STEPHEN HOCK

"A Need to Mourn Abandonment in Advance" in Nathaniel Mackey's *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate*

"Melin"

In a letter that appears in *Bass Cathedral* (2008), the fourth volume of Nathaniel Mackey's ongoing series of epistolary fictions collectively titled *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate*, the series' protagonist, a jazz musician identified only by the letter N., pauses to ponder the title of "Melin," the first song on Henry Threadgill's album *When Was That?* (1982). N. asks, "What does that title mean?" and considers the possibility that it might be "a typo, a misspelling," before musing, "Should it be 'Melan,' the root for 'black' in words like 'melanin' and 'melancholy'?" (125). N. poses this question of homophony as if only in passing, but like so many of the puzzles that fill N.'s letters, the question echoes against the larger framework that N. has put in place. In this case, the association that N. makes on the level of the signifier between blackness and melancholy resonates with Mackey's investigation of melancholy, loss, and trauma in the context of African American and wider African diasporic history throughout the series. In fact, over the course of the series to date—which, in addition to *Bass Cathedral*, comprises *Bedouin Hornbook* (1986), *Djbot Baghostus's Run* (1993), and *Atet A.D.* (2001)—N.'s experiences of traumatic loss repeatedly point to an overarching sense of loss stemming from the legacy of the Middle Passage that echoes across generations. As the series proceeds, it becomes clear that, apropos of the critical ligature between trauma and repetition that

Contemporary Literature 55, 3 0010-7484; E-ISSN 1548-9949/14/0003-0534

dates back to the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud, N.'s responses to those traumas are bound up with various forms of repetition, including the repeated textual production inherent to the series form itself as well as the musical repetitions of the improvisatory jazz he plays. Ultimately, however, these repetitions serve not to trap N. in the past but to open up for him a path to the future, with repetition functioning in the series not as a pattern one must follow compulsively but rather as a strategic tool for addressing trauma creatively.

Most important among the series' repetitions are its many variant repetitions of words and phrases, the verbal analogue to jazz riffing that Mackey refers to as "the creaking of the word." N.'s reflections on *melin*, in fact, demonstrate that word's creaking:

> But the piece that gets to me most, the one I can't get past, the one I keep playing, is the very first track, "Melin." What does that title mean? Is it a typo, a misspelling? ("Naima" appears as "Niema" on Shepp's *Four for Trane*.) Should it be "Melan," the root for "black" in words like "melanin" and "melancholy"? Is there an apostrophe or a "g" missing from what should be "Melin'" or "Meling"? "Meling" (or "melin'") is an obsolete word, more often spelled "melling," whose meanings are: 1) blending, combining; mixture; 2) copulation; 3) the action of mixing in fight or joining in combat; 4) dealing; intercourse; meddling. Or does the title refer to Abra-Melin, also known as Abramelin the Mage and Abraham the Jew, a magician from Wurxburg, Germany, who lived from 1362 to 1460? Abra-Melin wrote a body of magical works that influenced Aleister Crowley, who is said to have copied from *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* to compose his rituals for mastering demons. Abra-Melin was an expert on the *Kabbalah* and claimed to have acquired magical knowledge from angels, who taught him how to conjure and tame demons. Legend has it that he created two thousand spirit cavalrymen to help Frederick, the elector of Saxony. This pertains to the cavalry/calvary conflation I remarked on in my letter a few months ago. Listen to Olu Dara's cornet solo on "Melin," its bugling of a tremulous charge, an ostensibly triumphalist rally or rescue subjected to a spiritual demur.
>
> (125)

By this fourth volume of Mackey's series, his readers are familiar with N.'s crafting of passages like this one, where etymologically inflected puns and associative trains of thought suggest a numinous quality inherent to linguistic play, akin to the creative dynamic of

improvisational jazz. At first glance, such passages might seem to have little to do with the traumatic backdrop I've gestured toward. Rather than evoking trauma theory, these passages in which a word that comes up in the context of jazz performance is repeated in a series of variant permutations might more readily appear to call for theorists like Henry Louis Gates, Jr., whose work on Signifyin(g) seems a particularly apt fit. As Gates explains, "Signifyin(g) in jazz performances and in the play of black language games is a mode of formal revision, it depends for its effects on troping, it is often characterized by pastiche, and, most crucially, it turns on repetition of formal structures and their differences" (52). Indeed, as Gates notes, "Repetition, with a signal difference, is fundamental to the nature of Signifyin(g)" (51). On a broader scale, James A. Snead posits repetition as a constitutive dynamic of various African cultural practices, in contrast to what he sees as a recent tendency in Western culture to discount the value of repetition.[1] Particularly relevant to N.'s work as a jazz musician is the argument Snead makes for seeing the survival of a distinctly African mode of repetition in African American musical traditions, including jazz: "Repetitive words and rhythms have long been recognized as a focal constituent of African music and its American descendants—slave-songs, blues, spirituals and jazz" (68). Just as Mackey's riffing on the title "Melin" turns up unexpected associations that gesture to larger connections, however, it does not take long before the specter of Freud emerges in this train of thought, as Snead pinpoints Freudian repetition compulsion as the "one unexpected sphere of European consciousness" that has maintained a similar interest in repetitive practices (67), even as Gates argues that "Signifyin(g) constitutes all of the language games, the figurative substitutions, the free associations . . . in a way analogous to Freud's notion of how the unconscious relates to the conscious" (58).

1. In an interview with Paul Naylor, Mackey refers to Snead's work and comments on the role that repetition plays in his own serial texts: "I've lately been looking at this especially in relation to James Snead's essay 'Repetition as a Figure of Black Culture,' which, to put it roughly, poses a cultural disposition which prioritizes repetition against one which prioritizes progress" (653).

