5 LOVE AND TRAUMA

As we shall see, Robert Hood both experiences intense love as he lies in the Keskarrah family lodge and relives extreme trauma as he lies dying out on the barrens. This chapter will explore the relationship between love and trauma by tracing the experience of Hood and then theorizing that experience through debates in psychoanalysis. I will critique Žižek's Lacanian emphasis on the productive connection of trauma and love in the form of subjective destitution. I will turn to Kristeva's notion of the imaginary father to provide an alternative explanation of this relationship. Finally, I will argue that the impact of love on trauma comes principally through an ongoing relationship of the masculine subject with both the imaginary father and the oedipal father.

Greenstockings "cooks her favourite meal for Hood." (157) They are inside the cocoon of the family lodge, lined with the hides of animals, protecting them, "this warm circular place she has always lived." (158) Greenstockings stretches the deer stomach that is hung over

the fire and is cooking the meal. She talks of cooking equipment and laughs. Laughing occurs often inside Keskarrah's family lodge, inside the circular protective womb. But Greenstockings remembers that laughing had always been with the women, and now it is done with Hood. Greenstockings does not laugh with the men, but she can laugh with someone who is not a man, one who is not a normative Tetsot'ine or English man. Despite often being angry at men, Greenstockings is now easily laughing in the presence of a man, a man who is not quite a man.

Greenstockings speaks freely about cooking instruments, and although "not understanding a syllable of any word" she says, Hood is able to respond to her "singing voice." (157) Maybe he understands her voice precisely because he does not understand her words. Hood responds to the sounds she makes and not the words: "the sounds she makes skim fondly about in his ears, sing, as every concentrated minute he watches her mouth." (158) Hearing a fondly skimming sound corresponds with movements of her mouth. This watching, this seeing, is borne out in drawing: "he has been trying to draw her lips for two days." (158) In particular, he wants to "catch that bottom curve" of her lips, "the tilt of the corners where the sounds she makes seem to catch sometimes like a quick surprise." (158) The sounds emerge from a place marked fundamentally by surprise. Resisting the demand for comprehension and understanding (of syllables, grammar), Hood tells us that "he does not want to understand any word she ever speaks" He experiences "the freedom of watching, of listening with incomprehension." (158) Surprise, freedom, and incomprehension "fills him with staggering happiness." (158) In a "warm place with indescribable smells there is no listable fact, not a single word." (158) He is held within an "enveloping physical containment, all thought, all necessary decision, all duty gone." (158)

The place of "endless duty" is the officer's cabin, which is "unheatable." (158) Where he is surrounded by "frost white as leprosy." (159) This is a place where "blades of cold slice him long and thin to his very bones." (159)

The intense happiness and pleasure Hood experiences in the Keskarrah family lodge is similar to the happiness and pleasure that Greenstockings experienced with her mother in this same lodge. This intimation of the warmth and protection of the mother allows Hood to return to his own mother. He says, "I'm so warm here with you, it's almost like…like sitting beside the fireplace in the manse kitchen

in Bury" where "my mother knits in winter." (159) Hood is returned to his boyhood home and the freedom and pleasure nurtured in the bosom of the mother, a place where he has a special communication with his mother. He whispers to Greenstockings: "Only my mother … calls me 'Robin'. Only when we are alone." (160) Alone with Greenstockings is like being alone with his mother. Desire for Hood is a desire to return to the mother, the source of all warmth and comfort. The desire to draw Greenstockings, to make an image of her and not a word, is a desire to re-image-ine his mother, and re-image-ine the love that comes only from the mother.

Greenstockings is moved by Hood's strange communication. She has a thought which she has never had before about a man: "she will tell him anything", especially that which is "unspeakable." (160) This is a distinct form of telling, one not communicated with words. And the freedom she feels in their communication comes from his "incomprehension." (160)

Greenstockings finds Hood "stupid," but this is a stupidity that is directly linked to her freedom. This is because "he asks nothing, demands nothing, forces nothing to happen with his possible male domineering." (161) To Greenstockings it is "as if he isn't even a man, though he certainly is that, she has felt it." (161) He isn't a man in one sense, the aggressive, take-the-woman sense, but he is in another sense, one she has felt. This manhood is one that is predicated on a "quiet and patience." (161) A quiet and patient manhood is like the dream consciousness of a hunter. Not the usual English hunter, or the hunters that the Tetsot'ine have started to become, with their loud and impatient guns, but the "hunter dreaming animals to come when they want to." (161)

