A Canvas of Modernism in *The Day of the Locust*

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要約

『いなごの日』におけるモダニズムの構図

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ナサニエル・ウェストの『いなごの日』(1939) に関するモダニズム論。あらゆる行為を演技に変えるハリウッドの力によって，そこに生きる人間たちが疲労し，倦怠感に襲われ，ときとして心身の死を遂げる姿を考察して，モダニズムを規定し，その終末論的な特徴を分析する。

ハリウッドの人間たちは，演技として生きることに翻弄されながら，混乱を回避しようとして秩序の感覚を強める。かれらは人間の秩序と都市の無秩序が対立するのを知り，究極の秩序を構築して、この対立を克服しようとする。秩序と無秩序の二項対立から逃れるために，その二項対立を究極の秩序という一元的な真理に還元しようとする思考・欲望をモダニズムの心的構造として規定する。

それでは，このモダニズムの心的構造に終末論的な特徴を与えているのは何か。一つには，ハリウッドの住人たちがいかに秩序を志向しても，この都市には，かれらの秩序の枠組に収まらない無秩序が備わっているということがある。さらにハリウッドでは，かれらの秩序への意志そのものが演技としてしか意味をもたないということもある。主人公の芸術家が自らの画布に表現しようとしたのは，秩序の規範によって保証されるリアリティの感覚さえをも演じざるをえない人間の戯画化された姿であり，その演技の要求に応えられない人間の心身を死に至らしめる都市の力である。『いなごの日』の登場人物に認められるモダニズムの心的構造に終末論的な特徴を与えているのは，そうした都市の力にほかならない。

Introduction

As a historical fortress of American film industry, Hollywood has never lost its fame. Even the Great Depression failed to impair the glory of the city. As Sean Dennis Cashman reports in *America in the Twenties and Thirties: The Olympian Age of Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, "the onset of the Great Depression hardly touched film prosperity," and "Hollywood survived recessions in 1933 and 1938" (356). In *The Day of the Locust* (1939), Nathanael West sets the stage in this immortal Hollywood and carries on the thematic interest he has developed in *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933): some demonic force of a city that thrusts newcomers into confusion, exhaustion, and boredom, none of which can be offset except by exploding into anger and violence.[1] What ensues is a dialectic of power, both the irrepressible action of a city and the irrepressible reaction of an individual compressed into a fearful unity which finally becomes a naught symbolic of the zero point of being. Yet if anger and violence are the outcries of protest against the naught, they may also serve as an appeal to being and disclose their reverse side, a foreboding of catastrophic ending. From this imminent annihilation emerges the sense of crisis characteristic of modernism. A critical issue arises here: what conditions the sense of crisis in modernism? One of the most decisive factors is the erosion of reality (identity, meaning, substance, etc.) due to the surge of disorder people allegedly fail to reduce to their scheme of order. More fundamentally, their dualistic assumption of order and disorder, as well as their struggle for order with a capital O, constitutes the frame of modernist mind. The prime concern of this essay is to analyze the apocalyptic undertone unique to the modernist mind that the characters in *The Day of the Locust* will demonstrate in their antagonistic relation with Hollywood.

The key to our analysis is the picture "The Burning of Los Angeles" (5) on which the major character, Tod Hackett, continues to work throughout the novel. In this work of art, his focus is on the object which he feels he must paint — "the people who come to California to die" (113). In other words, this painting offers him an artistic perspective to represent, within the framework of his own canvas, the modes of dying of those whom he observes during his stay in Hollywood. Our task is therefore to elaborate on the leitmotif of "The Burning of Los Angeles" by illustrating the ways in which Hollywood tortures its major denizens, Harry Greener, Faye Greener, Homer Simpson, and Tod himself. This will allow us to identify the painting as a canvas of modernism on which most of the primary modernist features presented by Ihab Hassan are projected: "Technologism," "Dehumanization" (35), "Eroticism" (37), "Primitivism" (36), and "Urbanism" (35). In the process of the discussion of these modernist features in *The Day of the Locust* will some other crucial issues for this novel come up. Among them are the decline of the notion of depth, psychic epidemics such as inertia and apathy, anomie due to the decay of humanitarian criteria, the commodification of sexuality, and the sterility and fatality of violence. All these issues are modernist ones because they will reflect in some way or other the confrontation between the disorderly action of a city and the

orderly reaction of people.

Initially, we must set up a unifying concept essential to the consistency of the whole agenda. Since the fate of all major characters depends exclusively on their potential for playacting in Hollywood, the notion of performance will serve this purpose best. In this perspective, living in Hollywood itself can be seen as a mere performance, and its denizens as the performers who are required to act on the demands of performance which their social system imposes on them. The point at issue is the penalty they will pay for the failure to live up to this economy of performance — their own deaths, whether physical or psychic, which prove in our final analysis to signal the total loss of their proclaimed reality.

