

TYOLOGY, THE NOVEL, AND THE SELF

Lynne Walhout Hinojosa, Baylor University

I begin this paper by relating three episodes that are driving some of its questions. The first episode occurred in a study group I attended with fellow members of an American Baptist church. The group spent several weeks reading and discussing Walter Shurdan's *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*, and then followed that with a week on the Baptist Manifesto.¹ The discussion of the latter broke up the session as emotions rose and the pastor of the church, very red in the face, finally exclaimed in anger: "No one can get between me and the leather cover of my NIV Study Bible." While the comment itself did not totally surprise me, I did not understand his anger and redness in the face. What was it about the Manifesto's statements about communal versus individual reading of the Bible that was so upsetting? What was it about these Baptists (a denomination to which I was new) that would make them defend the individual's right to Biblical interpretation so strongly? The second episode occurred at a conference at Baylor, where I heard a paper given on *Robinson Crusoe* by the (male) provost of a well-known Christian college. I had taught the text for years in undergraduate literature survey courses, and every year debates had arisen among my students about the relationship of Crusoe's Christianity to his imperialist, colonizing, and capitalist activities and attitudes. I did not have a completely adequate answer (and still do not) for how to reconcile these elements, so in casual conversation with this speaker I raised the question of how to relate Crusoe's Puritanism with his Western attitude of dominance. The reply, in my view, was loud, a bit derisive, and definitely patronizing: "I don't think one has to worry about those things." I didn't pursue it further, but I

¹This document, written in 1997 and titled "Re-Envisioning Baptist Identity: A Manifesto for Baptist Communities in North America," can be found here:
<http://www.divinity.duke.edu/docs/faculty/freeman/ReenvisioningBaptistIdentity.pdf>

have always thought that a Christian literary critic does indeed have to worry about these things. The third episode occurred recently, when a friend of mine, upon learning that I was interested in E.M. Forster and especially *A Room with a View*, admitted that she and her friends in high school used to dress up as this novel's characters and have parties together. I said, "Oh, how fun!" but then, in hushed tones, she confessed: "You know, that novel shaped for many years how I thought life was supposed to go. I thought romance was *supposed* to happen like that."

These episodes connect in that they all raise questions about the self and its authority, reading, and texts. The modern novel in England emerged from and was shaped by Puritan theology and Bible-reading practices. Does individualized novel-reading, in turn, influence theories about Bible-reading? Could there be a connection between Crusoe's mindset and my American Baptist pastor's? As my friend implied, novel-reading can shape our attitudes, desires, and self-images, just as Bible-reading can. If the novel emerges out of Puritan theology, is its account of desire, selfhood, and authority Biblical, or not? Or, if the novel gradually "secularizes," how do we describe what happens to its Puritan roots?² Does the novel compete with the Bible in forming and winning souls? There are many more questions, of course, and no easy answers.

In this paper, with these larger questions in the background, I narrow my concern to this: What kind of self is portrayed in the novel and what kinds of selves were to be formed through reading novels? I examine the process of self-formation through reading by focusing on the Puritan theology and Bible-reading practice of typology and its use in two novels, Daniel Defoe's 1719 *Robinson Crusoe* and E. M. Forster's 1908 *A Room with a View*. In Defoe's text,

² Recent debates over secularization and literary studies also influence my concerns in the larger project of which I hope this paper will be a part. The modern novel has often been seen as a secular genre, portraying a "world abandoned by God," as Georg Lukács put it, but I tend to see the genre as engaging in a dialectical conversation with and about religion (Christianity).

Crusoe becomes an exemplary Puritan self. In Forster's text, Lucy Honeychurch becomes an idealized inversion of the Puritan self. Yet *both* texts create selves that seem autonomous morally and spiritually and that I believe deserve theological critique.

Typology and the Self in *Robinson Crusoe*

The plot of *Robinson Crusoe* shares striking similarities with that of Augustine's *Confessions*. This is perhaps not surprising as Puritan (and Protestant) theology was strongly influenced by Augustine. While *Crusoe* is cast as a spiritual autobiography written by a fictional character and *Confessions* is a spiritual autobiography written by a real person, both narrate the trajectory of the individual self in relation to God using similar motifs. Augustine and Crusoe both discuss the need to reorder their desires and to let reason dictate the soul instead of "Fancy" or appetite. Both, in retrospect, see that God worked in their lives through specific events and people, that God acted in history and had a providential plan. Both see their central sin as not being satisfied with their stations in life: they are prideful, too restless, and like Adam, attempting to be like God by creating their own laws, their own lives. Both center on remarkably similar conversion experiences as they narrate a transition in self-knowledge from a "false self" to a "true self" that is found only in submission to God. Both texts also use typology in various ways: as a narrative structure, as a code for readers, and as a method of Bible-reading, among other things. (More will be said about typology later.)

There is one significant difference between the two accounts, however.³ Augustine narrates his entire life as one involved in community. His mother Monica, Bishop Ambrose of

³ There are other differences, of course. One concerns the problem of evil—the Puritans had a strong conception of Satan as a force in the world, whereas Augustine defined evil as the absence of the good.

Milan, various dead authors, several groups of friends, even the heretical Manichees, among others, all serve to lead Augustine on his pathway toward conversion. He even converts to Christianity while sitting in a garden with a friend close by. Crusoe, on the other hand, converts to Christianity all alone. On a deserted island, with no role model, no community, no theological or intellectual training, and only, we assume, a childhood experience in the Puritan church of his parents, Crusoe randomly opens up a Bible, as Augustine did, and converts. Crusoe's post-conversion faith develops, and backslides, also in solitude. There is no baptism, and only when some cannibals arrive on the island and Crusoe rescues the pagan Friday does he share his Bible-reading and faith with another person. Even here, Crusoe leads Friday to convert to the Christian faith by reading and explaining the Bible to him in English and without the context of a larger Christian community.

Robinson Crusoe, then, presents a very different view of the authority of the individual than Augustine's text does. While Crusoe, like Augustine, submits his will to God's will, sees his former "false self" for what it is, and recognizes his place within God's Providence, he comes to this knowledge with just "himself, his Bible, and God." The larger church community is unnecessary in the process. While Augustine certainly narrates his movement toward God as an individual, he highlights and stresses throughout the text the role of the community of other believers and seekers. Indeed, he gives other people, especially other Christians, much credit for his transformation. The Bible-reading scene in the garden seems like the *last* step for Augustine along this pathway toward conversion. For Crusoe, the Bible-reading moments on the island seem like the *only* step. Crusoe had some instruction from his parents in his youth, we presume, and had what he terms an unknown "good friend" who packed the Bible that he later discovered after the shipwreck, but he has no other interactions during his whole pre-conversion

life that might be classified as instructive or as goading him towards the faith. He laments his wild friendships with other sea-farers, much as Augustine laments his “unfriendly friends,” but clearly there has been little Christian communal involvement. In this text, modern individualism and the Christian life are bound together in ways from which Augustine’s text seems to differ significantly.⁴

This binding of modernity and the Christian life in *Robinson Crusoe* has presented a quandary for literary critics ever since its publication. Defoe himself confuses the issue by labeling the third volume of Crusoe’s adventures an “historical allegory,” evoking a counterintuitive idea that history can be allegorical. Critics typically have tended to treat either one or the other of these two terms, but not both. Many famous readers of *Robinson Crusoe* dismissed the Puritan elements and identified the text as a realistic representation of modern individualism and freedom. In *Emile, or On Education*, Rousseau describes *Robinson Crusoe* as the first book (and only book for a long time) that he would let Emile read because, “stripped of its irrelevant matter,” it “supplies the best treatise on an education according to nature” (159). He suggested that “the surest way to raise [Emile] above prejudice and to base his judgments on the true relations of things, is to put him in the place of a solitary man” (159). Karl Marx thought the religious matter in the novel was irrelevant compared to Crusoe’s economic enterprises: “Of his prayers we take no account, since they are a source of such pleasure to him, and he looks on them as so much recreation” (*Capital*; qtd. in Watt 81). And in his seminal account, *The Rise of the Novel*, the marxist critic Ian Watt, who at least acknowledges that the text embodies “the struggle between Puritanism and the tendency to secularization which was rooted in material progress,” in the end says the “heritage of Puritanism is demonstrably too weak to supply a

⁴ Some have traced modern subjectivity to Augustine and his focus on the self. For an argument against this view, see Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity* (Routledge, 2003).

continuous and controlling pattern for the hero's experience" and that the "secular and economic viewpoint is the dominant partner" (80-83). On the other hand, those who have analyzed the Puritan framework and sources of the text, most notably J. Paul Hunter in *The Reluctant Pilgrim*, tend to downplay or even ignore the historically-realistic and troublesome aspects of the text such as human trafficking, imperialism, and capitalism, seeing the text as primarily an allegory of the individual Puritan life. More recently, others have analyzed the two elements together more thoroughly but with varied conclusions: either Puritans failed to live and maintain their theology in their activity in the world, and Crusoe's worldly enterprises reflect this historical trend; or, Defoe violated Puritan theology and failed to incorporate it integrally in his creation of Crusoe; or, Puritanism actually helped legitimize colonial activity.⁵

While this study can not resolve the tensions of modernity bound up in English Puritanism⁶, its examination of typology may help us understand better the notion of the self presented in *Robinson Crusoe*. The self portrayed in this text is historical and allegorical at the same time--in other words, it is typological--and has to be regarded as such, and, regardless of whether it reflects "true Puritanism" or not, this notion of the self has had tremendous influence in shaping the English (and the world's) imagination: in how people see themselves and what they value. It has been said that *Robinson Crusoe* has been the most widely-read text in England ever since its publication, with the one exception of the Bible.⁷ While the influence on its readership can not be scientifically outlined, the popularity of the text alone points to its lasting cultural impact both in England and in the United States. William Haller, in his 1938 *The Rise of Puritanism*, suggests that Governor Bradford, in his *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, writes

⁵ For the first, see Leopold Damrosch, Jr.; for the second, see John Richetti; and for the third, see Brett C. McInelly.

⁶ Much scholarly attention has been paid to this question, especially ever since Max Weber's 1904 *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

⁷ The same has been said of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

“less and less like a Puritan preacher and more and more like the author of *Robinson Crusoe*” (82). While this quote displays an anachronism (Bradford preceded *Crusoe* by several decades), there is a sentiment expressed that seems important. Defoe’s novel shapes, inspires, influences, and creates its readers just as strongly as other cultural forces do, including the church. One could even say that *Robinson Crusoe* is one of the major narratives that shape modern subjects.