This associative riff, from trauma to repetition to Signifyin(g) to Freud, reminds us that *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* can seem very much like a dream. The members of N.'s band—a band known at various points in the series as the Deconstructive Woodwind Chorus, the East Bay Dread Ensemble, and the Mystic Horn Society, before settling, early in *Atet A.D.*, on calling themselves the Molimo m'Atet—repeatedly dream collective dreams that uncannily prefigure events later in the series, and the band's performances frequently take on a dreamlike quality, for instance, on the repeated occasions when their musical instruments unpredictably produce comic-strip speech balloons filled with words that comment on the action. As in Freudian psychoanalysis, the meaning of this dream-text hangs on what the character Jarred Bottle—an avatar of N. who appears in the serial installments of the "lecture/libretto" that N. composes titled "The Creaking of the Word"—refers to in *Bedouin Hornbook* as the "endless drift of associations" that he feels himself caught up in (178). Mackey's readers likewise feel this endless drift of meaning enveloping them as they read deeper into the series. More than that, though, what this associative riff suggests is that Mackey's series' deep investment in repetition should be understood as hinging jointly upon the psychoanalytic context of the series' excavation of trauma and its evocation of linguistic play, a liaison—or, perhaps, a *melling*—that remains to be explored.[2]

2. Harryette Mullen implicitly links Mackey's work to a Freudian context when she argues that the "condensed and displaced symbolizations of amputation/castration extend the jazzy, dream-like improvisations of the sometimes hallucinatory text" (42). Barry Maxwell similarly suggests a Freudian context when he reads one of N.'s dreams as a "scene of castration" (220), although he cautions that the dream cannot "be adequately understood . . . through psychoanalytic constructs alone" (220). In a slightly different vein, Mitchum Huehls presents the most extensive consideration to date of Mackey's work as a meditation on trauma and time. Huehls reads *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* in terms of "a rhythmic temporality that negotiates the double pull of past and future on the black subject" (108). He interprets this "rhythmic temporality" as a sign of the lingering effects of the traumatic history of the Middle Passage and comments, "In sum, I am telling a story in which sublime trauma produces a supplement in the black subject, a supplement best figured as a 'cut' in time that both pulls the black subject back to the past and propels her forward into the future" (113).

"It Was Only to Be Expected That He'd Rest His Case on a Traumatic Pedigree"

Mackey's text demonstrates its interest in repetition as a response to trauma by repeatedly evoking the work of Freud, whose *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* stands as the *locus classicus* for the theory of repetition compulsion. The series announces its interest in the familiar psychoanalytic terrain of dreams and their interpretation from its start, as *Bedouin Hornbook* begins with N. writing to the correspondent that he addresses as "Angel of Dust," "You should've heard me in the dream last night" (7). N. then describes the dream, in which he plays (Archie) "Shepp's solo on his version of 'Cousin Mary' on the *Four for Trane* album—only infinitely more gruffly resonant and varied and warm" (7). That the series begins with N's account of this dream of playing music is only appropriate, given the series' origins in Mackey's own dreams. In his essay "Paracritical Hinge," Mackey explains: "The work began, no doubt, in the dreams I had during my late teens and early twenties of playing with some of the greats of the music. These were literal dreams in which I played alongside John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Thelonious Monk, and others. I repeatedly had these dreams" (212). Apropos of Mackey's repeated dreaming and its evocation of a sense of return or persistence, N. eventually comments of the dream that kicks off *Bedouin Hornbook*: "Perhaps Wilson Harris is right. There are musics which haunt us like a phantom limb" (7). In this way, N. sets the stage for the rest of the series, insofar as his dreams often address his anxieties concerning haunting, loss, and mourning. Later in *Bedouin Hornbook*, for instance, N. recounts a dream that appears to reflect a fear that he might die of a heart attack, as his father did (136).

Beyond its discussions of dreams themselves, Mackey's series makes various other references to psychoanalytic theories of dream interpretation that add up to an impression that the entire series—both the main narrative of N. and his band and the narrative of "The Creaking of the Word," the lecture/libretto that N. is composing—functions according to the logic of dreams. The installment of "The Creaking of the Word" that concludes *Bedouin Hornbook*, for instance, includes a passage in which the character Flaunted Fifth, who serves as another stand-in for N. within the narrative of the

lecture/libretto, describes a burning sensation in his chest as "a psychoanalytic fiction, an upward displacement of the hole burnt in his hand by his father's dime" (232–33). The fact that Flaunted Fifth explains a physiological symptom as a "displacement" of a childhood experience of receiving a dime from his father, and that this displacement appears as a "psychoanalytic fiction" that turns on a literalization of the idea of money "burning" a hole in one's pocket, recalls a number of features of Freud's work on dream interpretation, including his theory of displacement and his frequent recourse to wordplay and childhood experiences as keys to unlocking dreams' meanings, as in his discussion of "the work of displacement" in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (340–44). The reference to a burning sensation in Flaunted Fifth's chest likewise seems to be a displacement of N.'s fear that, like his father, he might die of a heart attack. These repeated references to dreams and the "psychoanalytic fictions" that surround them suggest one explanation for the dream-like events that fill the series—namely, that this text, too, functions on one level as a "psychoanalytic fiction" whose elements frequently address themselves to a sense of traumatization or loss.

This concern with loss notably manifests itself in a dream that N. recounts toward the end of *Bedouin Hornbook*. N. describes the dream as follows:

> Somewhere in North Africa I'd fallen in with a group of Sufis. It was their practice to go into a form of trance in which some of them hissed like snakes, others meowed like cats, still others neighed like horses and so forth. This was their way, one of them explained to me, of humbling themselves before Allah, their way of acknowledging that in relation to Him they were merely "as animals are to men." On hearing this I opened my mouth to say something about the need to inoculate loss, to make the point of a need to mourn abandonment in advance. "As though one were always to be left behind in advance," I intended to say, "by whatever one hopes to not be abandoned by . . ."
>
> I opened my mouth, however, only to find that a piece of glass had gotten caught in my throat. It seemed to be about an inch long and a half inch wide. I pondered making a move to dislodge it, very careful not to make a swallowing gesture, no matter how slight, for to do so would've embedded it all the more firmly. I didn't even dare inhale.
>
> Finally I coughed with all the force I could, hoping to get it out that way. I don't know if I succeeded, for what struck me much more than

> whether I did or not was the sound that came out of me in the attempt. It was a yelp (as though a dog had taken over my throat), so loud and so resounding it woke me up.
>
> (180)[3]