I The Performer

In the decade of the Great Depression, Tod comes to Hollywood from New Haven and becomes a set and costume designer at a movie studio. After staying in Hollywood for nearly three months, he still finds the city "a very exciting place" (4). In the course of his stay there, however, Tod presents a more complex way of seeing, because he is an artist, capable of observing his objects from the perspective both of an insider and of an outsider. A set of his lithographs titled "The Dancers" (9), for instance, accounts for his multifold perspective. Tod portrays his friends, Harry Greener, Faye Greener, and Abe Kusich as dancers, around whom stands the audience watching their performance. The composition of these lithographs shows the performer, the audience, and the artist, all of whom form three concentric circles. As his perspective changes, Tod enters into the innermost space of the performer, or stands within the wider circumference of the second space occupied by the audience, or steps outside of these two circles and stares at the whole theatrical field as another audience. These shifts of perspective qualify him as "a very complicated young man with a whole set of personalities, one inside the other like a nest of Chinese boxes" (4–5).

The manifold perspective open to Tod helps him to see Hollywood as a field of performance in which identities are formed and reformed by role playing and make-believe appearances. As he walks along Vine Street, Tod sees a great many of the evening crowd wearing sports clothes which are "not really sports clothes" (5). Also he notices a fat lady in a yachting cap going "shopping, not boating," a man in a Norfolk jacket and a Tyrolean hat returning "not from a mountain, but an insurance office," and a girl in slacks and sneakers with a bandanna around her head having just left "a switchboard, not a tennis court" (5). A glance at their fashion modes shows that none of the people can be identified by the clothes they wear. What they actually do is to enjoy the differentiations of identity, such as mountaineer and tennis player, which their clothes produce. Tod considers these people "masqueraders" (5) and implies that their substantial identities are hidden behind their deceptive clothes. His assumption that the outside and the inside should reflect each other like a mirror image stresses his penchant for order and characterizes him as a modernist. Nevertheless, he shows by regarding their clothes as signifiers and their identities as signifieds that these people are playing

with the arbitrary relation between their clothes and their identities. Through the power of his glance, their fashion modes demonstrate the artificial and superficial nature of signs and claim a new name. So long as a meaningful semantic relation between the outside (appearance) and the inside (substance) somehow remains intact, even if contested, late modernism, if not postmodernism, provides this name.[2]

The artificial and superficial nature of signs in Hollywood becomes more apparent as Tod glances over Pinyon Canyon. Along the slopes of Pinyon Canyon stand the houses made of plaster, lath, and paper which afford the outside appearances of "Mexican ranch houses, Samoan huts, Mediterranean villas, Egyptian and Japanese temples, Swiss chalets, Tudor cottages, and every possible combination of these styles" (6–7). If the evening crowd on Vine Street plays with the differentiations of personal identity which their clothes produce, these houses similarly play with the differentiations of national and architectural identity which their outside appearances produce. Moreover, these houses display a model of the disorderly order of "simulation" (152), to use Jean Baudrillard's terminology,[3] through their surfaces which are not supported by any volume, and whose putative volume is not decidable at first glance. The artificial and superficial nature of these surfaces indicates the radical negation of the Utopian belief that a sign can refer to the depth of meaning and that the sign and the real correspond to each other. Partly because of the loss of reality, and partly because of the device of pastiche intended to cannibalize a whole spectrum of styles and periods, these houses stress even more strongly than the evening crowd on Vine Street the play of signs characteristic of Hollywood, and anticipate the postmodern climate in which the notion of depth yields to the notion of surface.[4] Lacking the order of depth underlying the materiality of objects, Hollywood in *The Day of the Locust* turns into a field of performance where multiple surfaces are given free rein.

The field of performance in Hollywood can be both exciting and exhausting, and this ambivalence charms and devastates all the characters involved. Among the most tragicomic victims is Harry, a vaudeville performer. While clowning continuously, he becomes aware that few people punish a clown, and the clowning which he first restricted to the stage is now "his sole method of defense" (37). In due time, he becomes literally one with the role of a clown which Hollywood allures him to play, until he can no longer differentiate himself from his alterego. Even when seriously sick, he practices "a variety of laughs, all of them theatrical," and enacts "Harry Greener, poor Harry, honest Harry, well-meaning, humble, deserving, a good husband, a model father, a faithful Christian, a loyal friend" (65). In performing a series of Harrys, Harry introduces another sample of depthlessness in Hollywood because none of the Harrys he has performed maintains underlying identities. In his effort to entertain the audience with the differentiations of his now undecidable identity, Harry demonstrates the secret of performance which he has instilled into his daughter, Faye, who aspires to be a star — acting with a minimum of talent and a maximum of artificiality.

Toward the end of his performance, Harry hardly identifies himself as a human being and transforms himself increasingly into a nonhuman object, an animal, and a machine.