Puritan typological ideas and practices inform the form and content of *Robinson Crusoe* in various ways: 1) Crusoe reads the Bible typologically, foregrounding a Puritan *hermeneutics* 2) the narrative is structured typologically, providing a code that gave astute readers prefigurative insight into the text and that paralleled a Puritan *view of history* 3) Crusoe is a typological character, from whom readers were to receive moral instruction, reflecting a Puritan *morality* 4) a typological view of God the creator and the world is portrayed, in what we might call a Puritan *aesthetics*. Puritan typology, then, simultaneously relates a particular method of reading, a morality, an aesthetics, and a view of historical narrative, all of which together serve to create a theory of the human individual in relation to God—a theory of selfhood. Although these four aspects of typology work together to form a unified theology, I treat each in *Robinson Crusoe* separately, and then trace these same aspects of typology in Forster’s later novel.

HERMENEUTICS

First, typology is a theory of Bible-reading, what Paul Korshin calls the “most enduring of the hermeneutic techniques employed by the primitive Christians” (75). St. Paul reads portions of the Old Testament as prefigurative to the New, as containing clues or patterns that prefigure the later events of the New Testament. Adam, for example, is a type that prefigures the

antitype Christ, but the latter is the perfected fulfillment of what was the imperfect imprint of the prior. This mode of reading acknowledges that both type and antitype are historical realities and rests on the assumption that God works in history and has a plan for it, creating real things that signify other real things later on in time that fulfill spiritual truths. This mode of reading tends to “spiritualize” the Old Testament, which is indeed how Augustine came to read the Bible in *Confessions*. Augustine says of Ambrose’s teaching: “It was a joy to hear Ambrose who often repeated to his congregation, as if it were a rule he was most strongly urging upon them, the text: *the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*. And he would go on to draw aside the veil of mystery and lay open the spiritual meaning of things which taken literally would have seemed to teach falsehood” (99). This typological mode of reading helped Augustine accept the Old Testament, for it meant the church did not promote the immoralities of the patriarchs and prophets, but rather saw them as shadowy prefigurations of the new life Christ brings. The Bible then presents a typological narrative in which one can identify as one reads a preordained historical pattern in which types point to their future perfected spiritual fulfillment in Jesus, who enters history and transforms it.

For Augustine, as one reads the Bible, one can also apply the types to one’s own life and see one’s self in a typological pattern: the Bible can read the self or bring self-knowledge as one places one’s self into the narrative through reading. Augustine’s famous pear-stealing episode in *Confessions*, for example, in which he steals pears as a youth merely for the thrill of stealing and for the power of being his own authority, is reminiscent of Adam and Eve’s fall, a connection that would not have been lost on his readers. Indeed, as he identifies his adolescent self with the Biblical type, Augustine uses the episode to reflect on his original sin, the nature of evil, and his false self. In doing so, not only is he reading the Bible typologically—Adam is a type who can

represent all humans—but he is also setting himself up as a type in the narrative of the *Confessions*, prefiguring to astute readers the narrative to come in which the transformation of his personal history and his self through Christ will occur.

In this way, typological Bible-reading encourages the reader to become simultaneously what Korshin calls “prefigurative” and “postfigurative” types: as Augustine does reading himself into the Bible, the reader can also see the Biblical type (and the adolescent Augustine) as a prefiguration of himself, as a type either in need of a “new self,” or, if already a believer, as a type who prefigures “his own later perfections in the afterlife” (Korshin 154). At the same time, for the reader who is already converted, one can read one’s self typologically as “postfigurative of the Savior,” as a “new self” who imitates Christ and prefigures a final perfection. In these ways, Augustine’s typology is not only a way of relating Hebrew to Christian history, but it is also a way of reading one’s own life as following a narrative pattern elucidated in the Bible, of seeing the Christian life as one moving from Old Testament type to New Testament antitype, and then in this new self becoming a new type constantly moving toward final perfection in the afterlife. Augustine’s method of interweaving Biblical text with the narration of his own life in *Confessions* demonstrates his typological hermeneutics: these are not two separate stories, but rather the individual self is read by and into the Biblical text. The story of the self is subsumed into the larger narrative of the Christian story.

Typology, then, is a Bible-reading practice that reads in both the literal and spiritual senses: literal characters and events can have figurative and prefigurative spiritual meaning for one’s own life as well as for human history. It is a way of placing one’s self into a larger narrative pattern that one regards as historically true. It is also a way of reading that gives one access to one’s own “deep self”: reading the Bible in this way brings new understanding to

one's inner nature and its relation to God's plan in ways that no other text can. What was once obscure—the self, God, history, the future--becomes clearer through typological reading.

The connection of typology with obscurity reminds us that typology is not an exact method and involves more a poetic way of reading than a scientific one; indeed, it depends on the work of the Holy Spirit. Both the type and the antitype may be obscure to the human reader. The nature of the true and false self can be equally obscure. In the face of the emerging Baconian “new science,” Protestants of the seventeenth century were simply immersed in typological ways of thinking as they collected and categorized the types and adamantly retained typological (or spiritual) views of history and the world. Samuel Mather, whose *Figures and Types of the Old Testament* (second edition, 1705) is perhaps the most famous of the Puritan typological handbooks, had much to say about the obscurity of the types: “There was and is a double use of Types and parables, and of that whole way of Argument by Similitude and Comparisons: They do both *darken* and *illustrate*; but if not explained, they are like a Riddle, they cast a dark mist and a cloud upon the thing” (9). For Mather, “the Apostle’s definition of the type”-- “a shadow of good things to come”--has three parts: 1) “some outward or sensible Thing, that represents some other higher thing” 2) “There is the thing represented thereby, which is good things to come, which we call the Antitype” and 3) “There is the work of the Type, which is to shadow forth or represent these future good things” (52). He likens the “general Nature of a Type” and its Antitype to: the shadow and its substance; the shell and its kernel; the letter and its Spirit or Mystery (52). Even though “it hath been the Goodness and Wisdom of God in all times and ages, to teach Mankind Heavenly things by Earthly; Spiritual and invisible things, by outward and visible,” these teachings are not perfectly clear: they require special knowledge and insight given by the Holy Spirit (52). Just as the Antitype “infinitely transcends”

the type, such that “no type could reach it” (57), similarly, no human interpreter can decode without God’s aid the system of Types which He has created. As William Cowper put it later on, “God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.”⁸

Based on Mather’s account, one would have to acknowledge that God could “make it plain” to a solitary person on an island. God can choose the context and method He wishes. This is the theology of the Bible-reading practice both Augustine and Crusoe use: opening the Bible at random and letting God do the work of finding what is needed, not the individual reader.⁹ Augustine reads a verse about denying the flesh, which convicts him once and for all to give up the last part of his false self that was keeping him from conversion: his lustful desires. In this moment, the battle of the “two wills” (or false and true selves) is transformed—a battle of which Augustine had been keenly aware as he inquired with other seekers and learned from other Christians. Crusoe’s Bible-reading conversion, on the other hand, is preceded by no intellectual inquiry, theological training, or self-awareness: “I do not remember that I had in all that Time one Thought that so much as tended either to looking upwards toward God, or inwards towards a Reflection upon my own ways: But a certain Stupidity of Soul without Desire of Good, or Conscience of Evil, had entirely overwhelm’d me. . . . I was meerly thoughtless of a God, or a Providence” (82).

Nonetheless, without the benefit of previous interactions, God gives Crusoe the “plain instruction” needed for his conversion over the course of a few days of typological reading, the details of which are worth conveying here. Crusoe recounts how one evening when he became seriously ill, his “Conscience that had slept so long, beg[an] to awake” (84). When he remembers his Father’s “Prediction” that God would not bless him if he left home and that he

⁸ See the poem/hymn by William Cowper (1731-1800) titled “God Moves in a Mysterious Way.”

⁹ The practice of randomly opening up the Bible was common among the Puritans.

would have time to reflect on the neglect of his father's counsel with no one to help, Crusoe cries out to the Lord in Distress, blesses a meal for the first time, and reflects on creation, realizing that nothing must happen in the world without God's knowledge. Overwhelmed by the thought that God had possibly purposed his own shipwreck, Crusoe stumbles home: "I went, directed by Heaven no doubt; for in this Chest I found a Cure, both for Soul and Body, I open'd the Chest, and found what I look'd for, viz. the Tobacco; and as the few Books, I had sav'd, lay there too, I took out one of the Bibles which I mention'd before, and which to this Time I had not found Leisure, or so much Inclination to look into" (87). He tries several methods of imbibing the Tobacco, which then makes his Head "too much disturb'd" to read the Bible carefully, but the "first Words that occur'd to me were these, *Call on me in the Day of Trouble, and I will deliver, and thou shalt glorify me*" (87). While Crusoe sees at the time that these words from Psalm 50 are "apt" to his case, he says that "the Word had no Sound, *as I may say*, to me; the Thing was so remote, so impossible in my Apprehension of Things, that I began to say as the Children of *Israel* did, when they were promis'd Flesh to eat, *Can God spread a Table in the Wilderness*; so I began to say, *Can God himself deliver me from this Place?*" (87-8). Despite the obscurity of the words (and the buzzing of his brain), Crusoe goes on to describe the great impression these words made on him, and the fact that they led him to pray for the first time in his life. He identifies with Old Testament situations.

Although he goes to bed thereafter drunk on Tobacco and Rum, he wakes up the next day "exceedingly refresh'd," stronger, and more cheerful (88). A couple of days later, Crusoe picks up the Bible and begins to read the New Testament every Morning and every Night and in the process is able to compare the New Testament with the Old Testament: "It was not long after I set seriously to this Work, but I found my Heart more deeply and sincerely affected with the

Wickedness of my past Life: . . . the Words, *All these Things have not brought thee to Repentance*, ran seriously in my Thought: I was earnestly begging of God to give me Repentance, when it happen'd providentially the very Day that reading the Scripture, I came to these Words, *He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance, and to give Remission*" (89). At this moment, Crusoe lifts his hands to heaven and cries aloud: "*Jesus, thou Son of David, Jesus, thou exalted Prince and Saviour, give me Repentance!*" (90). He prays "in the true sense of the words," begins to have hope, construes the Words *Call on me and I will deliver you* in a different sense, and sees that he has indeed been delivered, not from the island, but from his past life, from sin and its affliction (90).

Crusoe's reading of the Bible during his conversion is typological: he comes to see his "true self" or spiritual nature for the first time by identifying with the literal types of the Bible, even though the nature of these types remain obscure to him at the time. (Only later does he identify himself at these moments with the doubting Israelites in the wilderness.) He reads the Bible and sees his life as a movement from the Old Testament to the New, with Jesus providing a new type of Deliverance, transforming his old self and providing a narrative within which to make sense of his personal history. In this novel, typological Bible-reading is a miraculous process led by God, and the meaning of the Biblical narrative for one's life can be acquired without the sustained instruction of the Church or the influence and teaching of other believers. As Crusoe reflects much later when Friday converts: "the Word of God, and the Spirit of God promis'd for the Guide and Sanctifier of his People, are the absolutely necessary Instructors of the Souls of Men, in the saving Knowledge of God, and the Means of Salvation" (202).