In this dream we see a number of the concerns that occupy N.'s attention over the course of the series. The dream opens in North Africa with a group of Sufis, as befits the concern N. and the other members of his band show for exploring the cultural heritage of Africa, along with other traditions pushed to the margins by Western discourses of imperialism and racism. The fact that N. is prevented from speaking by the presence of a piece of glass in his throat suggests the "broken bottle" of the series' title, a shattered vessel that stands for the African cultural traditions fragmented by the historical trauma of the Middle Passage; as Harryette Mullen observes of the series' title, "elements of African aesthetic and spiritual systems are the 'broken bottle' from which 'traces of perfume still emanate'" (40–41). The associative link the dream suggests from glass to bottle further alludes to the "bottle cap attacks" that N. suffers throughout the series. Likewise, N.'s desire "to say something about the need to inoculate loss, to make the point of a need to mourn abandonment in advance," speaks to the anxieties about more recent losses that he and other members of his band feel throughout the series, including N.'s anxieties about the loss of his father to a heart attack. In its excavation of these multiple concerns of the series, this dream exemplifies the way in which N.'s dreams, like those of the other members of his band, function as signposts guiding the reader through Mackey's text. These signposts become increasingly important as the text becomes increasingly dreamlike, highlighting the ways in which the dream presents reality transformed into phantasmagoria.

Most importantly, for the purposes of this essay, N.'s desire "to say something about the need to inoculate loss, to make the point of a need to mourn abandonment in advance," speaks specifically to Mackey's engagement with psychoanalytic theories of trauma, particularly the Freudian theory of repetition compulsion. Freud's

3. The ellipsis in this passage appears in the original, as do all the ellipses in my quotations from *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate*.

investigation in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* begins with his observation that "dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident" (11). From this, Freud posits that "there really does exist in the mind a compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle" (24), particularly as a response to trauma, which, Freud theorizes, results from situations in which a person "has run into danger without being prepared for it" (11), or in N.'s terms, has not had the opportunity to inoculate against loss before it happens. Those dreams in which patients repeatedly return to the site of their traumatization function, in Freud's reading, as examples of "endeavouring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis" (37). N.'s formulation of "a need to mourn abandonment in advance" therefore recapitulates the imperative Freud sees at work in repetition compulsion. Only by preparing for such traumas "in advance," N.'s dream seems to agree with Freud, can we avoid the traumatizations that produce the compulsion to repeat.

Mackey's series suggests this model of repetitive return as a response to traumatic loss early in *Bedouin Hornbook*, when N. describes "[o]ne of those dreams I have over and over again" (20), a dream that involves his brother Richard's return from over a dozen years overseas. As N. notes, "The odd thing is that my brother in fact came home a year ago, yet I've continued to have these dreams of his return" (21). These dreams are motivated, N. suspects, by a sadness he feels over "the notion of kin, as though the very idea were an occasion for tears, a pitiful claim to connection, a bleeding socket whose eye'd been plucked out" (21). This sadness reflects what N. describes later in *Bedouin Hornbook* as the "lifelong thirsting after tenuous kin" (135), and it becomes clear over the course of the series that this "lifelong thirsting after tenuous kin" reflects not just N.'s individual psychology but also the larger historical trauma of the loss of an entire history of family and cultural traditions as a result of the Middle Passage. We see the connection N. feels to larger historical traumas, for instance, in the first letter in the third volume of the series, *Atet A.D.*, when N. reflects on the death of Thelonious Monk in terms of "the quality the Brazilians call *saudade*," which, N. notes, "goes back to the homesickness the

slaves felt for Africa" (4). In this regard, Monk's death provides a particularly appropriate moment for N. to reflect on this sense of loss, since Monk's work forms part of the African American jazz tradition that N. locates within the wider context of African and African diasporic culture. Monk's death represents another instance in an ongoing history of cultural loss, recalling N.'s reference in the first letter of *Bedouin Hornbook* to "musics which haunt us like a phantom limb." N. thereby demonstrates the truth of Paul Garon's argument, in his exploration of the conjunction between the psychoanalytic and the socioeconomic in the context of the African American blues tradition, that a psychoanalytic mode of interpretation "can never be far removed from the societal elements that permeate the psychological categories themselves" (2). Indeed, throughout the series, we see that these larger societal, historical, and cultural losses function for N. as traumatic experiences, no less so than do the more recent losses of members of his immediate family.[4]

Beyond these dreams of loss, the major phenomena in Mackey's series that resonate with Freudian claims concerning the compulsion a traumatized individual feels to return to "the situation of his accident" are the dizzy spells or seizures that N. suffers. N. generally describes these spells as "shattered cowrie shell attacks" or "bottle cap attacks," due to the sensation they bring of having these specific objects imbedded in his brow, and they often appear to be triggered by news of death or loss, particularly the deaths of musicians whose work, like Monk's, occupies a place in the culture of the African diaspora. For example, in the letter in *Bedouin Hornbook* dated May 23, 1981, less than two weeks after the death of Bob Marley, N. notes, "The news of Marley's death brought on another attack" (207). These attacks therefore function on one level as a symptom of the inscription on N.'s psyche of the traumatic history of the African diaspora. In their first manifestation, however, earlier

4. As Kimberly W. Benston argues: "For the Afro-American, . . . self-creation and reformation of a fragmented familial past are endlessly interwoven: naming is inevitably genealogical revisionism. All of Afro-American literature may be seen as one vast genealogical poem that attempts to restore continuity to the ruptures or discontinuities imposed by the history of black presence in America" (152).

in *Bedouin Hornbook*, the attacks appear to originate in a trauma from N.'s individual history:

> It was at this point that numerous bits of broken glass imbedded themselves in my forehead, each of them the seed of a low, breathy growl which seemed to emanate from the stars. The bits of glass had all the feel of something heavensent, but an angular, trigonometric intrigue born of airtight recesses gave rise to a traumatic, anticlimactic unpacking of the fact that it was the windshield of my mother's car when I was eleven which was, after all, their source. In a flash, I heard the screeching of tires and felt myself thrown forward, the car ramming the rear of the one in front of us, not having stopped in time.
>
> (115–16)

