nationalist politics and realist poetics, both of which tend to focus on "the particular historical experience of a particular race in a particular part of the world" (412). Transnational allegory "widen[s] rather than purif[ies] what might be called the dialectic of the tribe" (410). In this sense, *Tender is the Night* expands the scope of Jameson's famous postulation that "[t]hird-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic – necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory" (69). Fitzgerald's representation of American expatriates shows that allegorical dynamics fusing the political and libidinal can also be found in a 'first-world text.' A modernist narrative of expatriation can already contain within it the transnational impulse that would find fuller expression in later postcolonial texts.

The key point of intersection of the private and public in *Tender is the Night* is encapsulated by the wound imagery, specifically that of stained sheets and rugs. In the opening of the book, the narrator uses a strange metaphor to describe the French Riviera beach: "its bright tan prayer rug of a beach" (11). This immaculate holiday beach contrasts sharply with the bloody beach of Thiepval where soldiers died in the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. Expatriate paradise and bloody battlefield interfuse through the shared imagery of the rug as Dick describes the massacred soldiers on the ground at Thiepval as "a million bloody rugs" (67). The blood imagery finally erupts in the more intimate space of a hotel bedroom when Nicole has a nervous breakdown on beholding a blood-stained bedspread at the scene of a murder cited earlier in this paper. It is as much as the memory of the incestual bedsheet as the intrusion and interpenetration of the personal and the political that so appals Nicole. It is also noteworthy to point out that the person murdered is a black man named Jules Paterson involved in a complicated saga of mistaken identity. Furthermore, Paterson's role is compared in the text to "the position of the friendly Indian who helped the white" (119). While the brief appearance this character makes is caricatural, if not racist, it is significant that the narrative engages to different degrees with multiple levels of victimhood and suffering – of the World War I soldiers, of the increasingly emancipated post-war woman, of the post-war generation, but also of the marginalized racial others.

World War I is thus more than the defining narrative event of *Tender is the Night*, it is also the book's preeminent and multidirectional metaphor. Nicole is not the only psychologically 'wounded' character to be allegorically linked to World War I. Dick Diver, her therapist-husband, has also been scarred by war. Ironically, as an Oxford Rhodes Scholar, he does not participate in the war since

"he was already too valuable, too much of a capital investment to be shot off in a gun" (129). Yet, Fitzgerald's recurrent imagery of broken shells (a deliberate polysemic play on war shells and egg shells) serves to highlight complex, invisible psychological wounds, linked to his guilt about not serving in the war and living off Nicole's wealth as well as his frustration about not having realized his potential to become a great doctor. In a lucid moment of self-understanding following "a long dream of war," he writes "the half-ironic phrase: 'Non-combatant's shell-shock'" (198).

Furthermore, though Dick is responsible for her therapy, he is irresistibly attracted to two virginal young women: a "beautiful shell" (134) like Nicole and the budding young actress Rosemary Shields. The pathological dimension of this father-daughter complex is evoked symbolically, through references to streets names like *rue des Saint-Pères* and popular culture. Nicole is associated with the song "Why Do They Call Them Babies?" (150) while Rosemary is systematically linked to the film that has brought her stardom, *Daddy's Girl*. Dick is "enough older than Nicole to take pleasure in her youthful vanities" (153). As he watches *Daddy's Girl* beside Rosemary, "a lovely shot of Rosemary and her parents united at the last in a father complex" makes Dick "winc[e] for all the psychologists" (80), but perhaps also subconsciously at his own fascination for 'daddy's girls.' Emphasising the idealisation of womanhood in the Hollywood films and musicals of the 1920s, Ruth Prigozy argues that Dick represents American audiences "of all ages and by the millions [who] were willing dupes" of this ideal of girlish innocence that Fitzgerald ironically exposes as a hollow "artifice" of popular culture (214). In addition, the constant allusions to World War I, generals, as well as physical and psychological violence foreground an allegorical correspondence between Dick's and Nicole's psychological battles to master their pathological drives, on the one hand, and civilization's struggle to control its propensity for violence and destruction, on the other. While Dick and Nicole seem blinkered by their expatriate locations, Fitzgerald, the epitome of the American expatriate (he spent much of the 1920s shuttling between the French Riviera and Delaware) clearly articulates a dual perspective on American culture, seen both from home and abroad.