Post-conversion, Crusoe's Christian self is also developed in solitude. He sets aside time to read the Bible three times a day, and on his fourth Anniversary of being on the island, he

speaks of the comfortable position in which he now finds himself: “for by a constant Study, and serious Application of the Word of God, and by the Assistance of his Grace, I gain’d a different Knowledge from what I had before. . . . I look’d now upon the World as a Thing remote, which I had nothing to do with, no Expectation, and indeed no Desires about, . . . viz. as a Place I had liv’d in, but was come out of it; and well might I say, as Father *Abraham* to *Dives*, *Between me and thee is a great Gulph fix’d*” (119). Allegorically, one might read such a statement as Crusoe being spiritually mature, as establishing his soul so securely in God that he no longer has desires about worldly things, and as preserving his “consecrated self” against all seductive outside influences.¹⁰ His establishment of authority and control over the island can be read as representing the Puritan belief that one should become “the monarch of the inner kingdom” of one’s soul (Egan 451). But the narrative is literal as well, and at this level, Crusoe’s comments also indicate how much he likes being alone; the desire or need to be part of a body of believers is absent.

Eventually, when Friday arrives on the island, Crusoe reads the Bible to him and helps him convert to Christianity from his native religion. For about three years, they study the Bible together and discuss theological issues, such as the problem of evil. Crusoe perhaps here realizes something about the value of Christian community, for he acknowledges that with Friday around, his grief is lesser, his life is more comfortable, and he experiences great joy (203). It is difficult to know, however, whether these feelings arise solely because of their spiritual communion and friendship, or because Crusoe is “Master” over Friday, directing and controlling his labor and activities, and benefiting from his servant’s steadfast devotion. Much critical debate has ensued over the question of whether Crusoe’s post-conversion life reflects a truly

¹⁰ See James Egan, “Crusoe’s Monarchy and the Puritan Concept of the Self,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 13:3. Summer 1973, 451-60.

Christian life or not. Conclusions all seem to hinge on how one views his authority.

Allegorically, Crusoe orders his soul and governs it; literally, Crusoe controls the island and its visitors (“My island was now peopled, and I thought my self very rich in Subjects” 222). Yet we can not ignore the combination--Crusoe’s character is typological, both allegorical and historical at the same time. While certainly the allegorical level of meaning is there, Crusoe also maintains literal physical and spiritual authority over Friday: Crusoe alone knows how to read English, and he alone is the Biblical interpreter. Here again, Crusoe suggests that because he and Friday have the Scripture and “His spirit to instruct,” they do not really need to be in England or a larger community (203). In this novel, the self, with the help of the Holy Spirit, is sufficient to read and apply God’s teachings.

When reflecting on Friday’s conversion, Crusoe relates to the reader a theory of Bible-reading that parallels yet differs from Augustine’s ideas about the plain and obscure sections of Scripture and that may explain why in this text, the self aided by the Spirit is deemed sufficient. At times Crusoe finds he can not supply adequate answers or explanations to Friday’s theological questions. He admits that in the process of searching out the answers, “in laying Things open to him, I really inform’d and instructed my self in many Things, that I either did not know, or had not fully consider’d before.” He also finds he “had more Affection in my Enquiry after Things upon this Occasion, than ever I felt before” (203). Here, Crusoe seems more ecclesially-minded: in communal Bible-reading, Crusoe learns more than he can by himself, and he develops a taste for further inquiry. But Crusoe does not really have an “interpretive community,” to use Stanley Fish’s term, and ultimately, he sees this further inquiry as unnecessary and even a detriment to the faith.

For Crusoe, the “plain instruction” one needs to be saved is available to all in the simplicity of Scripture:

How infinite, and inexpressible a Blessing it is, that the Knowledge of God, and of the Doctrine of Salvation by *Christ Jesus*, is so plainly laid down in the Word of God; so easy to be reciev’d and understood: That as the bare reading Scripture made me capable of understanding enough of my Duty, to carry me directly on to the great Word of sincere Repentance for my Sins, and laying hold of a Saviour for Life and Salvation, to a stated Reformation in Practice, and Obedience to all God’s commands, and this without any Teacher or Instructor; I mean, humane; so the same plain Instruction sufficiently serv’d to the enlightning the Savage Creature, and bringing him to be such a Christian, as I have known few equal to him in my Life” (204).

Crusoe goes on to discuss the more obscure or complicated passages and theological issues that people argue about in this way:

all the Disputes, Wranglings, Strife, and Contention, which has happen’d in the World about Religion were perfectly useless for us [and to the] rest of the World, [for] we had the sure Guide to Heaven, viz. the Word of God; and we had, blessed be God, comfortable Views of the Spirit of God teaching and instructing us by his Word, leading us into all Truth, and making us both willing and obedient to the Instruction of his Word, and I cannot see the least Use that the greatest Knowledge of the disputed Points in Religion which had made such Confusions in the World would have been to us, if we could have obtain’d it. (204)

Crusoe's theory seems to parallel Augustine's differentiation in *On Christian Doctrine* between "open" and "obscure" Scriptures. On the first level, the "open" level of "plain instruction," Augustine and Crusoe agree that what is needed for salvation is clearly stated. Augustine suggests that "Among those things which are said openly in Scripture are . . . all those teachings which involve faith, the mores of living, and . . . hope and charity" (113). He also says that "Hardly anything may be found in the obscure places which is not found plainly said elsewhere" (112). Unlike Crusoe, however, Augustine does not dismiss the obscure sections just because they might cause disagreement. While the open places are appealing to those who "hunger," the "obscure places may deter a disdainful attitude" (112). Those who are seeking or are new to the faith, or who have renewed spiritual hunger, find food in the open places. Those who want to grow in the faith, who need more intellectual assurance, or who want to deepen their faith, *should* turn to those obscure places: "having become familiar with the language of Divine Scriptures, we should turn to those obscure things which must be opened up and explained so that we may take examples of those things that are manifest to illuminate the things which are obscure, bringing principles which are certain to bear on our doubts concerning those things which are uncertain" (113). A more mature faith for Augustine is actually in conversation with doubt, testing the sure things against the obscure things, pitting uncertainties against certainties. This process may bring up disagreements, but it is necessary, for God teaches through obscurities as well as through what is plain, and He has given both forms of teaching in His Word. The self with the aid of the Holy Spirit may thus be capable of understanding the "open places" of Scripture, as Crusoe argues, but this is not enough for Augustine. The more mature reader of the Bible tests and explores her faith, deepening the understanding of what is

made plain by exploring more that which is obscure, even if it causes her to question and alter her initial understanding of what was said plainly.

While Crusoe takes the Augustinian division to imply that the passages of “plain instruction” are all that is really needed, and thus, the individual interpreter aided by the Holy Spirit is sufficient, I think one should read Augustine’s division differently. The individuals’ understanding of what is made plain in scripture is not enough, for, even if aided by the Holy Spirit, the reader is still human and ontologically distant from perfect understanding. The individual reader may remain trapped in his own interpretation, which may be wrong or incomplete, and thus needs to explore the obscure passages of Scripture in order to test and deepen his reading of the plain. In the same way, a community of readers can serve as a check and balance on the individual’s interpretation, providing scholarly and priestly insight, as well as other perspectives. In this way, the individual’s story and interpretation, which is very important, is also subsumed into that of the larger community of interpreters: the church. The last four books of Augustine’s *Confessions*, the post-conversion books, move beyond the story of the individual self and explore large theological issues—creation and time, for example. Once one has become a Christian, Augustine seems to imply, the self should continue its exploration of the eternal mysteries of the faith, seeking an understanding that moves beyond the particularity of one’s own story.

Perhaps Crusoe began such a process with Friday, certainly he moved more in this direction, but his statements seem to imply that he thinks the process unnecessary. While Crusoe constantly admits his need for the Holy Spirit in his hermeneutics of Bible-reading, the authority of the self alone to receive the Holy Spirit’s instruction seems problematic when coupled with both Crusoe’s willingness to dismiss entire portions of Scripture because they are difficult and

obscure and might go beyond his intellectual abilities or cause division, and his comfortable position of self-reliance as an interpreter of God's Word. In his view, the self could have all the basics of the faith, but it would never be matured, stretched, tested, strengthened, or corrected through communal interpretation of the mysteries of God's Word. The self would never open up to what is beyond its own story.

HISTORY AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

In addition to being a hermeneutic practice, typology is a theory of historical narrative. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English Puritans saw their historical moment as typologically related to Biblical history and therefore as part of God's providential plan.¹¹ As Korshin says, English Puritans "believed there were predictive connections between biblical times and their own and that they searched constantly for signs to justify their beliefs" and their politics (3). Thus, present history is also the postfigurative antitype to Old Testament types: for example, England is typologically related to Israel and the Puritans to God's chosen people. For the Puritans, Biblical history is both literally true and the "ultimate symbolic referent of contemporary events" (Hunter 101). Contemporary events fit into a larger pattern, and God creates and inserts Himself into that pattern, leaving clues or types by which astute readers of history can see His presence and detect His actions.

God works out a typological narrative, then, both on the order of world events and on the order of individual lives. Both the individual and the larger community (Puritans) read

¹¹ Korshin argues there were many "typologies" in this period, just as there have been in all periods. There is no one way in which typology is practiced, and the Puritans are not the only Protestant group that uses prefigurative narratives or Biblical types to interpret the present.

themselves through and into the types of Biblical history. Both also follow a pattern in which God intervenes in the world, shaping time from the Old Testament wilderness to the new history Christ brings, to time's final fulfillment in the New Jerusalem. God's people are important enough that God intervenes in their history, and individuals are important enough that God endows the individual events of their lives with spiritual significance.

The latter is what Crusoe stresses: his individual life fits a pattern that matters. The Table in the wilderness and the wandering Hebrews (120,137); the Prodigal Son (8,14), Jonah, Elijah, Ezekiel, and Job, among others, are all types which Crusoe briefly mentions. These types provide prefigurative clues and give the text what Korshin calls a typological structure. Through their knowledge of Biblical history and their recognition of the types, Defoe's readers could predict the future of Crusoe's plot. At one point, Crusoe discusses the hidden and secret working of Providence in human time and encourages readers to read their lives in a similar fashion, looking for providential signs or types—literal events endowed with spiritual significance: “I cannot but advise all considering Men, whose Lives are attended with such extraordinary Incidents as mine, or even though not so extraordinary, not to slight such secret Intimations of Providence, let them come from what invisible Intelligence they will, that I shall not discuss, and perhaps cannot account for; but certainly they are a Proof of the Converse of Spirits, and the secret Communication between those embody'd and those unembody'd” (162).

In light of this theology of history, Puritan texts tended to narrate events and coincidences so unreal that the only explanation could be God's Providence. In this way, they tried, as Defoe put it in the preface, “to justify and honour the Wisdom of Providence in all the Variety of our Circumstances” to those who, in the face of the emerging “new science,” increasingly

emphasized the natural causes of events. Indeed, Crusoe's story involves many coincidental events that seem unbelievable by any other explanation than God's providence.