In an interview with Peter O'Leary, Mackey revealed that, like N., he once had bits of glass imbedded in his forehead, "From my head hitting the windshield of a car in a car accident" (45). As Mackey goes on to note, "N. and I have some things in common. We overlap" (46). Though this comment might suggest a narrowly autobiographical reading, it is more productive to read N.'s experience as also striking a broadly societal chord, for instance, in light of Carol E. Henderson's argument that "African American writers recoup the African American body through a literary evocation of its physical trauma, thus reclaiming the essence of a selfhood fragmented under the weight of the dominant culture's gaze" (7). In this context, N.'s being injured by fragments of glass further underscores the metaphor in the series' title of the bottle of African cultural traditions broken through the experience of the Middle Passage. The fact that N.'s physical trauma originates with fragments of glass similarly resonates with works of trauma theory that focus on a sense of a fragmentation of memory or of the self as characteristic of traumatic experience. Jonathan Shay, for example, describes the process of putting traumatic experiences into narrative as one in which "the survivor pieces back together the fragmentation of consciousness that trauma has caused" (188). Likewise, that N.'s traumatization manifests itself in flashbacks to the feeling of having shards of glass imbedded in his forehead evokes the history of the very concept of trauma, since, as Ruth Leys notes, "Trauma was originally the term

for a surgical wound, conceived on the model of a rupture of the skin" (19). In similar terms, Roberta Culbertson writes:

> No experience is more one's own than harm to one's own skin, but none is more locked within that skin, played out within it in actions other than words, in patterns of consciousness below the everyday and the construction of language. Trapped there, the violation seems to continue in a reverberating present that belies the supposed linearity of time and the possibility of endings.
>
> (170)

Indeed, Culbertson's description of "harm to one's own skin," read in the context of the history of race in America, suggests further significance in the circumstance of N.'s original injury occurring at the level of his skin: just as N.'s skin serves as the site of his individual physical trauma, the color of his skin serves as the marker of his racial identity, subjecting him, in Henderson's words, to "the weight of the dominant culture's gaze."

As the series progresses, connections between individual losses and the larger history of loss occasioned by the Middle Passage become ever clearer. In *Djbot Baghostus's Run*, for example, N. elaborates on his evocation in *Bedouin Hornbook* of "musics which haunt us like a phantom limb" by relating a former slave's story of feeling the presence of a lost foot whenever he plays his fiddle. "Sometime," N. quotes the man as saying, "I ketch myself lookin' down to see if it have come back and joined itself up to dat leg, from de very charm of de music I makin' wid de fiddle and de bow" (142). No less than this phantom limb haunts the former slave, the phantom of slavery haunts Mackey's characters, even when they are several generations removed from the experience of slavery. Thus later in *Djbot Baghostus's Run* N. refers to the former slave's testimony as "retrieved historical trauma" (143). In this regard, Mackey's series accords with Cathy Caruth's argument that "history is not only the passing on of a crisis but also the passing on of a survival that can only be possessed within a history larger than any single individual or any single generation" (71). Indeed, critics working in contemporary trauma theory frequently read the effects of present-day racism in terms of the history of racialized trauma as an intergenerational phenomenon. Maria P. P. Root, for instance, theorizes the experience of racism as "insidious trauma,"

or that which "is usually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those in power, for example, gender, color, sexual orientation, physical ability" (240). So long as racism persists in America, it reminds those who experience it of the history of what Root would classify as "direct trauma," in this case the experience of slavery itself, even as it generates what she describes as "indirect trauma," such as is experienced by hearing reports of hate crimes perpetrated against other members of one's group (239–40). In the same vein, Sheldon George argues: "Racism constitutes a racial identity for African-Americans by creating for them a link to the *real* of slavery's trauma. . . . [R]acism is a traumatic encounter that often enables a form of repetition that actually re-manifests the traumatic *real*" (62). Similarly, Bruce Simon reflects:

> [S]aying "trauma" allows us to challenge another cliché to which those who acknowledge the "past injustice" of slavery and segregation often retreat: "all that's past; it's over and done with; put it behind you; forget about it." In return, we should emphasize that trauma is about the literal return—the recurrence and the survival—of a painful, catastrophic event or experience.
>
> (104)

Reading Mackey's series in this light thereby suggests a model of time that lingers over and seems to preclude leaving behind the traumas of the Middle Passage, the temporality that Culbertson describes as "a reverberating present that belies the supposed linearity of time and the possibility of endings." As the slave's testimony regarding his hope that "de very charm of de music I makin'" will restore his lost foot to him suggests, however, Mackey's characters ultimately find a way to address their own sense of traumatization through their music, the improvisatory jazz that functions as a particularly well-suited vehicle for their testimony to these traumas.[5] As such, the impossibility of endings,

5. Dina Georgis offers a complementary reading of jazz in relation to trauma. Describing jazz as "the music of loss, love, and racial grief," Georgis argues that jazz "signals the repetitions of traumatic experience" (215) and "metaphorizes the meanings of discord and connection between individuals of racialized groups who are living in difficult conditions and share a history of racial trauma" (216).

rather than condemning these characters to imprisonment in the past, opens up the possibility of a future.

In fact, as the series progresses, N. comes to resist the idea of compulsively returning to the site of a traumatic history, as we see in the installment of his lecture/libretto "The Creaking of the Word" that concludes *Djbot Baghostus's Run*. In jail on a charge of public exposure, the character Djbot Baghostus, another of N.'s avatars within the lecture/libretto, considers inventing and presenting at his trial a story about his father being lynched: "'They lynched my father,' he would say under oath. 'The white people stood around and laughed'" (195). After weighing this strategy, however, Baghostus thinks better of it: "Djbot Baghostus had second thoughts about this line of defense after only a moment's reflection. It was only to be expected that he'd rest his case on a traumatic pedigree. To do so would simply conform to predictable canons of deprivation" (195). Here, Baghostus's stance mirrors a statement Mackey made in an interview with Edward Foster. Responding to a question about the possibility that African American culture might lose "the adversarial position" that Foster sees as "one of its principal sources of energy" (60), Mackey states: "[Y]ou don't want to invest in your wounds. You don't want to see your wounds as the sole source of your identity" (60–61). Defining oneself only by one's wounds would be to define oneself on the terms imposed by the very system that inflicted those wounds. Narrowly conforming to "predictable canons of deprivation" would, in Baghostus's view, cede any claim to an identity other than the one-dimensional status of being heir to a "traumatic pedigree." Like Baghostus, N. will not simply return to and compulsively repeat that "traumatic pedigree." Instead, he offers a model of repetition as a generative means of responding to trauma, one in which repetition operates no longer as a compulsion but rather as a strategic choice. The characters in Mackey's series harness repetition as a way of looking forward, as if to forestall trauma before it happens. After all, as Jacques Derrida reminds us in his reading of Freud in *Archive Fever*, "there would be no future without repetition" (80), and it is this future-directed mode of repetition that N. and his band take up.