Fitzgerald's use of the trope of the wound as a site of painful personal and historical trauma is both magnified and multiplied in *Omeros*. The book opens with a powerful allegory established between the felling of trees and a European massacre of the native Arawak tribe. The Caribbean fisherman Philoctete prays before he "wound[s] the first cedar" (3). The trees are described as "bearded elders [who] endured the decimation / of their tribe" (6). This genocide anticipates references in the poem to other examples of colonial violence in North America

(the Wounded Knee Massacre) and Africa (the atrocities of the transatlantic slave trade, particularly the voyage from Africa to the Americas, known as the Middle Passage). The most striking example is Philoctete's ankle wound which, he believes, "came from the chained ankles / of his grandfathers" (19). His injury thus associates him with the suffering endured by his forefathers during their forced transportation from their African homeland to the West Indies.

However, the power of the wound imagery in *Omeros* derives not from its potential as an instrument to merely critique colonialism, but in its assertion of the universality of historical trauma. Not all the characters who bear scars are victims of colonial oppression. As pointed out earlier, the white expatriate Plunkett is also morally scarred. The linking of his head-wound with the "fatal wound" (86) sustained by the eighteenth-century midshipman in the Battle of the Saintes associates Plunkett with European colonialism. However, Plunkett's head-wound also makes him the colonial double of the St Lucian Philoctete who bears an ankle injury. Moreover, as a colonial expatriate, Plunkett is an inverted reflection of the poet-narrator, a postcolonial expatriate.

A St Lucian living in America, the poet-persona is, in fact, a fictionalised version of Walcott himself. In a metaleptic moment, the narrator, referring to Plunkett's head-wound, explains, "This wound I have stitched into Plunkett's character." He adds, "affliction is one theme / of this work" (28). Even the narrator is not exempt from the trauma of colonialism, though his dilemma is more existential and linguistic. His simultaneous allegiance to native creole and the English language, to St Lucian performative traditions and the western form of Homeric epic also brings pain. He thus speaks of "the wound of a language I had no wish to remove" (270). By having characters as diverse as Plunkett, the midshipman, Philoctete, and the poet-narrator bear wounds, Walcott emphasises the distinct but nonetheless permeable nature of historical suffering across divides of race, culture and class. Fitzgerald's and Walcott's locations as expatriates perhaps make them particularly sensitive to both the singularity of individual experience and the simultaneous necessity for solidarity across forms of borders.

At this point, it is relevant to address the problematic nature of an endeavour that uses a postcolonial lens to examine the experiences of white characters. To suggest, as I do, that the white expatriate is akin to the postcolonial subject; that he or she is another in-between figure straddling two countries, cultures and imaginaries, is to run the risk of transforming the 'persecutor' into a kind of 'victim.' Such a reading, it may be contended, undermines the oppositional thrust of the postcolonial project, which seeks to challenge white imperial and post-imperial hegemony. However, Walcott's transnational allegory powerfully illustrates the fact that Walcott is "[r]epudiating a separatist aesthetic of afflic-

tion" by "turn[ing] the wound into a resonant site of interethnic connection […], deconstructing the uniqueness of suffering" (Ramazani 406). It is this deconstruction of the "uniqueness of suffering" that creates a "transnational allegory" of affliction. A similarly interconnected allegory of affliction links the privileged Nicole, the debonair Dick, the dead black man, the dead soldiers of World War I and the decadent Lost Generation through the motif of the bloody rug. In this sense, the postcolonial technique of transnational allegory resonates deeply with the epistemological imperative of postcolonial studies which seeks not only to destabilise master-narratives such as imperialism and race but also to reveal their contrived nature as constructs or narratives per se.

CURE

As expatriate white subjects, Nicole and Plunkett also experience psychoanalytic arcs of transformation – from psychological trauma and its resulting neurotic tendencies to self-awareness and treatment. Nicole's ultimate cure is to rid herself of her emotional and psychological over-dependence on Dick by facing up to her psychological disorder. Significantly, her moment of cure is described in explicitly militaristic terms:

> [F]or this inner battle, she used even her weaknesses – fighting courageously with […] the empty receptacles of her expiated sins […]. And suddenly, in the space of two minutes she achieved her victory […] cut[ting] the umbilical cord forever. (Fitzgerald 324)

Yet, Nicole's 'cure' is curiously similar to her 'disease.' As Milton Stern observes, her psychosexual liberation from her father was facilitated by a first sexual transference to Dick, while her emancipation from her over-dependence on Dick is orchestrated by a second transference to Tommy Barban, a self-professed mercenary who becomes her lover and second husband. Nicole's personal cure, however, does not automatically herald an unproblematic fresh start, nor does it necessarily betoken a facile form of broader civilizational healing. Stern notes that the consummation of Nicole and Tommy's relationship is syncopated with a US battleship firing its guns to call its sailors on shore-leave back on board on the ship (see 107). The implications of the boisterous sailors' violence and promiscuity during their leave dramatically underscore the pathological persistence of the life- and death-seeking drives on personal and societal levels.