Hood, as an unmanly man, is not like an English man or a Tetsot'ine man, "a piece of something to be groped for inside his thick head." (161) Greenstockings is convinced that Hood does not think like that. She is convinced that his manly presence is one structured around an "undemand," one very much like the undemand of the mother, her unconditional love. Her mother left her with the memory of pleasure to which all experiences with men have paled in comparison. But now Greenstockings feels the presence of a man who comes close to her mother, who alone has been able to bring her pleasure: "the memory of his gentle tenderness, the kind of undemand he offers her humming a desire within her…strange…strange." Hood is a strange man, a man like a mother. Greenstockings, who is a strange

woman, and Hood, who is a strange man, are both in their strangeness mothers, who communicate to each other by being mothers.

The communication of mothers is best seen in winter and in relation to the animals. In the maternal lodge, whose circular warmth and protection comes from the animals. With Greenstockings and Hood becoming mothers to each other, the animals are present as mothers in the food. Greenstockings says that we see the animals "most often in winter because it is then that their stomachs taste so sweet on earth, sweeter than mother's milk." (162) She tells how her mother sang when she nursed her. And this singing continued when the meat from the animal was prepared in the winter lodge. Keskarrah, the father, acting like a mother, a maternal father, "chewed the meat tender and wet for me." (162) If the animal meat, tender and wet, is like the mother's milk, then the animal and the father are both extensions of the mother, as the primary source of goodness.

As the father chewed the meat for Greenstockings, her mother sang to the animals: "Give me your stomach, Sweet animal … milk of earth … chew it, milk it into my mouth; Feed me." (162) The animal's meat, the father's chewing, and the mother's singing, are all supplements for the original nourishment. Greenstockings says to Hood that she will sing that song for him, and she will chew the meat for him and feed him, and she will offer him her breast: "For you, I took this stomach…until it was full, here it is, cooked and smoked too, full and wanting to be eaten, you can eat and I will eat with you, our fingers feeding each other…. I could feed you now, should I give you my breast, should I sing?" (162, 163)

Hood sings too. He sings "the acceptable melancholy of the English manse knit into each cell of his personal, endless longing." (163)

> Drink to me only with thine eyes,
> And I will pledge with mine;
> Or leave a kiss within the cup,
> And I'll not look for wine.
> The thirst that from the soul doth rise,
> Doth ask...a drink... (163)

Hood's longing is for the contact of eyes and mouth. He longs to look with the eyes and kiss and drink with the lips. This alone will satisfy his thirst. This is why he is so intent on being able to see

properly. Will he be able to properly draw Greenstockings' lips? The image of her lips speaking is related to the kiss and the thirst, the kiss of the mother and the thirst for the mother. After the feast which nourishes, Greenstockings offers Hood her breast.

Hood attempts to feed Greenstockings "with the silver spoon he has carried inside his clothes from England." (168) He desires to be a mother for Greenstockings, teaching her how to eat from a spoon, as a mother to a child. They both become children for each other, enjoying "this game of eating, together, learning with simple silly laughter what they have both done since before consciousness." (168, 169) In teaching Greenstockings to eat from a spoon Hood gets her to purse her lips into an "oo" shape. Yet, "not comprehending what he is doing," (169) he is in a state of not knowing, not knowing that he is "shaping his name as round and long between her lips to meet his spoon." (169) Greenstockings' mouth "opens to accept it." (169) By forming his name "oo" with her lips to accept the spoon, she is accepting his name. Here, the name emerges from the context of eating like children, laughing like children, not knowing, not comprehending.

Hood is brought back to his mother, who sang, "Who fed Cock Robin?" (169) He sees himself and he eagerly replies, "I, said the Fish...." (170) Then he sees himself on the frigate when he first entered the navy, and he recalls being given the spoon by his godfather. This extends a tradition where godfathers give you a silver spoon when you begin your career. Hood points to St. Bartholomew's knife on the spoon – tradition says that the saint died by the knife. Knife and spoon. Death and life. The spoon that feeds and leads to the singing of "Who fed Cock Robin?" and the knife that kills and sings "Who killed Cock Robin?". His mother changed the rhyme – from the standard "killed" to "fed" – and proceeded to feed him. But the tradition of the father, the English father, employs the knife, or something worse.