At the final stage of his pantomime, something snaps inside him like "a mechanical toy" (65) that has been overwound, just when he starts spinning through his repertoire. His effort, however, is purely muscular, "like the dance of a paralytic" (66). Finally, Harry reels to the couch and collapses, and yet he still laughs with his eyes closed on the sofa. His laugh first sounds like "a sharp, metallic crackle, like burning sticks" (73) and gradually increases until it becomes "a rapid bark," falls away again to "an obscene chuckle," then climbs into "the nicker of a horse," and finishes in "a machinelike screech" (74). The tension of this denouement is conditioned on one of the features of modernism, "Technologism," by which Hassan means that "City and Machine make and remake one another" (35). The symbiotic relationship between "City and Machine" underlies the interdependent relationship between Hollywood and Harry; Hollywood converts him into a performing automaton, which subsequently contributes to activating the field of performance in Hollywood. In other words, the city entices him to perform as a clown and assimilates whatever performing output Harry has produced, only to create all the greater demand for performance.

There is nothing tragic about Harry being a machine as long as he can carry on his reproductive feedback to Hollywood. Only when the strain of the city goes beyond the limit of his performing potential, a sense of ending, following the symptom of a mechanical breakdown, hovers around him. Faye finds her father unable to check his continuous laughter, and causes our laughter, however distorted, by hitting him on the mouth with her fist as if to repair a broken machine: "She hit him only once. He relaxed and was quiet" (74). For a moment, Harry ceases to be a machine and unfolds himself as a human being, but one deprived of his human nature because he is dying at this point. Disqualified both as a machine and as a human being, he loses his mechanical and organic order and shows a couple of the modernist features Hassan puts forward: "Dehumanization" and "alienation of human will" (35). In this sense, Harry's mode of living can be seen as a modernist one.

While this definition of his life is appropriate in its own right, it limits the range of our further discussion, for the problem is not only the way Harry performs but also the force of Hollywood that has made him a performing automaton. As Harry's pressing death indicates, Hollywood is ready to oust him when he runs out of performing potential. This does not necessarily mean that Harry will be dead at any moment because he is somehow less efficient than other performers. What matters here is that the whole basis of action has shifted from entertainment, conceived as a relief to the world of work, to performance, subsumed into the economy of work. In other words, Harry tests his performing potential in the field of performance in Hollywood where every action is defined as part of a game pertaining to efficiency. Ironically, the city plays the game according to the order of its own rules, however disorderly the rules appear to the opponent.

In *The Day of the Locust*, the rules of the interactive game between Hollywood and its denizens, especially Harry, are defined by what Jean-François Lyotard calls "performativity — that is, the best possible input/output equation" (46). The "input/

output equation" between Hollywood and Harry starts to decline when he fails to meet the ever-increasing demand of performance so that he finds himself compelled to produce more performing output than he can. What Harry undergoes in the end is the crisis of output. This is the type of crisis which Jürgen Habermas claims as detrimental to the production system of liberal capitalism: "A crisis that derives from inadequate input is atypical of the capitalist mode of production. The disturbances of liberal capitalism were output crises" (45). Harry dies because he is unable to survive his output crisis. His is the death of a modernist performer in liberal capitalism where the sense of crisis reflects the inability of society to reproduce and legitimate its economic function. The economy of "performativity" inherent in Hollywood has forced him to use up his performing potential until the action of the city and the reaction of the performer counterbalance to the zero point of his own being. This is eventually one of the modernist modes of dying which Tod highlights in "The Burning of Los Angeles."

II The Audience

If Harry offers a prototype of the performer in *The Day of the Locust*, manipulated by the economy of "performativity" in Hollywood, Homer represents the mode of the human condition unique to the audience. Our analysis of Homer, therefore, will lead us out of the innermost space of the performer in "The Dancers" into the wider second space of the audience. Although the distinction between the performer and the audience seems ambiguous within Homer while he is preoccupied with Faye, he ends up as a worn-out audience. The juxtapositional perspective both Harry and Homer present will help us to complete the whole vision of "The Burning of Los Angeles" which Tod is accomplishing.

Originally from a small town in Iowa, Homer comes to California for a rest cure. Because of his ruralism and exhaustion, he is least qualified to playact in such a monstrous urban city as Hollywood. In fact, the lack of his performing potential is emphasized in various ways. In his hometown, Homer once worked as a hotel bookkeeper, though "mechanically" and with "the same impersonal attachment" (59) as he now does odd chores such as opening cans and making his bed. Since his arrival in Hollywood, he has been constantly trying to awaken his paralyzed hands but still remains as impersonal as "a plant" (61). Understandably enough, his psychic maladies make him an easy prey for the sensual, predatory, and voracious segment of people represented by Faye. Although Homer cannot fully defend himself, he is not totally defenseless either. Even his meager defense against Faye's charm, "chastity" (83), can be automatically the target of parody in Hollywood where sexual desire is mechanically processed, readily available as products: vices are made attractive by "skillful packaging," and "love is like a vending machine" (27). Just as West depicts information as a newly developed commodity in *Miss Lonelyhearts*, so he now processes sexuality into a new type of commodity in *The Day of the Locust*. As sexuality becomes integrated as part of capitalistic economy, the "Eroticism" of modernism arises, and, as Hassan asserts, "love now becomes an intimate of disease" (37).