A similar sense of uncertainty hovers over the major healing sequences in *Omeros*. Plunkett's compulsive need to compensate for the lack of a son through

his neurotic obsession with history comes to an end when his wife Maud dies (yet another 'wound' for him), succumbing to an imperialism that spares few: the "empire of cancer" (260). Maud's death brings home the reality of the absence of a son, a fact Plunket has, until this point, been unwilling to accept by imagining the nineteen-year old midshipman as his son: "He forgot the war's / history that cost him a wife and a son" (309). While the Battle of the Saintes did indeed result in the loss of the life of the midshipman (his 'son'), Walcott also underscores the emotional toll Plunkett's obsession with history took on his relationship with Maud. Nonetheless, Maud's literal death allows her husband to come to terms with the figurative 'death' of his absent 'son.' Instead of searching for self-validation in a self-aggrandising imperial past, Plunkett is able to follow his late wife's lesson by living in the present. He begins to appreciate the natural beauty of the island (Maud was an avid gardener, like the poet-narrator): "He learnt how to pause / in the shade of a stone arch watching the bright red / flowers of the immortelle" (309). He also starts seeing the Saint Lucians as individuals, not pawns of history: "he began to speak to the workmen / not as boys who worked with him, till every name / somehow sounded differently" (309).

Similarly, Philoctete's ankle-wound, linked to the ancestral trauma of the Middle Passage, is cured through a mystic concoction from a root carried by a swift from Africa whose flight across the Atlantic repeats the transatlantic routes of the slave trade. Finally, the poet-narrator faces a cultural conundrum – that of being a poet desirous of celebrating the St Lucian people from whom he feels alienated as an anglicised, economically privileged expatriate. Only a hallucinatory Dantean descent to the underworld, represented by the sulphur springs of St Lucia, guided by Omeros, liberates him from "Pride in [his] craft" through a rite of "exorcism" (293-4). His 'cure' is being self-critical of "the hypocrisy / of loving them from [the] hotels" in which he stays each time he revisits his native island (228). He will continuously re-experience this estrangement and, at the same time, attempt to bridge this distance.

In *Omeros*, but also in *Tender is the Night*, the wound thus seems to take on a "homeopathic" power through a "mirroring relation between injury and remedy" (Ramazani 413). The cure lies in a continuing re-exposure and reproduction of pain in order to come to terms with it. In Plunkett's case as well as Nicole's, the merging of injury and remedy also suggests that there is no one-shot solution; that the cure is a continuous, ongoing process, marked by a proactive desire to confront and periodically "exorci[ze]" (Walcott 294) the ghosts of the past. While open to charges of resorting to contrived 'happy endings,' the fact is that both Fitzgerald and Walcott check their utopic allegorical impulses by accepting that "[t]his was history. I had no power to change it" (217). Plunkett may have

come to terms with an "empire's guilt" (263) on a personal level, but St Lucian society as a whole remains "besieged / by the lances of yachts" (310), metonyms of the onward march of the tourist sector and neocolonial capitalism. Nicole may have achieved her "victory" (324), but the neurotic impulses of civilization, ominously reiterated by the sounds of naval artillery when she and Tommy make love, foreshadow the onslaught of fresh violence to be brought on by World War II (albeit unwittingly since the book was published in 1934). The figurative sophistication and political resonance of transnational allegory thus lies as much in its celebration of the possibilities of transformation and healing as in an unsentimental appraisal of an allegory's limits in the context of historical and contemporary violence that beget further tribulation and trauma.