Despite this theory of history, Crusoe himself spends little time reflecting on the larger patterns of world and church history. He does have some sense of Protestant and Catholic conflict in the world, but he gives no sustained reflection on the grand narrative of history in itself, apart from his own life's events. Although he reads himself into the Biblical narrative typologically, and he finds his true self, there is not the sense we had in Augustine that the self is totally subsumed into the larger Biblical narrative and universal truths, especially seen in Augustine's post-conversion narrative. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the individual and his story is what is most important. Perhaps Crusoe's desire to "justify" God's Providence rather than to "confess" it, as Augustine does, reveals something about their differences regarding the authority of the individual self.

MORALITY

Typology also implies a theory about morality. Korshin outlines how the genre of character books expanded in seventeenth-century England, becoming a staple of Protestant writing (122). In these books characters represented virtues and vices and were to provide examples to readers of various moral states. As part of a whole "Christomimetic" tradition stemming from Thomas a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, which was reprinted often and a very popular book to read among Puritans, good characters were ones whose individual lives imitated Christ (Korshin 197). In Richard Steele's *The Christian Hero*, for example, heroism is described as the imitation of the life and works of Christ and his disciples (Korshin 155). Through such

literature, readers could identify moral types that then became prefigurative or predictive in their imaginations. If one knew the type, one could predict the course the future plot might take. Good Christ-like characters in Puritan literature were not just prefigurative to their own life's plot, but became prefigurative for the readers' lives as well (Korshin 201). In the private experience of reading, comparing one's self and life to a character and story can illuminate the true self. *Robinson Crusoe* is intended to be read this way. Crusoe is not perfect, but his life is a typological representation of every Christian's life. Every reader can relate to his character and not only predict Crusoe's life by attending to the hidden typological clues in the narrative, but through his life predict their own. By reading one's self into the narrative of Crusoe's life, one can assess one's own moral and spiritual state.

Crusoe announces his typological status to the reader several times; perhaps the most outright is when he labels himself a "Memento" for all mankind and a representative of one delivered from original sin (179). He also gives frequent moral didactic lessons for how to read one's life into the pattern of God's plan. For example: "So little do we see before us in the World, and so much reason have we to depend cheerfully upon the great Maker of the World, that he does not leave his Creatures so absolutely destitute, but that in the worst Circumstances they have always something to be thankful for" (232). He wants readers to see that no matter how hard life is, if one has the proper perspective and view of God's Providence, one can find joy: "as my Life was a Life of Sorrow one way, so it was a Life of Mercy, another" (123).

This practice of the individual reader examining his own deep self through reading about character types and judging his own moral status is similar to the journal-writing practices John Wesley encouraged of his followers and that was also a common practice among Puritans. In examining daily events through journal-writing, the individual Christian sought to understand the

spiritual significance of life's events, to fit them into a narrative pattern, and thereby to understand his deep self (Korshin 267). Not surprisingly, a large portion of *Crusoe's* narrative is the reproduction of his island journal. These individualized reading and writing practices rest on the Puritan assumption that real life is typological: events can be read both literally and spiritually at the same time.

They are also practices, however, that give the authority to assess one's own moral state to the individual self, thus making moral judgment a private affair. Presumably Puritans were reading the same texts in large numbers, and this instruction would have effect in the larger community, but in *Crusoe*, the authority to discern situations and judge the moral self is unchecked, except by what *Crusoe* senses to be the Holy Spirit. Of course, for much of the novel he has no choice—he is all alone; nonetheless, the text perpetuates and idealizes a situation of private and individualized morality. There are many instances on the island in which *Crusoe* is his own ethical judge. He falls and backslides into sinful states and has to use his reason and his Bible-reading to formulate a judgment of himself and then a correction. The most interesting examples are when *Crusoe* ends up checking himself in his lust to kill the cannibals. Upon seeing the evidence of their activity, *Crusoe* is morally disgusted at their “hellish Degeneracy” (157), and he obsesses over how to bring judgment upon them:

For Night and Day, I could think of nothing but how I might destroy some of these Monsters in their cruel bloody Entertainment, and if possible, save the Victim they should bring hither to destroy. It would take up a larger Volume Than this whole Work is intended to be, to set down all the Contrivances I Hatch'd, or rather brooded upon in my Thought, for destroying these Creatures.
(155)

Over the course of many months he plots ambushes and spends days touring the island and imagining these plans in action. Eventually, however, he begins “with cooler and calmer Thoughts to consider what it was I was going to engage in,” and he asks:

What Authority, or Call I had, to pretend to be Judge and Executioner upon these Men as Criminals, whom Heaven had thought fit for so many Ages to suffer unpunish'd, to go on, and to be as it were, the Executioners of his Judgments one upon another. How far these People were Offenders against me, And what Right I had to engage in the Quarrel of that Blood, which they shed Promiscuously one upon another. I debated this very often with my self thus; How do I know what God himself judges in this particular Case. (157-8)

In the end, Crusoe decides that he ought to leave the judgment to God (159). In this case, one can admire Crusoe's ability to reason himself out of his obsessive state, to submit his own passions and desires to higher Reason and to the Holy Spirit, and to deny himself the ability to judge like God. Yet again, there is no larger community to check his thoughts and actions, and it is assumed that the individual can bring himself to the right position, with God's help. There is no image of a larger church providing a communal context for formulating moral judgments.¹²

AESTHETICS

Robinson Crusoe also displays for its audience what we might call a typological Puritan aesthetics. For the Puritans, God is the creator and exegete at the same time (Korshin). Puritans were keen to remind each other and their opponents that the material order reflects a spiritual

¹²It should also be noted that later in the novel Crusoe does use lethal force against the cannibals.

order and can reveal knowledge of God the creator, who reveals Himself in His creation. For the Puritans, nature is “emblematic” of the spiritual world, and if one meditates on the objects of creation, one can become more conscious of spiritual matters (Hunter 95). Just as one reads the self into a story through the types found therein, so one could read the self’s metaphysical place in relation to God by attending to the natural order and interpreting the signs that God places there.

God works through natural events in Crusoe’s life--sea storms, earthquakes, attacks by wild animals, for example--but prior to his conversion, he cannot see these events for their spiritual significance. He cannot recognize the Providential signs or their revelation of God’s meaning for his life. After his conversion, the bounty on the island and the relative paradise he finds there might be said to carry allegorical significance; the natural world reflects Crusoe’s new self as he finds peace and feels in tune with God. In a literal interpretation, however, one could also say that Crusoe’s authority over nature demonstrates a mastery that makes himself the God as he sees nature only for its instrumental value. At one point he ponders, for example, that he is the “Prince and Lord of the whole Island” and that he had the “Lives of all my Subjects [his animals] at my absolute Command. I could hang, draw, give Liberty, and take it away, and no Rebels among my Subjects” (137). Again, the text is both literal and spiritual at the same time, and this has to be remembered: the spiritual authority Crusoe gains within his own soul, even if aided by the Holy Spirit, has literal ramifications in the historical world.

One last point concerning typology and aesthetics will become more important when discussing Forster’s novel. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritans condemned fiction and the theater because they felt these cultural forms did not adhere to principles of Christian aesthetics. In fiction, the human author takes over the roles of both creator and exegete, usurping

God. The author creates the fictional narrative and also provides the clues for interpreting it (Hunter 99). Hunter sees Defoe's text as being strangely acceptable to Puritans, however, even though it pushes the limits by placing the story in a realistic contemporary world, because Crusoe is a type representing all Christians (115). In this view, when Defoe claims in the Preface that the work is not fictional ("The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it"), he is not lying, as many accused him of doing, because the plot and character are *essentially* true. Just as in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Crusoe relates the true narrative pattern that can be accorded to all Christians (Hunter 115). As we will see, Forster plays with this Puritan theology of fiction, as well as just about every other typological aspect of Puritan thought.

Typology and the Self in *A Room with a View*

After *Robinson Crusoe*, typology remains an integral part of many novels throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from novels intended for serious moral teaching such as Samuel Richardson's *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) to novels that satirize typological practices such as Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1769). Korshin cautions, however, that one should not read a novel typologically unless the author has placed obvious clues for the reader to read the text in this way (188). I argue that E. M. Forster does just that in his 1908 novel, *A Room with a View*.¹³ Chapter titles and many prefigurative comments and intrusions by the narrator create a reading experience similar to that of *Robinson Crusoe* in which the reader is able to read the signs, predict the plot, and know something about the

¹³ One could argue that all novels and forms of storytelling use prefigurative devices and techniques. I am interested in the remnants of a particular technique—Biblical typology—in the modern novel, and thus feel that Korshin is right to suggest there should be obvious clues in the text before one reads it for its use of typology.

characters. In this text we can see the same typological elements as in *Robinson Crusoe*--hermeneutics, historical narrative structure, morality, and aesthetics--but these are no longer founded upon a Biblical narrative assumed to be historically true. Now, typology is based on a periodized historical narrative in which the Renaissance, also seen as historically true, is the typological prefiguration of the present day. Forster also quite humorously and playfully makes a theme of typology itself, bringing into question the assumptions that Puritan typology rests upon, even as the novel continues to rely formally on typological practices. In the process, the novel inverts the Puritan typological view of the self that was evident in *Robinson Crusoe*.¹⁴

The basic plot of *A Room with a View* follows a pattern similar to that set forth by Augustine and Defoe: Lucy must find her true self by learning to read the depths of her soul and then strive to make that true self a lived reality, shedding her false self. There is a deep obscure self to be read, interpreted, brought to the surface, and lived, but reading and interpreting character are quite difficult. Often Lucy's view is described as muddled and her deep self as obscure: "like most of us, she only faced the situation that encompassed her. She never gazed inwards" (138). A few other characters can detect something of Lucy's true self. Mr. Beebe, the newly-appointed local rector for Lucy's parish, glimpses this deep self when Lucy plays Beethoven on the piano in Italy and tells her: "If Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting—both for us and for her" (30). In the diary he keeps while in Italy, Mr. Beebe draws two drawings, one of Lucy as a kite held down by her travelling chaperon and elderly spinster cousin, Charlotte Bartlett; the other of the kite (Lucy) set free. For Mr. Beebe, Lucy's true self can only be found in complete freedom from the reins of others; later we learn that in his view, this means celibacy. In contrast, when Mr. Emerson begs Lucy in Santa Croce

¹⁴ This analysis will never do justice to the humor Forster uses in the novel; the reading experience itself can not be replicated and simply has to be experienced.

early in the novel to forge a friendship with his son, George, he feels both will find something of their true selves: “You are inclined to get muddled, if I may judge from last night. Let yourself go. Pull out from the depths those thoughts that you do not understand, and spread them out in the sunlight and know the meaning of them. By understanding George you may learn to understand yourself. It will be good for both of you” (25). The deep self for Mr. Emerson is found in union with another, and it is this idea of freedom and selfhood found in romantic love, rather than Mr. Beebe’s seemingly-religious solitude, towards which the novel’s plot moves.