"The Creaking of the Word"

Mackey sums up his model of future-directed repetition with the phrase that serves as the title of N.'s serial lecture/libretto, namely, "the creaking of the word." The first appearance of this phrase comes in *Bedouin Hornbook*, when N. revisits the subject of a Toupouri harvest ritual that inspires a street performance by his band earlier in this first volume of the series.[6] After going through a number of possible meanings the ritual may hold, N. writes:

> The susceptibility of the Toupouri piece to any number of allegorizations (symbolic sociality, symbolic circumlocution, symbolic hollowness-musically-sculpted-by-breath and so forth) leaves me dangling as to which thread to pursue. I'm thinking of calling my talk "The Creaking of the Word," which is the name the Dogon give their weaving block. The sense I get from this is that a) we can't help but be involved in fabrication, b) a case can be made for leaving loose ends loose, and c) we find ourselves caught in a rickety confession no matter what.
>
> (133)

"The creaking of the word," therefore, suggests a quality of instability, an unavoidable tendency of meaning to resist definition or closure. In this formulation, we see one advantage in Mackey's choice to compose *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* as a series, namely, the quality of "leaving loose ends loose" that the open-endedness of the series form offers. In fact, the most basic of the repetitions of "the creaking of the word" that Mackey presents in *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* are precisely the repetitions of the series form itself. This form governs not only the text as a whole, insofar as it has been published as a series of four volumes, but also the multiple narratives within the series, including the main narrative of N. and his band that is crafted through N.'s series of letters, as well as the narrative that is developed through the serial installments of his lecture/libretto. The series or serial is a form with which Mackey has a good deal of experience, since, in addition to this series of epistolary novels, he

6. This street performance appears in the letter in *Bedouin Hornbook* dated August 30, 1980 (74–81).

is also the author of two ongoing poetic series, "*Mu*" and *Song of the Andoumboulou*. As he has stated in various interviews, his interest in the series form reflects his resistance to the idea of narrative closure. In his interview with O'Leary, for instance, Mackey responds to a question about whether he sees the poems that make up "*Mu*" and *Song of the Andoumboulou* as "cohering with the books they are a part of" or "each as a discrete series" (41) by stating: "I'm attracted to the sense of closure that the book offers but I'm also—I'm attracted to it but I'm not content with it. I want to have something that opens it up, that reminds us of the openness and the 'openedness' that it is susceptible to, that it can't in fact escape" (42). Similarly, in an interview with Christopher Funkhouser, Mackey talks about his use of the serial form in the following terms:

> It seemed like that form, which is episodic, which doesn't seek to totalize but to be just the expression of a particular occasion, fit my commitment to process. . . . It invites you to think about work that you've already done as incomplete and open to further articulation or modification, variation, which is a lot of what improvisation is, working out the suggestions that reside within a previous statement, a musical line or whatever. . . .
>
> . . . [W]hen something is apparently closed, you can break it open and pull further implications and explications out of it. That's the process that I work with, in both verse and prose.
>
> (328–29)

Mackey's employment of the series or serial form is one of the ways in which his work takes on the qualities of "the creaking of the word," refusing to resolve itself into a text whose ending would grant a quality of finality, of closing the door on the questions it raises. In this way, the form of the series and "the creaking of the word" offer a means of recouping an alternative affirmative vision of traumatic temporality, Culbertson's "reverberating present that belies the supposed linearity of time and the possibility of endings." Instead of being locked in the past, Mackey's various ongoing series hold out the possibility of revisiting and revising the meanings produced in their earlier installments as a way of opening up the future.

Fittingly, in his interview with O'Leary, Mackey explains the title of his series *Song of the Andoumboulou* by noting, "The Andoumboulou are, in Dogon mythology and cosmology, an earlier form of human being who were flawed and failed to sustain themselves or

failed to be the thing that human beings would eventually be. So they're a version, an earlier attempt, an earlier draft of human being that didn't work out" (39). As such, the very title of *Song of the Andoumboulou* carries connotations of the repetitive processes of rewriting and revising inherent to the series. Paul Naylor, in his chapter on Mackey in *Poetic Investigations*, quotes a letter from Mackey in which he writes, "I'm lately fond of saying that the Andoumboulou are in fact us, that we're the rough draft" (77). The fact that Mackey has come to see present-day human beings as the Andoumboulou further indicates his resistance to narrative or lyric closure. As Naylor puts it, "the song of the Andoumboulou is also potentially 'our' song—the song of a form of humanity that is not quite finished, that is still in the process of becoming more than it presently is," and he proposes that Mackey's work "may suggest a way in which humanity might move beyond the 'rough draft' stage of development" (78). Ultimately, however, it seems more likely that Mackey's work resists the teleological premise of Naylor's supposition that progress "beyond the 'rough draft' stage" is possible or even desirable.

The model of weaving that the Dogon associate with "the creaking of the word" likewise suggests the attractions that Mackey finds both in the repetitions of the serial form and in the various textual repetitions that fill his series, even as the etymological connection of the word "text" to weaving suggests affinities between the practice of weaving and the process of writing an ongoing text like *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate*. At one point in *Bedouin Hornbook*, N.'s avatar Jarred Bottle examines a quotation, "from a book on the Dogon," that he calls "Namesake Epigraph #1":

> "The Word," said the old man, "is in the sound of the block and the shuttle. The name of the block means 'creaking of the word.' Everybody understands what is meant by 'the word' in that connection. It is interwoven with the threads; it fills the interstices in the fabric."
>
> (176)