But for his participation as a performer in Hollywood, Homer could be immune to the infectious corruption of this city. In an attempt to escape from his half-dead life, however, he does choose to be a performer: he sets up a "business arrangement" (148) with Faye and agrees to patronize her until she becomes a star. This is the mutual-aid contract in which the would-be star exploits the sexual desire of her patron, who in return exploits her desire for success. The problem for Homer derives not from the reciprocal exploitation, but from his lack of understanding that the ideal of Faye's stardom is an absurd one. All Faye can do is to dramatize her desire for success with a minimum of talent and a maximum of artificiality — the family heritage which her father, Harry, bequeathed to her.

The artificial and superficial nature of her performance is emphasized in various ways. Even Homer senses her "odd mannerisms and artificial voice" (70). All her gestures are so "completely meaningless, almost formal" that Faye seems "a dancer rather than an affected actress" (70). She repays Claude for his compliment by "smiling in a peculiar, secret way and running her tongue over her lips" (185), and seems to promise "all sorts of undefined intimacies," though her gestures are actually "as simple and automatic as the word thanks" (186). Her affectations are so "completely artificial" (87) that Tod finds them fascinating. She also stresses dressing herself in "the right clothes" (148) for the pursuit of stardom and eventually continues the satire on "skillful packaging" as a means to success in Hollywood. Tod feels uneasy with "her self-sufficiency" and barely resists "the desire to break its smooth surface" (156). His emphasis on the notion of "surface" in Faye becomes entirely valid when there proves to be no depth beneath it. Her flirtations with some men, for instance, are the artificial and superficial acts of displacement by which she can shift away from the boredom of any fixed point, just as a girl in her movie scenario flirts with a sailor of lower station because the girl is bored with her engagement to a Russian count.

In her relationship with Homer, Faye starts persecuting him as her "boredom" (159) deepens.[5] Although Homer stirs up "his servility and his generosity" (159) in reforming his relationship with Faye, these humanitarian defenses only work for worse. His "servility" inflames her sadistic desire to torture him, while his "generosity" causes her to feel mean and cruel, however hard she may try to be kind. As a result, Faye and Homer are caught in a vicious circle where despair flows into violence, which in turn brings forth a further degree of despair. In this dilemma, Homer still searches for a center on which, he seems to believe, he can set up a "meaningful" world of his own. It is therefore devastating to him that Faye can shift her field of action by drifting like "a cork" (215) from one man to another. In each shift, Faye brings her physical charm, along with her purposeful gestures, into play, and serves as a temporary center to her male counterparts, around which they form a circle, willing to find their way inward: "The only move [Earle, Miguel, Abe, and Claude Estee] made was to narrow their circle about her" (188). The opposing stances of Homer and Faye suggest that the former represents the modernist notion of order by holding to the scheme of a center, while the latter represents the postmodern notion of indeterminacy by mapping centers as she circulates her desire.[6]

As Faye displaces the center of her desire that she used to share with Homer, he finds himself becoming less a performer and more an audience. When Miguel and Earle start living in Homer's garage, he cannot do anything other than see these squatters hang around. While Faye enjoys an erotic dance with Miguel, Homer becomes less active and more frustrated. Finally, he locks himself in his bedroom and refuses to be even an audience.

The lack of Homer's performing potential cannot be overemphasized, especially in a striking contrast to the overflow of Abe's performing potential. Abe watches Faye enjoying an erotic dance first with Miguel, and then with Earle, until he cannot curb the outburst of his desire to be a performer: "Le' me dance" (197). Abe's desire becomes all the more insatiable because he fears remaining prohibited from the field of dancing. In the end, Abe finds vent for this prohibition in assaulting Earle and expresses both his boredom and his sexual desire in violence: "Just as Faye and Earle started to dance again, he charged between Earle's legs and dug upward with both hands" (197). This brutal and yet comical charge can be defined, though temporarily, as an indication of "the violent return to the repressed" (36) which Hassan ascribes to modernism under the entry of "Primitivism."

The Freudian notion of repression, which Hassan applies to his definition of primitivism, may intimate the internal confusion of Homer and Abe. And yet it cannot fully elucidate the essential nature of the field of dancing where Homer ceases to be an audience, not to mention a performer, while Abe is tempted to be a desperate performer. As Fredric Jameson stresses, "repression is reflexive, that is, it aims not only at removing a particular object from consciousness, but also and above all, at doing away with the traces of that removal as well, at repressing the very memory of the intent to repress" (118). Given "the very memory of the intent to repress" which the Freudian notion of repression represses, the notion of power relation in a Foucaultean sense of the term[7] offers one of the most effective substitute approaches to our issue: the power relation invariably present where there is desire.