For most of the novel Lucy runs from the deep self that the narrator constantly hints exists. Four of the last chapter titles begin with the word “Lying” to indicate how much Lucy hides from herself. In one of these chapters the narrator describes Lucy this way:

She gave up trying to understand herself, and joined the armies of the benighted, who follow neither the heart nor the brain, and march to their destiny by catch-words. The armies are full of pleasant and pious folk. But they have yielded to the only enemy that matters—the enemy within. They have sinned against passion and truth, and vain will be their strife after virtue. As the years pass, they are censured. Their pleasantry and piety show cracks, their wit becomes cynicism, their unselfishness hypocrisy; they feel and produce discomfort wherever they go. They have sinned against Eros and against Pallas Athene, and not by any heavenly intervention, but by the ordinary course of nature, those allied deities will be avenged. Lucy entered this army when she pretended to George that she did not love him, and pretended to Cecil that she loved no one. The night received her, as it had received Miss Bartlett thirty years before” (170).

To know herself truly Lucy must attend to passion and to truth. If she were to do this, she would be among the few who do not attach themselves to some narrative about how life should be lived, which, according to the narrator, always fail under the pressure of reality.

Recurrent images in the novel are of fences, rooms, and views. Lucy must learn not to be “fenced in” by grand narratives; she must learn to see the “view” of her own soul and not keep it confined to any particular “room.” In this text, there is no Bible to pick up and randomly open through which God points out one’s true deep self in the reading process. Nonetheless, ironically, there *is* a central type of text by which and through which Lucy reads herself: the romance novel. *A Room with a View* self-referentially plays with the idea of the novel as sacred text, as the means by which Lucy’s true self is accessed, read, and formed. In the end, while Lucy Honeychurch is more influenced by the larger community and by human interactions in finding her true self than was Crusoe, the *telos* seems to be complete autonomy from any historical narrative or moral system: the self is the final spiritual and moral authority.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

A Room with a View was published at the height of an era deemed by some “the cult of the Renaissance.” In the wake of Jacob Burckhardt’s 1860 *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* and John Addington Symonds’s seven-volume treatise on *The Renaissance in Italy*, published in England from 1875 to 1886, many modernist writers began to see themselves as ushering in a new Renaissance and found inspiration in historiography of the Italian Renaissance. Modernists attempted to define themselves against the Victorians, much as the Renaissance was narrated as a break from the Middle Ages. In both narratives, from medieval to renaissance and

from Victorian to modern, an old social and moral order shaped by Christianity is left behind and surpassed. This is the great myth of Renaissance historiography: the idea that an entire age and culture can secularize, replacing Christianity. Instead, Symonds saw a new modern “spirituality” based on individualism and reason emerging.

Often, the Victorians were associated with the Puritans. Matthew Arnold in his 1869 *Culture and Anarchy* had argued that because of Puritanism’s emergence in the seventeenth century, the Renaissance never fully took hold in England. Reacting against the “moral indifference” and “laxness of conduct” of the Renaissance, Puritanism directed England to a “strictness of conscience” instead of a “spontaneity of consciousness” toward which the rest of Europe was moving (137). As a result, Arnold felt Puritanism had led to a “contravention” of the “natural order” in England, to a state in which England had trapped itself in moral and intellectual systems that would inevitably fall behind the rest of the West (67). For many modernists, such Puritan influences were still too strongly in place in English society, and those who reacted morally and spiritually against the art and literature they produced were often labeled Puritans and dismissed. Forster isn’t just using typology in his novel because this is how novels are written. I believe he consciously inverts various aspects of the Puritan typological worldview because he wants to see it go away in his own society and replace it with a new egalitarian and sexual ethics.

The structure of this myth of secularization--that Christianity (or Puritanism) can simply be replaced--is typological. Much as the New Testament is the fulfillment of Old Testament types, the Renaissance recovers, fulfills, and perfects the types of antiquity. Similarly, in Forster’s day the present was commonly narrated as the fulfillment or antitype of the Renaissance type. In the process of typologically relating two separate periods of history, the

entire Middle Ages (or Victorian age, etc.) are dismissed as the “dark ages.” In such a historical scheme, the ancient, the medieval, the renaissance, the Victorian, all become types that can be seen as spiritually fulfilled in people and in places in Forster’s novel. Instead of a movement from Old Testament type to a new self found in Christ, Lucy’s movement is from the Medieval to the Renaissance, from Victorian to Modern, and the novel provides coded clues to its readers for interpreting characters and events according to this framework.

The novel associates Italy with the Renaissance and England with the Middle Ages. The novel opens with Lucy on vacation in Italy with her cousin, Charlotte Bartlett. Lucy begins to gain some insight into her “true self” while in Italy, but the visit is cut short in order to avoid a scandal over her kiss with the young George Emerson. When Lucy returns to England, where the second half of the novel takes place, and becomes engaged to Cecil Vyse in a chapter titled “Medieval,” the reader knows she is regressing into her false self. Seeing that the last chapter of the novel is titled “The End of the Middle Ages,” a reader can predict something of the movement Lucy’s story will take. Although Forster never explicitly uses the word “renaissance” in the novel, this connection certainly would not have been lost on his readers, who in the 1900s were steeped in the historical narrative of medieval and renaissance and were deeply fascinated with Italy.

MORALITY AND CHARACTER TYPES

Lucy’s movement from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and from England to Italy also involves movement from a typological method of judging character to a new morality of egalitarianism and sexuality. Yet while the novel pokes fun at typology and the process of

creating character types, it can't escape the method itself. Character typology is attached to England, the Middle Ages, and Christianity. The "renaissance" in morality is attached to Mr. Emerson, and his son, George.

The silliness of the British propensity to typecast people is highlighted throughout the first half the novel, which focuses on a number of British tourists who have all by chance taken up temporary residence at a British-run pension in Florence. In judging and interpreting each other, the British rely on multiple typing systems: social class, nationality, gender, political party, religion. For example, when Mr. Emerson offers to give Lucy and Charlotte his rooms that have a view, Charlotte can tell that he is "ill-bred, even before she glanced at him" (4). The British characters typecast the Italians often, while the Italians seem to live in a society that does not rely on typecasting. Even Miss Lavish, the novelist who prides herself on her "originality," typecasts "commercial travelers," "early Victorians," and British tourists ("The true Italy is only to be found by patient observation," she instructs Lucy) (34). Yet Miss Lavish herself is a type that Forster's novel mocks playfully: the "student of human nature" who seeks to depict the "true Italy" in her novel is herself conventional, never missing a chance to stand up for "Bohemianism" and "adventure."¹⁵

In many conversations in the first chapters the British characters try to assess Mr. Emerson's character: Is he nice? Is he deplorable or just disagreeable? Is he a Socialist? (8) The elderly Miss Alans believe he lacks delicacy but that he does beautiful things. In the end, the British at the pension do not accept him because they do not have a framework for understanding him. He seems to resist typological interpretation as he alone "speaks the truth"

¹⁵ In the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, historical fiction and romance novels such as Miss Lavish writes were extremely popular. Many of these were set in Italy and were written by female authors, who in the genre found a way to make a living and often took pennames. Forster is in part poking fun at this trend in his creation of Miss Lavish.

(8). Most of the British characters fail to see the “true selves” of other people; they may have hints of it, but they tend to make hasty character judgments based on surface codes of behavior, appearance, and language. Such judgments always imply value rankings and moral assessments. In this novel, character typology is of the “false self,” a hermeneutics of the surface. This inverts the Puritan view of character typology, which was believed to illuminate the true self and its deep moral state.

The novel attaches such typecasting and value judgments to the medieval. Curiously, even though he tries to be a sort of modern aesthete, Cecil Vyse is coded as medieval: “Like a Gothic statue. Tall and refined, . . . he resembled those fastidious saints who guard the portals of a French cathedral. Well educated, well endowed, and not deficient physically, he remained in the grip of a certain devil whom the modern world knows as self-consciousness, and whom the medieval, with dimmer vision, worshipped as asceticism. A Gothic statue implies celibacy, just as a Greek statue implies fruition” (85). Cecil is medieval and ascetic because he does not evoke sensuality and because he fervently tries to create himself to be a certain type of person, thereby submitting himself to a limited vision of what a human can be. He fancies himself an “Inglesse Italianato,” a self-proclaimed romantic aesthete who defies the typological conventions of British society, especially Lucy’s family and the surrounding country gentility. In his quest to be a certain type, Cecil constantly makes negative judgments and insolent comments about and to others, judging them by their furniture, music, or hobbies, by the types of gatherings they hold, or by how they pronounce the names of Italian painters. He tries “to affect a cosmopolitan naughtiness which he was far from possessing,” and which even Lucy sees as silly when applied to one who has spent the winter vacationing with his mother. Cecil constantly fashions himself, but he is of the surface only, and he completely lacks the inner freedom and physicality of the

Renaissance type he strives to be. Cecil is a sort of Victorian “dandy” type, who perhaps thinks of himself as embodying new Renaissance values but who utterly fails to live a life of the body. Lucy admits that she always thinks of Cecil in a room rather than outdoors, and his botched attempt to kiss Lucy passionately in the woods is a hilarious foil to the kissing George is able to perform. Instead of tapping his “true self,” Cecil self-consciously tries to forge himself to be a certain type, and this is medieval.

Just as Cecil is uncharitable in his interpretations of others, Cecil also reads Lucy as a type and is unable to see her deep self. He thinks of her as a “woman of Leonardo da Vinci’s, whom we love not so much for herself as for the things that she will not tell us” (87). Lucy takes on light and shadow for him, shades of beauty (one chapter is titled “Lucy as a Work of Art”), but Cecil never penetrates Lucy’s “real self,” and this is the conflict the reader detects right away. Although he is amused at Lucy’s outburst against Mr. Eager, he feels a woman’s place is to not make such moral judgments (97). The only relationship Cecil enacts with Lucy and with other people is “feudal: that of protected and protector” (149). His self-assumed authority causes him to make moral judgments on people by typecasting them. Through Cecil’s character, it is clear that the novel is not portraying as its ideal a self who has the authority to fashion itself into whatever type it wants; rather, the novel promotes the self’s authority to transcend spiritually all such typecasting--and moral--narratives.