N. takes this "Namesake Epigraph" from page 73 of Marcel Griaule's study of Dogon culture, *Conversations with Ogotemmêli*. Shortly before this passage, Griaule describes the warp, the series of threads that serve as the foundation of the weaving, as "narrow

and endless" (71). This endlessness should not be understood in a linear sense but rather in a cyclical fashion, as Griaule makes explicit: "'The craft of weaving in fact,' said Ogotemmêli in conclusion, 'is the tomb of resurrection, the marriage bed and the fruitful womb'" (73). Griaule reinforces this point on the next day of his conversations with Ogotemmêli, when he learns that "weaving is a form of speech, which is imparted to the fabric by the to-and-fro movement of the shuttle on the warp; and in the same way the to-and-fro movement of the peasant on his plot imparts the Word of the ancestors, that is to say, moisture, to the ground on which he works . . . and extends the area of cultivation round inhabited places" (77). This "to-and-fro movement," this motion of return that does not simply revisit the same ground but rather "extends the area of cultivation," is the physical analogue to those textual practices which, in Mackey's series, use repetition not simply to reinforce a word's meaning or to shore up meaning against some traumatic threat but rather to open up meaning for the future, to make the word creak in a self-consciously playful fashion. As N. notes in *Djbot Baghostus's Run*, "Both the creaking and the erosion to which words are prone (the multiplication as well as the depletion or debilitation of meaning) make a certain amount of play inescapable" (145). For N., though, more than simple play is at stake. Rather, in the repetitive practices of "the creaking of the word," N. sees a strategic function of repetition as a means of surmounting the traumas of the past by opening up the future.

The temporal trajectory that is at stake in the creaking of the word becomes notably apparent on an occasion in *Bedouin Hornbook* in which that creaking is accomplished by the employment of allusion in a manner analogous to jazz riffing. In this episode, N. describes Lambert, one of the members of his band, as he prepares to play his horn:

> Before blowing into it he raised his right forefinger and said something which, had I been walking, would've stopped me "dead" in my tracks. "To articulate the past historically," he said, "means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. This danger affects both the content of a tradition and its receivers: that of becoming a tool of the

> ruling classes." I could hardly believe my ears. It sounded like a quote, but he neglected to name its author.
>
> (146)

Indeed, Mackey never identifies the source of this quotation as the sixth of Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (255), though he does allude to that essay's reference to "the angel of history" (257) later in the letter in which this episode appears, when N. refers to "the eventual 'angel' of Black-historical stolen harvest" (150). Instead of explicitly identifying the reference, Mackey prefers to let this quotation, like so many others in the series, linger in the air like a bit of music quoted in the middle of an improvisatory jazz performance, familiar to those who know the context out of which Mackey is weaving his own textual performance, and tantalizingly suggestive to those who, like N., might not recognize the source. Beyond the uncanny air of unrecognized allusion, Mackey's riff puts Benjamin's "Theses" in dialogue with his own project of exploring the history of diasporic African culture, as he gestures toward the future of "the eventual 'angel' of Black-historical stolen harvest." Instead of decontextualizing Benjamin's essay, Mackey's riff recontextualizes it and thereby makes Benjamin's words creak, drawing Benjamin's "Theses" out of the past and projecting them toward the future, the allusive riff performing an analogous function to the series form in terms of building an "openedness" into the text. Continuing the allusive and associative riff Mackey sets in motion, we might suggest that this "openedness" of the series is not unlike "the door of a future to come whose time would not be homogeneous," as Derrida puts it in his riff on Benjamin's "Theses" in *Archive Fever* (69), another text that makes words creak in the process of reflecting on Freud, trauma, and repetition.

"After-the-Fact Premonitory Vision"

The most concentrated instance of the creaking of the word in the series, one that vividly illustrates the power that the series grants this creaking to serve as "the door of a future to come whose time would not be homogeneous," appears in a letter in *Djbot Baghostus's Run* in which Penguin, another member of N.'s band, experiences

what N. describes as a "shamanic seizure" while preparing a fish curry for the others (87). The symptoms of this seizure include Penguin's "quasi-robotically" dicing onion after onion, beyond what is needed for the curry (88), and, most strikingly, his going into what N. describes as "a long phonological run" (89), giving voice to a stream of permutations of words and phrases that seems to be a condensed demonstration of the creaking of the word. Just before beginning his run, Penguin utters a sentence that none of the assembled members of the band understand: "Our chances of finding the furtive beat she embodies are about as flimsy as onionskin" (89). N. describes the beginning of the run as follows:

> As Penguin spoke the punchy, projective sound of the dunduns coming from the living room peppered, punctuated and seemed to prompt his muttered meditation. The four of us hung on his every word, though the deeper he went the more oblivious of us he became. "Furtive curvature, furtive beat," he reflected out loud, initiating a long phonological run in which declarative statement gave way to repetitions and permutations of certain syllables, words and phrases and which had a Tranelike, sheets-of-sound aspect or impact to it. "Furtive heat, fevered hit. Fervid curvature. Flaunted rotundity. Flaunted curve, overt curve, ovarian cave, curvaceous ferment. . . ." He spoke at a now hurried, now halting, staccato pace, attacking the onion with irregular, choppy strokes of the knife as though it (the onion) were a rope, the phonological rope he was tied up in, a Gordian rope he was trying to cut his way thru, an umbilical rope. ". . . Fervent fertility, pubic fur. Fragrant pelt. Flared nostril. Flaunted crotch, flagrant pelt, pungent crux. . . ."
>
> (89–90)

In his run through a series of variations on his prefatory sentence, Penguin weaves a text whose elements are connected chiefly by the phonological or acoustic "repetitions and permutations of certain syllables, words and phrases and which had a Tranelike, sheets-of-sound aspect or impact to it." As such, Penguin's run further marks the series as the sort of "jazz text" that Gayl Jones describes:

> The writer's attempt to imply or reproduce musical rhythms can take the form of jazz-like flexibility and fluidity in prose rhythms (words, lines, paragraphs, the whole text), such as nonchronological syncopated order, pacing, or tempo. A sense of jazz—the jam session—can also emerge from

> an interplay of voices improvising on the basic themes or motifs of the text, in key words and phrases.
>
> (200)