As his mechanical and impersonal action and his paralyzed hands symbolize, Homer is physically and mentally too frail to hold dominant control over Miguel and Earle, however strong his desire for Faye may be. Abe is a dwarf charged with an excessive amount of sexual desire, but Miguel and Earle see him as no match for them because of his toy-like figure and action, robbed of physical masculinity. When Miguel and Earle enjoy the erotic dance with Faye, therefore, they form a field of performance with the exclusive force they exert over Homer and Abe. Both Homer and Abe in return supplement the field of performance, however unwillingly, by filling the role of the audience. In other words, the strong (Miguel and Earle) offer the unassailable foundation on which their field of performance is constructed, while the weak (Homer and Abe) are forced to validate this construction as subjects.

Faye and Miguel drive Homer away from their field of performance as they overwhelm him in operating their performing potential through their erotic dance. On the other hand, Abe initially yields to Miguel and Earle in their power relation, when his

submission constitutes both the desire and the lack on which it is conditioned. In this perspective, we can no longer define Abe's assault on Earle as "the violent return to the repressed," but as the desperate attempt to fulfill "the lack" indicative of his desire by breaking down his unfavorable power relation with Earle. If Abe can successfully achieve his aim, he can set up his own field of performance in which Earle serves as an audience. As it turns out, however, both Abe and Earle become incapacitated in their fight for sovereignty and show themselves as incompetent as Homer in their performance.

When Homer finds Faye in bed with Miguel, he only stares at them absentmindedly and has no role to play as an antagonist. The loss of his hold over Faye and Miguel forces him to enact the inert audience who does not even recognize the lack on which his desire for performance should be predicated: "He didn't know what to do, so he backed out of the room and closed the door" (209). This does not mean, however, that Homer has been immune to the bursting strain that the demand of performance in his urban milieu has been imposing on him. After Faye finally leaves him, he still remains a mechanical figure, but one suddenly released from his constant pressure into both the languor of stupor and the ease of relief: "He was like a steel spring which has been freed of its function in a machine" (211). If we see this "machine" as a field of performance, or more directly as Hollywood, Homer's performing potential has been fully exhausted in the city where the antagonistic physical and psychic drives of its denizens develop a machinelike field of power relation: "While part of a machine the pull of the spring had been used against other and stronger forces, but now, free at last, it was striving to attain the shape of its original coil" (211). Like Harry, Homer is crucified by the "Technologism" of Hollywood that prompts the city and the workers to produce and reproduce one another. While Hollywood claims the efficiency of "Technologism" as one of the most compelling truths of increasing output, Homer ceases to supply required feedback, whether productive or reproductive, to the city. At the moment, the action of Hollywood and the reaction of Homer are finally reduced to the zero point of being heavily loaded with deadly ennui.

The image of "a steel spring" that has been wound to the utmost limit recalls the image dedicated partly to Abe, and more essentially to Harry — "a mechanical toy" that has been overwound. Although Homer and Harry basically play opposite roles, the former as an audience and the latter as a performer, both of them are necessary to each other for fulfillment of their roles. Furthermore, each of them acts as the alterego of the other in the sense that they are modernists manipulated by the efficiency-oriented economy of performance in Hollywood. Thus the portrayal of Homer and Harry which "The Burning of Los Angeles" presents is complete.

Ⅲ The Artist

Among the most conspicuous features that distinguish Tod from other characters is his perspective as an artist. The aesthetic distance he has achieved prevents him from falling a ready prey to the maladies of the performer and the audience in Hollywood that

would otherwise afflict him. The discussion of his artistic stance naturally centers around some terms related to the eye, such as see, stare, and watch. The performers, Harry, Faye, and Abe, as Tod sees them in "The Dancers," are most excited when their audience stares at them: "It was [the audience's] stare that drove Abe and the others to spin crazily and leap into the air with twisted backs like hooked trout" (9). Homer tries "not to stare" at Faye, though his effort is wasted, while Faye enjoys "being stared at" (69) and justifies her identity as the epitome of the performer group. In contrast, Tod is most excited when he sees, for instance, "Abe's grotesque depravity" which arouses pure indignation in him: "The little man excited him and in that way made him feel certain of his need to paint" (9). When Earle, Miguel, Abe, and Claude "narrow their circle" around Faye, Tod stands on "the outer edge, watching her" (188) through the opening between Earle and Miguel. Furthermore, Tod not only sees Earle, Abe, and Claude "watching Faye dance with Miguel," but also stands again "watching the dancers" (195) from the doorway. Stepping outside the double circles occupied by the performer and the audience, Tod acquires a critical insight into the field of dancing and impresses us as a seer.