Charlotte Bartlett is also attached to the “medieval,” especially because of her view of women. As she explains to Lucy: “It was not that ladies were inferior to men; it was that they were different. Their mission was to inspire others to achievement rather than to achieve themselves. Indirectly, by means of tact and a spotless name, a lady could accomplish much. But if she rushed into the fray herself she would be first censured, then despised, and finally

ignored. Poems had been written to illustrate this point” (38). The narrator goes on to label this description one of an immortal “medieval lady”:

The dragons have gone, and so have the knights, but still she lingers in our midst. She reigned in many an early Victorian castle, and was Queen of much early Victorian song. It is sweet to protect her in the intervals of business, sweet to pay her honour when she has cooked our dinner well. But alas! the creature grows degenerate. In her heart also there are springing up strange desires. She too is enamoured of heavy winds, and vast panoramas, and green expanses of the sea. She has marked the kingdom of this world, how full it is of wealth, and beauty, and war—a radiant crust, built around the central fires, spinning towards the receding heavens. Men, declaring that she inspires them to it, move joyfully over the surface, having the most delightful meetings with other men, happy, not because they are masculine, but because they are alive. Before the show breaks up she would like to drop the august title of the Eternal Woman, and go there as her transitory self. (39)

Charlotte’s view of women denies them their “true selves,” and the reader finds herself hoping that Lucy will break free of such an outdated view. For much of the novel, Charlotte seems to hold ascetizing power over Lucy, but only toward the end does the narrator make it clear that this controlling influence is unethical. After the kiss in Italy, Lucy imagines that she and Charlotte will have a debriefing session in which “together in divine confidence they would disentangle and interpret” her “sensations, her spasms of courage, her moments of unreasonable joy, her mysterious discontent” (71). Instead, Charlotte cuts off such talk and is worried about stifling the moral and social scandal that potentially could ensue. The narrator calls this “the

most grievous wrong this world has yet discovered,” that Charlotte ignores Lucy’s sincerity and “craving for sympathy and love” and instead presents to her “the complete picture of a cheerless, loveless world in which the young rush to destruction until they learn better—a shamefaced world of precautions and barriers which may avert evil, but which do not seem to bring good, if we may judge from those who have used them most” (76). This passage reminds immediately of Crusoe’s paranoid building up of the fortress around himself and years spent in hiding after he discovers the single footprint in the sand. Through Lucy’s interactions with the medieval Charlotte and Cecil, the novel clearly links the surpassing of typological ethics by egalitarian and sexual ethics to feminism; the “fencing in” of female lives is but one immoral result that Forster sees the practice of character typology causing.

Mr. Emerson and his son, George, represent the “new age” or renaissance towards whom the reader wants Lucy to move. Mr. Emerson’s philosophy of life is clearly juxtaposed with Christianity and its types and is revealed in the novel through his encounters with church figures, especially with Mr. Eager, the local British rector in Florence. In this novel the Church’s authority to read and form the deep self is replaced with a philosophy that seems to reject any foundational narrative or ethical system, just as the medieval or Victorian needs to be subsumed by the renaissance and modern. All such moral systems take the human out of the body and into the surface world of types and restrictive moral judgments. They may protect from evil, but they do not seek the good, according to the narrator. A “renaissance” in Mr. Emerson’s terms, involves a return to the body, a simple being or presence in the world, and the fullest living of the body in a life of love among other humans. For him, each human should be equally capable of living this way in freedom.¹⁶

¹⁶ This sort of linking of the body to the renaissance has its roots in Walter Pater’s text, *The Renaissance*. In the larger book project, I plan to make this connection more clear, as well as the attachment of the medieval to Ruskin.

Mr. Emerson's anti-Church stance arises early in the novel, when Lucy finds herself touring Santa Croce at the same time as the Emersons. When a small child trips over a sepulcher and Lucy runs to his rescue, Mr. Emerson feels the need to cry out: "Hateful bishop! . . . Hard in life, hard in death. Go out into the sunshine, little boy, and kiss your hand to the sun, for that is where you ought to be. Intolerable bishop!" (20). Leading a tour group at the same time, Mr. Eager provides Ruskinian interpretations of Giotto's frescoes based on "standards of the spirit": "Remember . . . the facts about this church of Santa Croce; how it was built by faith in the full fervour of medievalism, before any taint of the Renaissance had appeared," he tells his group (22). Mr. Emerson loudly rejects this interpretation and provides a materialist one instead: "Remember nothing of the sort! Built by faith indeed! That simply means the workmen weren't paid properly. And as for the frescoes, I see no truth in them. Look at that fat man in blue! He must weigh as much as I do, and he is shooting into the sky like an air-balloon.' He was referring to the fresco of the 'Ascension of St. John.'" (22). When George seriously ponders the fresco, Mr. Emerson says: "You will never go up. . . . You and I, dear boy, will lie at peace in the earth that bore us, and our names will disappear as surely as our work survives" (22).

Influenced by modern philosophy and literature (Mr. Emerson's personal book shelves, we discover, are filled with Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, A. E. Housman, and Samuel Butler, among other authors), Mr. Emerson promotes a personal philosophy of love and kindness. George describes him to Lucy as "kind to people because he loves them," not like most of us, who think "it improves our characters" to be nice (23). Mr. Emerson tells Lucy "We know that we come from the winds, and that we shall return to them; that all life is perhaps a knot, a tangle, a blemish in the eternal smoothness. But why should this make us unhappy? Let us rather love one another, and work and rejoice. I don't believe in this world's sorrow" (26).

For Mr. Emerson the true self can only be experienced if the body is free. When the Italian cab driver brings his girlfriend along on the excursion to Fiesole, Mr. Eager disapproves, but Mr. Emerson defends them saying: “Do we find happiness so often that we should turn it off the box when it happens to sit there? To be driven by lovers—A king might envy us, and if we part them it’s more like sacrilege than anything I know. . . . We have no rights over his soul” (61-2). He goes on to compare “Spring in nature” and “Spring in man,” arguing that the “same laws work eternally through both,” but that paradoxically we praise the one but see the other as improper (62). Mr. Emerson has found for himself a new spirituality and morality apart from the Church, which he feels has only taught men in superstition and ignorance “to hate one another in the name of God” (25). Instead, as he tells Lucy later, “Love is of the body; not the body, but of the body” (197). He believes in the soul, but he hates to use the word, because “superstition has wrapped it round” (197). One is reminded here of Foucault’s inversion of Plato: “The soul is the prison of the body.”

Mr. Emerson’s natural inclination is not to typecast people or make moral judgments on them, but it is unclear what his notion of good and evil might be. The only comment the reader gets about this comes from George: “We cast a shadow on something wherever we stand, and it is no good moving from place to place to save things; because the shadow always follows. Choose a place where you won’t do harm—yes, choose a place where you won’t do very much harm, and stand in it for all you are worth, facing the sunshine” (147). No longer is there a narrative or a text to read in order to interpret one’s self within human history and divine providence. What matters now is how one positions one’s own body in the light of some vague notion of Truth and Beauty.

While there is no God or Biblical narrative that guides history and moral living, Emerson still sees an end toward which he hopes humanity is moving, and he casts that end in reverse Christian typological terms. When discussing the equality of women with men, he tells Mr. Beebe: “The Garden of Eden . . . which you place in the past, is really yet to come. We shall enter it when we no longer despise our bodies. . . . In this—not in other things—we men are ahead. We despise the body less than women do. But not until we are comrades shall we enter the garden” (123). The acquisition of virtue and character are of the false self for Mr. Emerson; such surface barriers always crack under the pressure of reality, according to the narrator. Instead, the body (materiality), passion, true kindness, love, and egalitarianism are of humanity’s true self.

Such an Eden is the very *telos* of *A Room with a View*. In the closing scene, Lucy and George are in one another’s arms, back at the pension in Florence. They have recovered freedom and a life of the body, and they are autonomous morally and spiritually, finding their true selves in love of each other. But they are unmarried and are in Florence against the wishes of Lucy’s family. To gain this freedom, they have broken away from the social structures and moral communities that have shaped them, just as the myth of the renaissance implies can happen. The reader’s desire to see them together is fulfilled, and the novel ends. Yet we never see them enter a future; we never see whether they can be reconciled to their communities back in England; we never see if they can actually make it as a couple. There is no *telos* beyond the freedom, and as for Crusoe, the “good life” seems to be acquired by and for the individual only.

The clergymen in this novel are presented as ineffective authorities in the process of character formation and moral judgment, and thus are unable to provide a narrative of the “good life” that can compete with the Emersonian one. Mr. Beebe is very likable, but he tries hard not

to fulfill his character type: “No one would take him for a clergyman,” says Lucy (9), and “Who would have supposed that tolerance, sympathy, and a sense of humour would inhabit that militant form?” think the Miss Alans (32). He doesn’t like to hear that people enjoyed his sermons; instead, he wants to coordinate social events and “provide people with happy memories” (36). He still attempts to maintain some authority over people’s souls, but he never makes typological value judgments as one would think a Christian interpreter might do. He takes great interest in Lucy, for example, and makes arrangements with Charlotte for Lucy’s trip to Greece after she cuts off her engagement to Cecil, but the reader is made to see his mission as repressed: he is glad Lucy will not marry, and he sees preserving her in a celibate life as “to help not only Lucy, but religion also” (182). Beebe does not openly condemn physicality, but he has made a habit all his life of studying the character of “maiden ladies” (31).

Mr. Eager also fails as a moral and spiritual authority. He is a “parson of the cultured type” (97) whose parishioners carry a Bible in one hand and a Baedeker in the other. His views of art and aesthetics echo Ruskin’s (who lauded the Gothic and hated the Renaissance), and he sees himself as a superior reader of Italy’s culture (49). He is portrayed as extremely morally rigid and judgmental, far from the love of Jesus. He can’t treat the lower class civilly, swatting at an Italian bookseller, for example, and he will not sway from his moral condemnation of Mr. Emerson. He warns Lucy not to be taken in by “his personal charms,” for Mr. Emerson had “murdered his wife in the sight of God” (53).