Greenstockings tells Hood that he must eat now: That he will not die by the knife. She says: "My snow friend, no knife waits for you." (171) He must eat now and rest. She says to him that later he will "walk and walk over our land until hunger meets you, but now I feed you." (171) Greenstockings sees that later Hood will freeze: "certainly cold will clutch and devastate him before anything else." (171) This places more importance on his last (real) meal in the warmth of the maternal – "Who fed Cock Robin?" – before he encounters a death wrought with hunger and freezing, before he encounters all

that is not maternal. Before he is abandoned by the maternal and sacrificed to the paternal legacy of the English word – "Who killed Cock Robin?"

Now, though, he can happily eat what Greenstockings feeds him, the fat of the meat she has "shredded and washed in her own sweet saliva." (171) as a mother to a child, allowing for an ecstatic experience: "he has never sensed such texture in his mouth." (171, 172) At least not since being a child with his mother. Hood experiences an oral pleasure that can easily become dangerous. The pleasure of the mouth in eating and naming can become the danger of hunger. Greenstockings says: "There is a place in my mouth that is dangerous." (172) It is dangerous due to a lack of nourishment by the mother. In that dangerous place, people get thin and think slowly, and can be reduced to eating those who have already died. Rather than eating from each other, they eat each other. This is not a solution, because it increases the hunger: "you just eat the hunger that has already eaten them." (172) To Greenstockings, hunger is terrible: "Hunger makes People crazy sometimes." (172) The battle to the death is a battle that arises from a lack of maternal nourishment.

Greenstockings tells Hood that in order to not go crazy you need to sing and to watch the ravens and the compassionate wolves. The wolves "taught us how to hunt these honey animals [the caribou] that feed us." (173) The wolves are our "brothers and sisters, we will never kill them." (173) Keskarrah has told her that if people are hungry they need to watch the ravens, who will lead the hunter to what the wolves in their kindness have left behind. For "we are all animals, we know our hunger, and when we have food we leave some for each other." (173)

Although not understanding the literal meaning of the words Greenstockings speaks, Hood understands at another level, the level of the dream. So he looks into Greenstockings' eyes and he can see the shape of the silver wolf he has already dreamed of earlier. Hood dreams that he is trying to draw the wolf. He is drawing in identification with the wolf, as he wants to draw Greenstockings, who now resembles the wolf. Yet, suddenly in his dream the quill is replaced by the gun and he shoots the wolf's jaw away. He is suddenly very sad – he does not understand how he could have shot the wolf. He has always refused the gun (except for that one time when he tried to duel with Back). He had, as an officer, been required to carry one, but he never loaded it, preferring the loaded quill. But now identification

with the wolf, which sustains life, is replaced by gunning down the wolf, which destroys life. Even though he has not carried the gun himself, in the end, Hood is the one who carries the gun for the English, and is the one condemned for the destruction wrought by the gun.

With Hood lying in her lap, Greenstockings picks the lice from his hair, lice that are everywhere here. The English hate the lice. But Greenstockings patiently picks them one by one from his hair, opens her mouth, crushes them in her teeth, and then swallows them. Unlike the other English men who are revolted by the lice, and certainly would be revolted by someone eating them, Hood now finds that Greenstockings' work represents a "tender, intimate cleanliness." (175) His mother has claimed that this "is Next to Godliness." (175) Greenstockings explains that the lice live by drinking human blood. As she says this blood drips from her lip. As lice eat human blood, human blood is then eaten by humans as they eat the lice. This is an eating of the human that is nourishing, unlike the eating of humans racked by hunger. Which is more revolting? Hood understands: "We are all always bloody," he thinks. (175)

There are, then, quite different experiences of blood, two quite different ways in which blood can be shed. Hood is sent back in his imagination to the English ship where he has once again been forced to have his gun loaded against the sailor's mutiny. He is told he will have to execute them, shed their blood. And as he recalls this, he hears "the thin ascetic voice of his father, the Right Reverend Richard Hood," who speaks the lesson from St Paul in "his categorical, logical clarity of preposterous faith." (176) He recalls his father saying: "And all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin." (176)

Yes, we are all blood and we all shed blood for each other, nourishing each other in turn. We are then bonded together in communion where the drinking of blood means a sustaining of life. But a sacrificing of ourselves through the maternal connection is different from another kind of sacrifice, a sacrifice of the scapegoat so that there will be a remission of sins, a distinctive form of paternally sanctioned sacrifice that is required by the words of his own father. This means that Hood will not only be sacrificed by the generalized English father, for the generalized English father's sins, but also, more specifically, by his own father, his own father's sins. It was his father who handed him over, at the age of fourteen, to Franklin's command.