Tod's incisive criticism of Hollywood and its denizens is one asset provided by his artistic defense. He alone notices, for instance, that Faye drifts like "a cork" from one scene to another in search of her stardom in Hollywood. For all his endowment as an artist, however, Tod cannot disengage himself from the psychic maladies of people around him. His psychic death[8] is foreshadowed at an early stage of the novel where he is incapable of moving out of his hotel: "He wanted to move, but inertia and the fact that he didn't know where to go kept him in the Chateau until he met Abe" (10). Worthy of note are Tod's "inertia" and his failure of self-placement, both of which closely parallel Homer's numbness and disorientation. More self-reflective than Homer, Tod becomes aware of the Hollywood epidemic encroaching on himself as he chases Faye: "He began to wonder if he himself didn't suffer from the ingrained, morbid apathy he liked to draw in others" (156). Tod finds himself being infected with "apathy," basically the leitmotif of his art, as Faye drags him into the field of performance from which he has been drawing back to work on "The Burning of Los Angeles." His artistic defense does not work here as properly as he wishes, just as Harry's "clowning" and Homer's "chastity" are not able to defend them. In this circumstance, Tod's "inertia" and "apathy," coupled with Homer's numbness and paralysis, project the image of a wasteland on Hollywood where attempts to resist being part of its climate inevitably fail. The idea is that the city and the inhabitants fight for hegemony until the former insidiously coopts the latter as part of its own order. The term "cooption" aptly defines the modernist nature of "Urbanism" in Hollywood as an agon between one order (disorder) of the city and the other of the inhabitants.

Considering their incompetence in action, both Homer and Tod should be naturally attracted to Faye. Her energetic action affects Homer more than her beauty: "He thought her extremely beautiful, but what affected him still more was her vitality" (69). Equally, Faye stimulates Tod and revives him for a while: "Maybe he could only be galvanized into sensibility and that was why he was chasing Faye" (156). Homer and

Tod, as well as the rest of the major characters including Faye herself, try to induce excitement and hold back the explosion of their boredom into violence. Despite the temporary psychic breakthrough Faye has offered Tod, he becomes all the more depressed because she only flirts, and her flirtation is part of her own defense against boredom. He suspects that even her kiss will never be meant to convey any human emotion: "He wanted to beg her for a kiss but was afraid, not because she would refuse, but because she would insist on making it meaningless" (89–90). Her kiss, now defined as part of her performance, assumes the artificial and superficial nature of a sign. While Faye surpasses her father in performing the action required for the sake of performance, Tod bases his value judgment on humanitarian criteria, such as "meaningful" human interaction. In Hollywood, however, where "love is like a vending machine," sexuality obtains meaning when it is produced only to be consumed, and consumed only to be reproduced. Since the order of commodification characteristic of late capitalism replaces the order of humanitarian criteria in this city, Tod yields to Faye in his attempt to subordinate her artificial and superficial love to his humanitarian order. All he can do is to sympathize with Homer, who shares the belief in the depth of meaning with him, though sympathy is one of the humanitarian criteria inimical to the modes of action in Hollywood: "He wondered why all his sympathy had turned to malice" (190).

Despite the decline of humanitarian order in Hollywood, the compensating advantage of Tod's sympathy is worth considering. First, his sympathetic friendship with Harry and Homer artistically helps him to portray the trials both the performer and the audience in Hollywood undergo as supplementing their roles. Tod becomes aware, for instance, that "[Harry's] clownship was a clue to the people who stared (a painter's clue, that is — a clue in the form of a symbol)" (36–7). Second, and more importantly, Tod's sympathy for Harry and Homer prepares us to see him as an artist of anger and protest for the weak. Although the direct target of his anger is the Hollywood crowd rushing to the world premiere of a new film, his anger is ambivalent. On the one hand, he detests the crowd because, though they first seem to be "gentle" (221) and "harmless" (224), they are in reality "demoniac" (222), "savage and bitter" (224). On the other hand, Tod understands with compassion that they are "the lower middle classes" (223), characterized by their "boredom and disappointment" (224). In other words, their radical act, just like the violent act of Abe and Earle, is the sterile outcry of "boredom and disappointment," and ultimately of poverty, whether material or mental. They have been cheated and enslaved by the myth of California as "the land of sunshine and oranges" where, in fact, "the sun is a joke" (225).

As this aphoristic joke implies, realism does not offer Tod the best means of portraying the adversity and resentment of hopeless people in Hollywood. Given the laughable grotesqueness of the characters, more appropriate for his purpose are parody, satire, and caricature, all of which he combines in transforming his anger about the inhuman force of Hollywood into his protest. This is why Tod chooses "Goya and Daumier" (6) as his masters. Northrop Frye justifies his choice by stating that "it seems clear that an officially approved realism cannot carry on the revolutionary tradition of

Goya and Daumier" (61).