The facts of this “murder,” mentioned so briefly by Mr. Eager in Chapter 5, are revealed to Lucy at the end of the novel in Chapter 19, by Mr. Emerson himself. Narrative clues in this next-to-the-last scene make the typological succession of Christianity (medievalism) by Mr. Emerson’s philosophy (renaissance) obvious to the reader. The material details are of spiritual

import as Christian spirituality is being replaced by another. Lucy meets Mr. Emerson by chance in Mr. Beebe's study. Mr. Beebe is absent, off at evening services, preaching to a congregation of only three: Lucy's mother, Charlotte Bartlett, and his own aged mother. While Mr. Emerson sits in Beebe's place, a new "priest," the church on the hill is described as receding in spiritual significance: "Built upon the slope of the hill so artfully, with its beautiful raised transept and its spire of silvery shingle—even their church had lost its charm; and the thing one never talked about—religion—was fading like all the other things" (191). Suffering greatly from rheumatism, Mr. Emerson is mourning his son's having "gone under," telling Lucy that he taught him to trust in love but that the result has not worked out (192). When he asks Lucy if she remembers Italy, she picks up a volume of Old Testament commentaries, almost as a shield or as a symbolic last clutching to the old Biblical narrative, and says: "I have no wish to discuss Italy or any subject connected with your son" (192). After he tells the story of George's mother, however, Lucy begins to soften. Mr. Emerson reveals that he and his wife had refused to have George baptized and that in the end, this had caused her death:

"She agreed that baptism was nothing, but he caught that fever when he was twelve and she turned round. She thought it a judgment." He shuddered. "Oh, horrible, when we had given up that sort of thing and broken away from her parents. Oh, horrible—worst of all—worse than death, when you have made a little clearing in the wilderness, planted your little garden, let in your sunlight, and then the weeds creep in again! A judgment! And our boy had typhoid because no clergyman had dropped water on him in church! Is it possible, Miss Honeychurch? Shall we slip back into the darkness forever?" (193)

Mr. Emerson goes on to reveal that it was none other than Mr. Eager who came to visit Mrs. Emerson regularly during this time and who “made her think about sin, and she went under thinking about it” (193). This is how Mr. Emerson had “murdered his wife in the sight of God” (193). Seemingly, Mr. Eager’s typological reading of God working in human events caused a horrible tragedy. Although Mr. Emerson never had George baptized, nor did he ever blame Mr. Eager, he does admit now that perhaps “We have pushed our beliefs too far. I fancy that we deserve sorrow” (195). At this moment, when Lucy does not know what to do, she “looked at the books again—black, brown, and that acrid theological blue. They surrounded the visitors on every side; they were piled on tables, they pressed against the very ceiling” (195). She feels physical pressure from these books of Biblical interpretation, and she feels sorry for Mr. Emerson at having to find “sanctum” in this place (195). The narrator intrudes, suggesting that Lucy fails to see that Mr. Emerson, too, is “profoundly religious” (195). Next, Mr. Emerson does what no clergyman can do; he interprets Lucy’s true self: “You love George!” (197). As he rambles on, Lucy doesn’t understand his words, but gradually, the veils of darkness withdraw “and she [sees] to the bottom of her soul” (198). Mr. Emerson “had shown her the holiness of direct desire,” not desire mediated and reordered by a sacred text but the supposed “direct desire” of the body, and she resolves to go to George. Puritan typological morality is inverted and replaced. The reordering of the desires and transformation of the false self into the true enabled by the Holy Spirit is inverted. Now, the human self on its own denies the false self of typological imprisonment and returns to the desires of the body in freedom. Instead of the self needing God’s aid to transcend the false self, now the self alone has the ability to transcend the false self.

PLOT

Mr. Eager interpreted George's illness as a twelve-year-old typologically, as having spiritual significance, and he used his authority to get Mrs. Emerson to see it in the same way. Despite Forster's humor, this event highlights the grave moral consequences he sees resulting from Puritan-like typological interpretation. *A Room with a View* is structured by other key typological events as well: occurrences in the material world which have spiritual significance, but only if the characters can see it. The cause of these events is unclear, however, and the novel plays with various interpretations--whether human events occur by coincidence, by fate, or by providence--but never provides a conclusive answer. The murder witnessed in the Piazza, the kiss at Fiesole, the novel-reading scene--all are potential conversion moments for Lucy, but like Crusoe, it takes a while for her to see and acknowledge her "true self."

One of the most significant events occurs early, in the simply-titled "Fourth Chapter." Lucy has gone walking alone, wanting "something big" to happen to her, and it does. She witnesses the murder of a man in the Piazza Signoria. By coincidence, George is also there, and he is able to catch her while she faints, help her back to the Pension, and discard her bloodied photographs in the River Arno. The narrative sets up the scene using typological clues. As Lucy enters the Piazza, statues of Neptune and satyrs are described as "unsubstantial" in the twilight, "half god, half ghost" (39). The imagery is of an archetypal entrance to an underworld, by which the knowing reader would expect a character to gain life-transforming knowledge: "The Loggia showed as the triple entrance of a cave, wherein dwelt many a deity, shadowy, but immortal, looking forth upon the arrivals and departures of mankind. It was the hour of unreality—the hour, that is, when unfamiliar things are real" (40). Later, the narrator describes the Piazza as a

place where “experience” brings “immortality”: “the statues . . . suggest, not the innocence of childhood, nor the glorious bewilderment of youth, but the conscious achievements of maturity. Perseus and Judith, Hercules and Thusnelda, they have done or suffered something, and though they are immortal, immortality has come to them after experience, not before. Here, not only in the solitude of Nature, might a hero meet a goddess, or a heroine a god” (55). In this cultural renaissance space of recovered antiquity, humanity meets divinity. What is experienced here has immortal spiritual significance that could change one’s life forever, according to the narrator.

George is willing to admit the significance of witnessing the murder almost immediately: “Something tremendous has happened; I must face it without getting muddled. It isn’t exactly that a man has died” (42). As they overlook the River Arno, Lucy feels as if “she had crossed some spiritual boundary,” but she retreats to her false self, concerned for the moral judgment of others and for George’s secrecy (41). George, on the other hand, will not “return to the old life,” as Lucy suggests they should do, but states that now, “I shall probably want to live” (43).

The next day, as Lucy ventures out with Charlotte in order to avoid George, things are different: she tries people “by some new test, and they were found wanting” (51). She attempts to “formulate the questions rioting in her brain,” and she feels the “well-known world had broken up” (54). Ironically, however, Charlotte leads her right back to the scene of the previous day’s event, where Lucy is forced to hear how others interpret the event before she can interpret it herself. Coincidentally, Miss Lavish is there, sitting on the exact spot of the murder, doing a “few calculations in realism” and “collecting material” for her novel (47). She interprets the event scientifically and reduces its spiritual significance, wanting to “raise the tone of the tragedy, and at the same time furnish an excellent plot” (47). Mr. Eager also is present in the square. He sees in the event negative spiritual significance and detects tones of evil, but seems

more concerned for the degradation of culture than anything else: “To one who loves the Florence of Dante and Savonarola there is something portentous in such desecration—portentous and humiliating” (49). In this scene by which the narrator makes it clear that material events carry spiritual significance for the individual, the divine intervention is not of the Christian God, but the gods of antiquity who watch over the Piazza in Renaissance statuary.

There are also hints of divine intervention in the episode in which Lucy and George kiss in the field of violets at Fiesole. This time, however, divinity takes specific human form. The Italian cab driver is described as an ancient type, Phaethon, “a youth all irresponsibility and fire” whom “neither the Ages of Faith nor the Age of Doubt had touched” (57). When Lucy asks him to lead her to Mr. Beebe, she feels that “in the company of this common man the world was beautiful and direct. For the first time, she felt the influence of Spring” (65). He leads her not to the clergyman, but to George: “She fell out of the wood. Light and beauty enveloped her” (66). Surprised, George contemplates her, then kisses her passionately. The driver is described by the narrator as a seer: “He alone had divined what things were, and what he wished them to be. He alone had interpreted the message that Lucy had received five days before from the lips of a dying man” (68). This ancient type is able to work the plot according to the signs that had been planted.

On the drive home from Fiesole, a huge lightning storm occurs, and the narration plays with the Puritan typological idea that natural events bear spiritual significance. Mr. Emerson is petrified of the storm because he is worried about George, who has decided to walk back to Florence. Mr. Eager says the storm is a test of one’s “courage and faith,” but not a real threat from God nor a mystery: “If I might say so, there is something almost blasphemous in this horror of the elements. Are we seriously to suppose that all these clouds, all this immense electrical

display, is simply called into existence to extinguish you or me?” (68). He provides a rational explanation: even from the scientific standpoint, he says, “the chances against our being struck are enormous” (68). He goes on to judge Mr. Emerson’s fear in spiritual terms: “Typical behaviour. . . . In the presence of reality that kind of person invariably breaks down” (69). Yet despite Mr. Eager’s authoritative interpretation of the storm, as they disembark the carriage, an explosion occurs up ahead and a tramline support crashes down. “If they had not stopped perhaps they might have been hurt. They chose to regard it as a miraculous preservation,” and the group embraces each other (69). Interestingly, in the aftermath of the near miss, the older people recover quickly. Miss Lavish calculates realistically that they would not have been hit should they have continued on. Mr Eager gives a “temperate prayer,” and the drivers “poured their souls to the dryads and saints” (70). If there is divine intervention in the Italian events of this novel, it is something ancient yet prevalent everywhere to those who can see: to those who are truly of the renaissance spirit.

In contrast, when in England the British debate whether there is a force directing human events. Interestingly, Mr. Beebe, who should be instructive about God’s providence, speaks of coincidence, while George speaks of Fate. Mr. Beebe tells George that he always meant to write a “History of Coincidence,” although he believes “coincidences are much rarer than we suppose” (REF). “For example,” he tells George, “it isn’t purely coincidentally that you are here now, when one comes to reflect,” for we all have had Italy and an interest in “things Italian” in common, and it is no wonder that our paths have crossed. Cecil Vyse met the Emersons in the Italian rooms at the National Gallery, for example, because they both were fascinated with Italy, and he then convinced them to move to Summer Street. George, on the other hand, prefers to speak of Fate: “Everything is Fate. We are flung together by Fate, drawn apart by Fate—flung

together, drawn apart. The twelve winds blow us—we settle nothing—“ (125). At this, Mr. Beebe cautions him not to attribute anything to fate because he believes that humans are the cause of all actions; these causes work out to look like coincidences, but they can be rationally explained. George concedes only in this way: “It is Fate that I am here. . . .But you can call it Italy if it makes you feel less unhappy” (125).

This novel self-referentially inverts the Puritan view of God working in history by structuring its plot around key events that the narrator hints carry spiritual significance, yet clearly, any sense of the Christian God intervening in the lives of humans has dissipated. The great coincidences of the plot *may* be attributable to some ancient, pagan deity or Fate, or they *may* be rationally explained by dissecting human agency and motivation. Or, just maybe, the novelist is now the creator and exegete of the human plot.

HERMENEUTICS

The Italians and the English are portrayed as having different ontological modes. The Italian is the true self: at one with the world, unified in passions, mind, and heart, living in the materiality of the body with ease. The Englishman is of the false self: applying a narrative or superstructure to the world, straying from the lower desires and the body while abiding safely in abstraction. For Lucy, it is not Bible-reading, but rather typological reading of romance novels which reorders her desires and brings her closer to her Italian true self, inverting the Puritan hermeneutic. We see this first when Lucy confesses to Charlotte after the kiss with George: “But this time I’m not to blame. I want you to believe that. I simply slipped into those violets. No, I want to be really truthful. I am a little to blame. I had silly thoughts. The sky, you know,

was gold, and the ground all blue, and for a moment he looked like some one in a book” (70). When Charlotte does not understand, Lucy says: “Heroes—gods—the nonsense of schoolgirls” (70). Reading novels has tapped into Lucy’s true self: her desires and actions and way of seeing the world in moments of true self-knowledge match with those of the romance narrative. Later, when back in England, Lucy again remembers the scene of the kiss and unwittingly reveals her true self: “I fell into all those violets, and he was silly and surprised. I don’t think we ought to blame him very much. It makes such a difference when you see a person with beautiful things behind him unexpectedly” (143). The narrator points out that there was “an unfortunate slip” in Lucy’s “rather” good speech (note carefully the pronouns), but “whether Miss Bartlett detected the slip one cannot say” (143). In any case, the slipup reveals to the reader that there is a disconnect between Lucy’s surface behavior and her inner deep desires.