Hood, realizing all of this, is in despair at the way in which his paternal heritage has shaped the blood-connection. He desperately seeks a return to the mother. He clutches Greenstockings and then "her folded legs loosen about his face." (176) And as he, for the moment, experiences the comforting return to the mother, Hood is overwhelmed with a feeling of mutuality, and communion with Greenstockings. He removes the boots which Greenstockings herself had sewn for him, boots that had made him feel powerful, just like the snowshoes. Then he pulls his stockings down and offers them to her. Greenstockings removes her moccasins and "he watches her leg, her skin, slip down and fill the space only he has shaped." (177) She stands up in his green stockings and he feels toes "spreading like fingers into the gentleness of wool." (177) Her feet were "sheltered and safe within the interwoven circles knit so lovingly by steel in the hands of his loving mother." (177) In the safe and secure family lodge, protected by the hides of animals, Greenstockings and Hood feed each other food from the animals. Hood has been sheltered and protected by the stockings sewn by his mother, and the boots sewn by Greenstockings. After shuddering at the paternal heritage that performs a distinctive sacrifice of life and a distinctive shedding of blood, he now experiences a quite different sacrifice and a quite different taking of blood, one that provides for a communion. He responds by giving the gift of warmth and protection provided by the mother.

And then Birdseye murmurs in dream-consciousness the fate of Hood as Snow Man. She begins to spastically sing English words from the rhyme "Who killed Cock Robin?": "Cock…robin…rock…robin…who…saw…him…I…said…the fly…" (178) She goes on, "With…my…little…eye…" (179) Whereas Hood had earlier dreamt of his own mother's "Who fed Cock Robin?" now he hears Birdseye dream of his other fate: "Who killed Cock Robin?"

Later, destitute out on the barrens, Hood prays, "what may befall me this day O God I know not but I know that nothing can…." (220) The prayer ends there and does not move on to "separate me from your love." Hood has been separated from the love of the father, and he doesn't know what will happen to him while being separated from this love. He has experienced the love that can only come from the mother, but has never experienced that maternal love from the father. Hood is physically exhausted now, but this is combined with a psychic exhaustion, an exhaustion both initiated and prepared for by the absence of love.

The Expedition is returning from the Polar Sea, trying to return to Fort Enterprise over the barren lands and not by river. Franklin and Back and others have gone ahead and have promised to return with food to the three Englishmen remaining on the barrens – Richardson, Hepburn, and Hood. They are joined suddenly by a fourth man, the Mohawk, Michel. Michel, along with Belanger, is sent back to Richardson's group to help. Yet, Belanger is not with Michel. Michel claims that Belanger did not follow him. To the three English men, Michel "seems suddenly very powerful:so deliberately intense and muscled." (222) And he is carrying "a long rifle with powder and shot." (222)

They are also astounded that Michel has brought meat. The three English men have dreamed of food. They dream of seeing a Raven who will lead them to food. They say, though, that they would give up four roasted pigs for a "great hot fire." (224) Hood recalls a biblical scene: "Three men bound in the midst of the burning fiery furnace." (224) He says that they could be like the three men who "could walk loose in the midst of it" without "a hair of our head singed." (224) Richardson adds that "there were four men in the fiery furnace." (224) Hood replies that yes, "also an angel, I pray, sweet angel, come! Carry us into the great, fiery furnace, the Yellowknives call it 'Like a Woman's Breasts', o soft breasts, blessed be God." (224) Hood, in the midst of bitter cold, longs for the presence of the angel in the fire who will offer him her soft breasts to soothe his pain. This is a return to the warmth of infancy and the soothing contentment at the mother's breast.