As Jones notes, these jazzlike qualities frequently render such texts "seemingly nonlogical and associational." In other words, such texts become dreamlike, and apropos of Mackey's engagement with Freudian dream interpretation, the run's associative train draws together a number of the topics that the band addresses throughout the series, an associative logic behind the phonological associations that tie the terms of the run to one another. The run's references to fertility, for instance, allude to the Toupouri harvest ritual and other instances in the series in which N. considers the topic of the harvest. The mention of "fragrant pelt," meanwhile, connects not only to the run's other component phrases such as "pubic fur," "flaunted crotch," and "pungent crux" but also to the "traces of perfume" of the series' title. Another of the run's olfactory references, "flared nostril," has the added dimension of looking back to a moment in *Bedouin Hornbook* in which Lambert points out a tradition holding that "one of the devil's nostrils tends to be unusually wide whenever he assumes bodily form" (147), and thus to a host of legends of musicians selling their souls to the devil that the series alludes to. In counterpoint to that moment of retrograde rhythm, the appearance of the word "funk" later in the run (90), by contrast, looks forward to N.'s musings in the series' next volume, *Atet A.D.*, on "synaesthetic ascendancies of sound and scent of the sort suggested by 'funk'" (72).

Despite its references to far-flung topics covered elsewhere in the series, Penguin's run, insofar as it appears to be symptomatic of a seizure or possession, seems to retreat from the liberatory potential that N. sees in the creaking of the word to open up and create new meanings. Fittingly enough, then, instead of continuing to multiply meanings, the run ultimately resolves itself as a sort of forced exercise in repetition, one that winds up by plowing the same ground over and over again, a debased version of the repetition compulsion that never moves toward the future. N. notes this relatively early in the run, when he comments, "Penguin's long phonological run, for all its alliterative, assonantal, associative thrust, conveyed a sense of being stuck, as though run, as well as rope, were rut (iterative

rut he would never get out of, iterative rope he was hung up on)" (90). Later, we read: "His prolix phonological run eventually came to where these were the only words he uttered. '. . . Rusted kiss. Rusted kiss. Rusted kiss.' This was the note on which his run came to an end" (92). "Rusted kiss," too, gestures to another part of the series, specifically Penguin's statement earlier in *Djbot Baghostus's Run*, "I tasted rust on Djeannine's perfunctory lips" (27), which he makes in his recollection of a dream that he, Lambert, and N. share of a drummer named Djeannine, a connection that further underscores the dreamlike quality of this episode.[7] The members of the band therefore take the run's conclusion as evidence "that Djeannine did indeed have hold of him" (92), that his seizure is an instance of his possession by the dreamt-of drummer whose instrument's rhythmic qualities his run's repetitions invoke.

Something that occurs at the end of this episode, however, suggests that Penguin's apparent loss of agency under the demands of constricted repetition may not be so complete. After Penguin comes out of his seizure, he is comforted by the other members of the band, particularly Djamilaa, who at one point implores him, "Don't cry, Penny, don't cry" (95). Djamilaa's address of Penguin with the diminutive "Penny," as N. interprets it, "allowed her to console and get close to Penguin while pushing her side of the Penny/Djeannine spat" (95), a debate that Penguin and Djamilaa engage in earlier in *Djbot Baghostus's Run* over the relative merits of the two drummers they have dreamt of, Djeannine and Penny.[8] Strangely, Penguin does not seem to be bothered by Djamilaa's taking the occasion of comforting him as an opportunity to push her side of the debate. As N. recounts the episode, in fact, Penguin's acceptance of Djamilaa's strategically creaking consolation occasions another repetition:

> His amenability to Call-It-What-You-Will's new diminutive step, moreover, acquired an after-the-fact air of complicity and command. So strong was this retroactive air that it induced an after-the-fact premonitory vision

7. The dream of Djeannine that the band's three male members—N., Penguin, and Lambert—collectively dream is detailed in the letters in *Djbot Baghostus's Run* dated August 30 and August 31, 1981 (20–32).

8. N. recounts the dream about Penny shared by the band's two female members at the time, Djamilaa and Aunt Nancy, in the letter in *Djbot Baghostus's Run* dated September 1, 1981 (33–47).

> or vignette in which Penguin appeared to have prompted Djamilaa, appeared to have encouraged her addressing him as Penny. What one saw took one back a moment in time. Djamilaa had just said, "It'll be okay. It'll be okay. Don't cry, Pen, don't cry." Tears continued flowing from Penguin's eyes as he reached into his right pants pocket for his handkerchief and, pulling out the handkerchief, caused a penny to fall from his pocket to the floor. It was then that Djamilaa added, "Don't cry, Penny, don't cry."
>
> The curious thing is that Lambert, Aunt Nancy and I all saw it that way, though we'd all seen it the first way as well (no hand in the pocket, no handkerchief, no penny). Time, it seemed, had fallen behind by trying to get ahead of itself and now sought to correct or catch up with itself by including what in its haste it'd left out before. Perhaps the sense of suppositious retreat we'd gotten from the drums in the park two days before had infiltrated and so radically altered our experience of time that a palimpsestic repeat now opened up a crack in what before we'd have taken to be solid, sealed, absolute. Time, we now knew, was double-jointed.
>
> (96–97)

Given the dream logic that governs so much of the series, we should not be surprised that this "after-the-fact premonitory vision or vignette" turns out to come true, more or less. The "palimpsestic repeat" that has entered into the band's perception of time goes on to manifest itself once more, as Penguin does "indeed reach into his right pants pocket, take out a handkerchief and wipe his eyes," although in this paradoxical repetition of the foreseen events, no penny falls out of his pocket (97). N.'s sense that this vision of events repeating themselves in strategically variant forms constitutes a counterploy on Penguin's part to Djamilaa's rhetorical ploy of addressing him as "Penny" seems to find confirmation when the other members of the band ask Penguin and Djamilaa if they saw the penny. Penguin and Djamilaa both deny having seen it, but N. records, "I saw (or thought I saw) the slightest trace of a grin on Penguin's lips as he disavowed our premonitory vision or vignette" (97). By suggesting the possibility that this repetition and revision of events is, ultimately, the handiwork of Penguin, N. extends the scope of the creaking of the word, giving it power not only over Penguin's phonological run but also over time itself, time that now appears decidedly not as "homogeneous" but rather as "double-jointed." Under the repetitive energies channeled by the band, time

creaks, too, demonstrating the power of repetition to open up "what before we'd have taken to be solid, sealed, absolute." Instead of being at the mercy of a compulsion to repeat, Penguin uses repetition as a tool no less than Mackey does, seeing in its revisionary capacity the possibility of reshaping the future. If *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* were a text grounded in realism, this episode could perhaps be explained, however unsatisfactorily, as a group hallucination. More productive, however, is to recognize the "double-jointed" quality of time in this episode as a sign of the series' construction of itself as a dream-text whose repetitions and associative verbal play indicate its address to and simultaneous move beyond traumatic history through the "openedness" of the series form, functioning, to return to Derrida's riff on Benjamin, as "the door of a future to come whose time would not be homogeneous" (69).