This self-referential play continues when Forster humorously sets up the romance novel as a sacred book lying in a garden at the opening of chapter 15, which is titled “The Disaster Within.” One can not but see the comic parallel to Augustine’s and Crusoe’s conversion scenes. As Miss Bartlett, Mrs. Honeychurch, and Lucy all get ready to go to church, “the garden of Windy Corner was deserted except for a red book, which lay sunning itself upon the gravel path” (144). As the sun rises “higher on its journey, guided, not by Phaethon, this time, but by Apollo, competent, unswerving, divine,” its rays are described as falling on all of the characters in their various settings, in their movements casting shadows. “But this book lies motionless, to be caressed all morning by the sun and to raise its covers slightly, as though acknowledging the caress” (144-5). The book is pure, in union with the sun, void of any shadow.

Of course we find out later that afternoon as Lucy, Freddie, and George play tennis and Cecil strolls through the garden reading the red book aloud occasionally when it is “so bad,” that

the novel has come from the lending library, is titled *Under a Loggia*, and is authored by none other than Joseph Emery Prank, the penname of Miss Lavish. Gradually Lucy recognizes that the book is the one Miss Lavish was writing while they were in Florence, and that it is about her and George. There is a murder scene in the Piazza, and when Cecil tries to find an “absurd” account of a view that he remembers in the novel, Lucy accidentally finds and Cecil reads aloud the account of the kiss at Fiesole: “Miss Lavish knew, somehow, and had printed the past in draggled prose, for Cecil to read and for George to hear” (155). George also recognizes the scene, and a few moments later, when no one can see, George grabs Lucy and kisses her again. (Later, he admits “the book made me do that.”) The semi-random reading of the “sacred” romance novel in the garden reveals to both their deep selves as they typologically identify with *themselves* as portrayed in the novel. The moment also seems highly coincidental: Lucy’s fiancée, Cecil, unwittingly reads the passage that reorders her desires toward another, and that in the end, when she breaks off the engagement that very night, coincidentally shows him more of his own true self.

It is hard to know how to interpret this hermeneutical circle in which art imitates life and then life imitates art. The novel pokes fun at popular romance novels and authors who indeed were flourishing in Forster’s day (or perhaps it pokes fun at the British propensity to typecast and morally judge such novels), yet at the same time, such novels are depicted as having the power to reveal and shape the reader’s inner self. Additionally, Forster’s novel itself participates fully in the genre, evoking similar desires in the reader. In making the romance novel a sacred text, the vehicle of truth for its readers, Forster satirizes the Puritan theology of fiction even while proving it correct: Puritans worried that fiction might reorder the reader’s desires away from God and toward lower pursuits, and this is exactly what Forster’s novel performs. At the same time, in its

self-referential play, the idea also arises that the body's freedom and passion are also narratively-constructed, shaped and cultivated in the typological reading of the romance. In this view, what Mr. Emerson hopes for—the absolute renaissance or autonomy of the body—is an impossibility and is itself a narrative that orders the desires—and fences in the self—in a certain and limiting way.

AESTHETICS

This ironic playfulness is even more pronounced when the reader begins to notice how it is not just Miss Lavish's novel, but perhaps Charlotte Bartlett who is the real "author" and "exegete" of Lucy's plot. Instead of the Christian God coordinating spectacular coincidences and events as in *Robinson Crusoe*, intervening in time and space, now it might be an aging spinster who has the power to direct history, planting prefigurative clues all along the way. The reader is made to question the legitimacy of coincidences just enough to wonder if this is the case. Miss Bartlett just happens to lead Lucy back to the scene of the murder where Miss Lavish is dissecting it for her novel. Charlotte and Miss Lavish discuss the characters of her novel, taking secret joy together, for example, when they find out that Mr. Emerson's work was on the "Railway" and what this might mean for his character in the novel. Charlotte just happens to see George kissing Lucy at Fiesole, and she later just happens to tell Miss Lavish all about it, despite her vows to secrecy. Miss Lavish just happens to bicycle through Summer Street where she just happens to meet the Emersons again, and then Charlotte just happens to write Lucy a letter when she is in London that conjures up her memories of George as it discusses the coincidence of Miss Lavish meeting him. Hints that Charlotte is a causal agent are dropped more and more

in the last chapters: “Miss Bartlett’s sudden transitions were too uncanny. It sometimes seemed as if she planned every word she spoke or caused to be spoken; as if all this worry about cabs and change had been a ruse to surprise the soul” (141). When Charlotte and Lucy argue after the second kiss in the garden, Lucy finally resolves to talk to George herself, but then “realized that this was what her cousin had intended all along” (160).

In the last chapter, when George and Lucy are back in Italy, they discuss the events that led them to this point. George considers the forces of Fate that “had swept him into this contentment”: “all the people who had not meant to help—the Miss Lavishes, the Cecils, the Miss Bartletts!” (201). Then they realize together that Charlotte had arranged Lucy’s last meeting with Mr. Emerson in Mr. Beebe’s study on purpose: “She knew he was there, and yet she went to church” (203). George reflects on Charlotte’s character: “That your cousin has always hoped. That from that very first moment we met, she hoped, far down in her mind, that we should be like this—of course, very far down. That she fought us on the surface, and yet she hoped. . . .The sight of us haunted her—or she couldn’t have described us as she did to her friend. There are details—it burnt. I read the book afterwards. She is not frozen, Lucy, she is not withered up all through. . . .I do believe that, far down in her heart, far below all speech and behavior, she is glad” (204). In this moment, readers are forced, just as George and Lucy are forced, to rid themselves of their tendency to interpret Charlotte typologically and to build a fence around her. Even Charlotte Bartlett has a deep self.

CONCLUSION

I have outlined how the Puritans saw the typological nature of Crusoe's character, which implies simultaneity of the historical and the spiritual. In this way, there has to be a connection between the allegorical trajectory of Crusoe's soul and the literal trajectory of his actions on the island. By implication, I have tried to argue that if we have questions on the literal level with Crusoe's actions and attitudes--such as his participation in the slave trade, in lethal combat, in capitalistic acquisitiveness--it points to a problematic theology on the spiritual level. We can not simply dismiss the literal level in favor of the allegorical. Specifically, the theology of the self and its authority as portrayed in this novel is problematic. Forster detects some of the problems of the Puritan typological narrative and highlights them in *A Room with a View*, but in the end, presents for Christians another problematic version of the self.

James McClendon, in his recovery of narrative theology, participates in the very processes and practices of Puritan typology outlined here, but his *Ethics* begins to correct the failures of both the Puritan conception of the Christian self as portrayed in *Robinson Crusoe* and the inverted Puritan self as portrayed in *A Room with a View*. McClendon outlines three "strands" or "spheres" that, because they are three components of the Christian self, a Christian ethics must include. In his words, we are:

1) part of the natural order, organic beings, bodies in an organic continuum, God's *natural* creation; but also 2) part of a social world that is constituted first by the corporate nature of Christian existence, the church, and thereby by our share in human society, God's *social* creation, as well; and 3) part of an *eschatological* realm, the kingdom of God, the 'new world' established by God's resurrection of

Jesus of Nazareth from the dead. (66)

McClendon calls these three respectively the *body*, the *social*, and the *resurrection* strands of Christian ethics.

Forster's novel invokes a philosophy mostly of the body strand only. Reacting against what he sees to be Puritanism's drawing of the self out of the body (Crusoe's lack of sexual desire has been a matter of much discussion), Forster calls for a return of the self to its natural bodily existence, free of the restrictions of typological labels and the accompanying moral judgments. In the process, however, this seems to be all there is in the novel. While Mr. Emerson calls for an egalitarian social ethics—the equality of women with men, in this case—the novel never shows us what this would look like. We are left with two people in love, but they have separated themselves from the social world, finding its mores too restrictive, and we don't see them live out life as free and equal human beings. The church itself is depicted as dying and ineffective, and the eschatological or resurrection nature of human existence, the participation of the self in God's kingdom, is simply denied. Thus, there is no sense that the body, human participation in the natural order, and social egalitarianism are creations or mandates of the Christian God. In fact, the only narrative that seems to be driving these ideals is the narrative of renaissance, or of freedom from the past and its restrictions. The novel makes fun of itself in this way, showing in many cases that freedom from one restriction may mean entry into another, but nonetheless it calls for a return to a "pagan" version of the life of the body. Its view of the self is "defective" in Christian terms because it denies the eschatological nature of our being and because it focuses mostly on only a single strand of what the self is (McClendon 67). Nevertheless, Forster's novel helps us see, as McClendon also does, that we need a "new Christian sense of the life of the senses" and a Christian theology of the body and of

erotic union. It also forces us to examine how we view and judge one another's character, raising many interesting questions, such as: How can the church as a community best make authoritative moral judgments and corrections of each other while still holding all its members as equal, made in the image of God?

Robinson Crusoe, in addition perhaps to its lack of a full theology of the body, fails primarily and fundamentally to present an adequate theory of the self by omitting almost completely a theology of the second strand of the self: the social. There is no sense here, as there is in Augustine, that the story of Crusoe alone is inadequate, that he needs the larger church, or that he must strengthen and test his faith by living it out in a community of other people and by engaging with the Bible in all its complexity and obscurity. His own story—and the authority of his own self—is sufficient. For McClendon, one essential Christian conviction, “the doctrine of the church,” is that each individual story must hunger “for another to complete it. . . . My story must be linked with the story of a people” (356). While Crusoe does this to some degree by typologically reading the Bible and converting, he never really desires to be a part of the church. Perhaps this means the self presented here is ultimately defective at the resurrection level as well, for the other essential Christian conviction, according to McClendon, is the “doctrine of salvation,” which recognizes that the story of a people, “the story of each and all is itself hungry for a greater story that overcomes our persistent self-deceit, redeems our common life, and provides a way for us to be a people among all earth's peoples without subtracting from the significance of others' peoplehood, their own stories, their lives” (356). Crusoe has no common life to be redeemed, and he doesn't really see any “self-deceit” that needs to be overcome. He thinks he is able to know what the Holy Spirit instructs, alone, and he never questions it.

These two novels, then, which have the ability to shape our selves and how we see the world, history, God, and the plots of our lives, contain failures of great import for the Christian reader. As McClendon says, the “moral strength of Scripture’s story lies in the integrity of all three” strands of which the self is composed (67). Not only does such a Biblical view of the self need to be outlined by Christian theologians, but new methods and means of reading that self need to be formulated, whether in new practices of Bible-reading or in new uses of Biblical typology in novels.

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