Later, however, Tod becomes induced to add the names of other masters while walking around the film production set. For him, the showy devices there produce a weird sense of reality, an almost unreality, that his "revolutionary tradition" of artistry cannot fully encompass. He pushes through the swinging doors of "Last Chance Saloon" and identifies "no back to the building" (137). Instead, he finds himself in "a Paris street," which he follows to the end, coming out in "a Romanesque courtyard" (137). A group of people are picnicking on "a lawn of fiber" (137), eating "cardboard food" in front of "a cellophane waterfall" (138). On a small pond are floating "large celluloid swans" (138). Confounded by a medley of junk from "a tangle of briars" to "the bones of a dinosaur," Tod sits but on "a rock made of brown plaster" (138). All these items, huge or small, stress that the world of film is an ideal factory of "simulation" still superior in the loss of depth to the make-believe environment of the city of Hollywood, as represented by Vine Street and Pinyon Canyon. Tod learns that it requires more than "Goya and Daumier" to render his odd feeling about a reality of the unreal terrain he has just witnessed. As yet a modernist artist, he remains fettered by a rupture between the real (order) and the unreal (disorder). His masters are hence not only "Goya and Daumier," but also "the painters of Decay and Mystery," such as "Salvator Rosa, Francesco Guardi and Monsu Desiderio" (139).

Tod's final vision of "The Burning of Los Angeles" suggests that he aims to create an animated caricature of his friends with these masters in mind: Faye runs proudly, throwing her knees high, and Harry stumbles along behind her, while Homer is about to fall out of the canvas. Their consternation over the burning city reminds us of their clumsy performance and consequently of their modes of dying in Hollywood. Harry risks his whole life to enact a series of Harrys all of which are the traces of his lost identity, just as Faye yearns for stardom and only performs her dream of becoming a star. Homer shows the residue of his energy at the end of the novel in fighting back a would-be child actor, Adore Loomis, who has been trained only to be as mechanical a performer as Faye. Nevertheless, he ends up walking more than ever like "a badly made automaton" with his features set in "a rigid, mechanical grin" (225). Finally, the Hollywood crowd sweeps him away until he goes out of sight in their wild surge. Of all these characters, only Tod seems to have achieved a critical insight into the human condition of them all, but even he finds himself being tossed around by "the mob" (236).

At this moment, the image of "the mob" recalls the opening of the novel in which Tod sees a unit of cavalry and a group of foot soldiers proceeding like "a mob" (3) in a film being shot outside his office. "The dolmans of the hussars, the heavy shakos of the guards, Hanoverian light horse" (3) are all jumbled in bobbing confusion. Behind the cavalry follow some groups of infantry, among whom are "the scarlet infantry of English with their white shoulder pads, the black infantry of the Duke of Brunswick, the French grenadiers with their enormous white gaiters, the Scotch with bare knees under plaid skirts" (3). All these enhance the topsy-turvy, though simulative, atmosphere of the battle scene. The world of film and the city of Hollywood are interfused both through

the image of a mob and through the image of a battleground into the field of power where the antagonistic desires of the masses, whether physical or psychic, grind against each other: "lynchings, murder, sex crimes, explosions, wrecks, love nests, fires, miracles, revolutions, wars" — the "daily diet" (225) of desires offered by newspapers and films. While suffocated by an increasing number of the crowd, Tod becomes aware of the field of power where all these desires merge and where he senses the zero point of his own.

As Tod sees it, the field of power made by the Hollywood crowd forces the new members to go through "a change" (223). New groups of people look "diffident, almost furtive" (223) until they join the line, but as soon as they have become part of the crowd, their countenances turn "arrogant and pugnacious" (224). When the maleficent force inherent in the field of power reaches its zenith, Tod starts being carried swiftly in one direction and then in the opposite. Trying to face toward his original direction, he collides with a mass of people going in the opposite direction, and the impact turns him around. As "the two forces" (231) clash against each other, he is turned repeatedly until he becomes "part of the opposing force" (231). All this characterizes the field of power in Hollywood as a modernist battleground where the city does not cease to exert its force until the individual involved picks up the leading stream of desires and becomes integrated as its part. After another short rush, Tod finds himself in "a dead spot where the pressure [is] less and equal" (231). The "dead spot" is not equivalent to void — the empty zone characterized by the total loss of force.[9] On the contrary, it is the meeting place of multifarious desires where their counteractions are ideally balanced into the temporary still. This is the zero point of action and reaction which Tod undergoes.