As I near my conclusion, I will now offer a belated answer to the question raised at the beginning of the article. Can expatriate writing, whether written in the modernist or postcolonial period, be said to have a specifically postcolonial poetics? The convergences between the expatriate and postcolonial conditions are multiple – varying degrees of spatial, psychological and cultural dislocation, resulting in a renewed need for self-definition. Of most relevance to this paper is the idea that both expatriate and postcolonial narratives also function as political allegories. Warren Susman's definition of expatriate writing applies equally well to postcolonial writing: "a cultural mechanism available to the intellectual whereby he can attempt to turn his personal problems into public issues" (171). Yet, Nicole's expatriation remains fundamentally different from Plunkett's, transnational allegories notwithstanding. While Fitzgerald's Lost Generation appears to be in denial of the shattering psychosocial effects of the Great War, the diverse inhabitants of St Lucia in *Omeros* are haunted by historical events that have shaped their contemporary lives such as the Middle Passage and the Battle of the Saintes. Nicole and her fellow elite expatriates are, above all, travellers across *space*, aimlessly drifting from one European resort to another. Major Plunkett demonstrates the postcolonial preoccupation with *time* and history, attempting to replace his war service and his dying empire at the centre of a master-narrative that he and his nation no longer master. Nicole and Plunkett also serve as important reminders that there are several white experiences (male/female, wealthy heiress/a soldier who has risen through the ranks, Anglo-American/British), just as there are multiple 'postcolonial' locations.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I would like to return to the *Odyssey* and bring this study full circle. Intertextual references to Homer's epic appear in both *Tender is the Night* and *Omeros*. Dick is systematically associated with the martial tradition and generals, particularly Ulysses Grant, in *Tender is the Night* (see 121, 132, 338). In addition to the eponymous bard Omeros who shares similarities with Odysseus, Plunkett's desire for a son is described as a doomed quest for his Telemachus in *Omeros* (see 263). Yet, Odysseus never experiences the psychological trauma that Nicole and Plunkett do. Admittedly, he suffers – though his theatrical insistence on the pain of exile reflects a propensity for exaggeration and a desire to manipulate his listeners (see Emlyn-Jones). It can also be argued that Homer's epic style leaves no room for the psychological analysis of a post-Freudian world. Nonetheless, it reflects, above all, an understanding of war that is fundamentally different from our own: one of war as simultaneously a source of tragic death and of eternal life through glory (*kleos*). Tragedy is present in this equation – but neurosis is not. The erosion of a martial aristocracy, the rise of individualism and the emergence of pacifist protest render the unequivocal epic glorification of war impossible for the modern post-war expatriate. Both *Tender is the Night* and *Omeros* suggest as much – the morally scarred Nicole and Plunkett are parodic doubles of the psychologically unscathed Odysseus: the wars to which they have been witness can no longer be presented as personal and moral victories but as ethical and civilizational failures. Their redemption lies not in their homecoming but in the difficult task of being at home in a disturbed and disturbing world.

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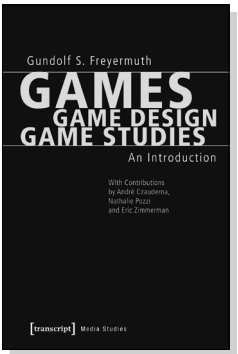

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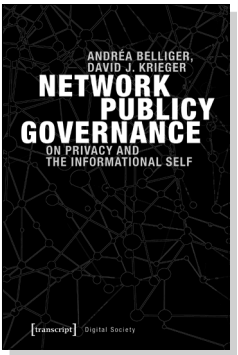

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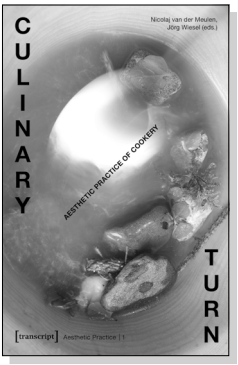

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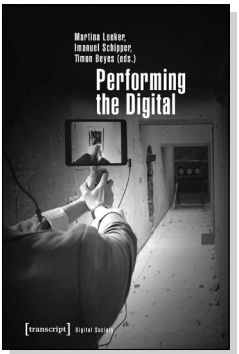

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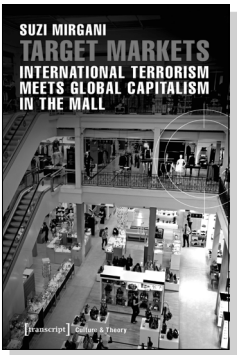

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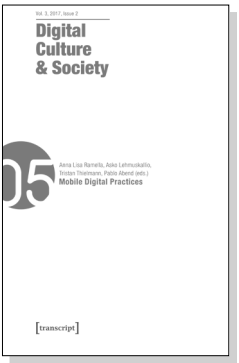

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