"Wound and Wound and Wound"

In his essay "On Jazz," Theodor W. Adorno suggestively writes, "The history of the social function of jazz, the tendency to disenchant the dance, has yet to be written, and to be transposed subsequently into its opposite, a new magic" (485–86). It is tempting to think of the bizarre, dreamlike phenomena that fill *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* as "a new magic," a jazz magic that responds to the call Paul Garon offers when he writes: "The blues singer may be confirming a segment of psychoanalytic theory. . . . But there's a trace of magic there. And it is precisely in magic that we find the poetic means for the transformation of reality" (187–88). Of all the magical or dreamlike events that fill Mackey's series, one of the most memorable is the repeated emergence of comic-strip speech balloons out of the instruments that N. and his band play, bearing inscriptions that, like Penguin's phonological run, partake of the creaking of the word. In the balloons' most recent appearance in the series to date, in *Bass Cathedral*, one of the balloons reads: "*But was. Nothing was. Strut made something of it, wound and wound and wound. Water slipped under my feet, I floated. Water wet my feet, a ring of water I strode on. Strut was a way of saying something else had hold of me. A ring of water bore me round and round*" (137). Given the series'

excavation of traumas historical and personal, we might at first read the repeated words "*wound and wound and wound*" as referring to wounds, traumatic injuries. Carried forward by the rhythm of the language, however, we hear, by the end of the balloon, that those words should seemingly rhyme with the final "*round and round*," shifting from "*wound*" as injury to "*wound*" as the result of the action of winding, as if the winding of a clock or a metronome, marking the rhythm of time's march to a future in which reality might continue to be transformed, as if in a dream.

Virginia Wesleyan College

WORKS CITED

Adorno, Theodor W. "On Jazz." Trans. Jamie Owen Daniel. *Essays on Music*. Ed. Richard Leppert. Berkeley: U of California P, 2002. 470–95.

Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken, 1968. 253–64.

Benston, Kimberly W. "I Yam What I Am: The Topos of Un(naming) in Afro-American Literature." *Black Literature and Literary Theory*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Methuen, 1984. 151–72.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.

Culbertson, Roberta. "Embodied Memory, Transcendence, and Telling: Recounting Trauma, Re-establishing the Self." *New Literary History* 26.1 (1995): 169–95.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Trans. Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.

Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Trans. and ed. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1961.

———. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Trans. and ed. James Strachey. New York: Avon, 1965.

Garon, Paul. *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*. Rev. ed. San Francisco: City Lights, 1996.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.

George, Sheldon. "Trauma and the Conservation of African-American Racial Identity." *JPCS: Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society* 6.1 (2001): 58–72.

Georgis, Dina. "*Falling* for Jazz: Desire, Dissonance, and Racial Collaboration." *Canadian Review of American Studies/Revue canadienne d'études américaines* 35.2 (2005): 215–29.

Griaule, Marcel. *Conversations with Ogotemmêli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*. London: Oxford UP, 1965.

Henderson, Carol E. *Scarring the Black Body: Race and Representation in African American Literature*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2002.

Huehls, Mitchum. *Qualified Hope: A Postmodern Politics of Time*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2009.

Jones, Gayl. *Liberating Voices: Oral Tradition in African American Literature*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991.

Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000.

Mackey, Nathaniel. *Atet A.D.* San Francisco: City Lights, 2001.

———. *Bass Cathedral*. New York: New Directions, 2008.

———. *Bedouin Hornbook*. 1986. Los Angeles: Sun and Moon, 1997.

———. *Djbot Baghostus's Run*. Los Angeles: Sun and Moon, 1993.

———. "An Interview with Nathaniel Mackey." Conducted by Edward Foster. *Talisman* 9 (1992): 48–61.

———. "An Interview with Nathaniel Mackey." Conducted by Christopher Funkhouser. *Callaloo* 18.2 (1995): 321–34.

———. "An Interview with Nathaniel Mackey." Conducted by Paul Naylor. *Callaloo* 23.2 (2000): 645–63.

———. "An Interview with Nathaniel Mackey." Conducted by Peter O'Leary. *Chicago Review* 43.1 (1997): 30–46.

———. "Paracritical Hinge." *Paracritical Hinge: Essays, Talks, Notes, Interviews*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2005. 207–27.

Maxwell, Barry. "'I Hate It When Things Become So Pat as to Be Oppressive': Staying Out of Range of the Commonplace in Nathaniel Mackey's *Bedouin Hornbook*." *Holding Their Own: Perspectives on the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States*. Ed. Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Heike Raphael-Hernandez. Tübingen, Ger.: Stauffenburg, 2000. 217–26.

Mullen, Harryette. "Phantom Pain: Nathaniel Mackey's *Bedouin Hornbook*." *Talisman* 9 (1992): 37–43.

Naylor, Paul. *Poetic Investigations: Singing the Holes in History*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1999.

Root, Maria P. P. "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality." *Personality and Psychopathology: Feminist Reappraisals*. Ed. Laura S. Brown and Mary Ballou. New York: Guilford, 1992. 229–65.

Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*. New York: Atheneum, 1994.

Simon, Bruce. "Traumatic Repetition: Gayl Jones's *Corregidora*." *Race Consciousness: African-American Studies for the New Century*. Ed. Judith Jackson Fossett and Jeffrey A. Tucker. New York: New York UP, 1997. 93–112.

Snead, James A. "Repetition as a Figure of Black Culture." *Black Literature and Literary Theory*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Methuen, 1984. 59–79.

The Henry Threadgill Sextet. *When Was That?* About Time, 1982. Sound recording.