The "dead spot" offers Tod a momentary relief, though he at the same time arouses the sense of pain he has lost during the wild surges forward and backward: "He became conscious of a terrible pain in his left leg, just above the ankle" (231). Along with the newly acquired sense of agony comes his final vision of "The Burning of Los Angeles." Beneath the upper frame, Tod draws a burning city featured by various architectural styles, "ranging from Egyptian to Cape Cod colonial" (236). Through the center is a long winding hill street, leading into the middle foreground, where "the mob carrying baseball bats and torches" (236) appear. Significantly, Tod portrays himself as an infuriated mob in this picture: "Tod himself picked up a small stone to throw before continuing his flight" (237). In *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (1931), a boy named John Gilson throws "a stone" into the pool in search of "the Real" (14) only to show that all the circular ripples are the traces of the central agent of reality (the stone) which he has lost. In *Miss Lonelyhearts*, a lovelorn columnist called Miss Lonelyhearts imagines himself holding a "stone" (71) of protest, never to discern his target. In *The Day of the Locust*, Tod grabs "a small stone" of protest for "the people who come to California to die; the cultists of all sorts, economic as well as religious, the wave, airplane, funeral and preview watchers — all those poor devils who can only be stirred by the promise of miracles and then only to violence" (236–7). His is the protest for those masses who are so bored and disappointed with the proliferation of dreams in Hollywood that their desire for action trembles on the verge of violence.

Only when Tod leaps from the outermost space of the artist into the innermost space of the performer is "The Burning of Los Angeles" complete. It is striking that he accomplishes his artistic mission as he becomes unable to differentiate the performer, the audience, and the artist within him. The distinction between art and life coincidentally tapers in him, just as the distinction between performance and action blurs in Hollywood. His painting therefore reflects the anarchic force of the city where no one can secure the supremacy of his or her own order in life but as a staged reality. Embodying the rage of the masses ultimately required to perform their sense of reality in the late capitalistic city of Hollywood, Tod finally plays "the role of Jeremia" (114), just when "The Burning of Los Angeles" assumes the undertone of the caricatured apocalypse of modernism.

Notes

1 For an analysis of the force of New York that tortures Miss Lonelyhearts, see Nabae ("A Modernist Savior vs. a Postmodern Performer in *Miss Lonelyhearts*," *English Review 2*. Osaka: Momoyama Gakuin U, 1990).

2 In this light, we can distinguish Tod's perspective as an early modernist one, for he counts on the normalizing force of order in his observation. When Daniel Bell argues that modernism "insists on the meaninglessness of appearance and seeks to uncover the substructure of the imagination" (47), he rephrases our definition of late modernism.

3 Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulation, which holds that "the sign and the real are equivalent," proceeds "from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference" (170). Contrasting representation with simulation, he concludes that "whereas representation tries to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelopes the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum" (152).

4 In *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson defines parody as a mode of modernism and pastiche as a mode of postmodernism. Parody is grounded on the binary assumption of order and disorder that characterizes modernist discourse: it can set up its new order (disorder) only by undermining the preceding order, whether linguistic or social, on which it is based. While parody capitalizes on the rupture between order and disorder to claim its newness, pastiche plays with the fragmentation of a panorama of established norms and sets itslef free from the hold of any specific aesthetic order except of its own. In the same book, Jameson also asserts that the notion of surface is not only metaphorical but also physical in American postmodern scenes: "Nor is this depthlessness merely metaphorical: it can be experienced physically and 'literally' by anyone who, mounting what used to be Raymond Chandler's Bunker Hill from the great Chicano markets on Broadway and Fourth Street in downtown Los Angeles, suddenly confronts the great free-standing wall of Wells Fargo Court (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill) — a surface which seems to be unsupported by any volume, or whose putative volume (rectangular? trapezoidal?) is ocularly quite undecidable" (12–13).

5 This reminds us that West constantly depicts boredom not as the lack of energy, but as a spot where something violent is ready to come out on stimulation. We may recall here, for instance, that Tod observes the attendants at Harry's funeral staring back at him with "an expression of vicious, acrid boredom that trembled on the edge of violence" (131).

6 Like Ihab Hassan, we use "indeterminacy" as an umbrella referent covering a number of "terms of unmaking," such as "pluralism, randomness, disintegration, decenterment, displacement,

discontinuity, detotalization, delegitimization" (92). Also to borrow his phraseology, we could characterize Faye's decentralizing moves as "displacements of desire" (66).

7 Foucault sees power as something being exercised in the formation of a relationship between individuals where one agent acts and affects another agent in such a way that the former is able to get the latter to do what he or she would not otherwise have done.

8 While Homer is satirically named after the legendary author of the *Odyssey*, Tod's name alludes to the German word for death.

9 Four years after the publication of *The Day of the Locust* in 1939, T. S. Eliot published *Four Quartets* and echoed the undertone of "the dead point": "At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor/ fleshless;/ Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance/ is,/ But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,/ Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement/ from nor toward,/ Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point the still/ point,/ There would be no dance, and there is only the dance" (15–6). At "the still point," like at "the dead point," binary oppositions are canceled out: "flesh" and "fleshless," "from" and "towards," "arrest" and "movement," and "ascent" and "decline." There is no action whatever except for the cancellation of these binary oppositions. Paradoxically enough, the very cancellation of the opposing forces produces "the dance" of stalemate and invokes "the dance" of death and "the dance" of rebirth. All these dances are mingled to create a modernist reverie filled with desperate prayer for salvation.

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