This fourth in the dream, the maternal angel, is very different from the fourth present now, the Mohawk Michel, who in his "miserable drudgery" displays "hatred on his full and twisted lips." (224, 225) Hood, starving and cold on the barrens, has sunk into a pleasurable dream space where the protection and care of infancy are present. Michel destroys this by offering him "small meat, scrawny juices" which "ruin once again Hood's accepted somnolence of starvation." (225) Michel has destroyed his fast and, in turn, destroyed the peace he has achieved.

For Hood, the presence of Michel is different than the presence of the angel. Hatred is different from love. And masculine anger in particular is different from what Hood knows to be maternal love. For Hood, the angel is clearly associated with Greenstockings. Hood dreams of Greenstockings at Fort Enterprise. She will be there, "fire

burning in that endlessly warm round lodge." (227) Hood prays, "dear God my god … bless her bless her that woman more gentle and tender…." (227) The angel sent by God who provides gentleness and tenderness is contrasted with Michel who seems so powerful. Hood asks why Michel has come to him rather than the angel. Michel does not know how to find Fort Enterprise. He is "lost crossing tireless rivers – sea coasts and rivers without trees." (228) Michel is lost here as well, cast adrift from his secure moorings, and he is both lost and angry.

Hood then thinks of trees and the appeal of trees. In contrast to Michel, "the wrong kind of Indian" for this place, he thinks of Keskarrah and the esker that shelters Keskarrah's family lodge. He is associated with the trees, for it was Keskarrah who drew them to the esker that would shelter the fort. Hood dreams of "branches piled in warm green bedding over his lodge." Creating the secure womb in which "arms fold him into warmth of breasts the apple taste of her nipples, o sweetest sweetest." (229) Then Hood turns in his dream-consciousness to the name of Jesus: "How sweet the name of Jesus feels." (229) The comfort Hood has experienced from Greenstockings in her family lodge forms the name of Jesus for him. Belief in the name of Jesus is, at this point, inseparable from the maternal experience. He refers to the arms of Greenstockings that hold him as "her everlasting arms." (230)

Hood touches himself and "he feels bone." "Is there skin?" he asks. (230) He thinks of his feet and the green stockings his mother had made for him and he gave to Greenstockings. He says that "his long green woolly feet … they have gone." (231) There are two kinds of green present here, one, the green stockings, in reference to the mother, and two, the green of gangrene, in reference to the cold and the snow. Both are present here, ambivalence in the experience of green.

The green of gangrene has made his feet useless, and Hood associates this with all those other things which are useless here on the barrens: "they are useless anyway, all useless: books, instruments, smashed canoes, feet, whole bodies … sprawled over tundra, too bony to eat." (231) This uselessness of his green feet is contrasted to the green of Greenstockings who, in his dream-recollection, takes his feet and "kneads them supple as the caribou leather covering her breast and tongues them, each toe warm as milk, into the haven of her nest

and body." (231) The feet are useless with all those instruments, yet they become something else when embedded in the maternal nest.

Hood wonders now whether "they had clawed thousands of miles of sea and land and sea and back over the land again, to discover no more than each other's walking skeletons." (232) If the logic of the death drive holds sway here, are they not discovering spirit reduced to a bone? If we are to believe Žižek, and his interpretation of Hegel in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), life pared to the bone is the ultimate expression of spirit, the supreme encounter with spirit as the void, the nothingness that grounds all expressions of something. However, this idea of emptying the self to discover the self is not the end of the story for Hood, because he dreams of a return to the mother, to Greenstockings and the maternal lodge, a return that Žižek and other Lacanians of like mind would never dream of.

In fact, Hood realizes that the destitution of cold and hunger that has reduced his spirit to a skeleton was avoidable if the Expedition had recognized the image that Keskarrah "drew on the ground when they first arrived on the shore of the great crashing lake." (233) Keskarrah called this river the Ana-tessy and had indicated that it was "the closest and easiest river for their return if they must return from the east." (233) The trip back from the Polar Sea would have been made much easier, and they would have been able to avoid the destitution they suffered, if they had given credence to the image that Keskarrah had drawn. Instead, they attempted to travel over land using their instruments of navigation, ending up with "the confusion of after-the-fact numbers that foretold nothing … all of Lieutenant Franklin's instruments and notebooks vanished in glaze." (233) These instruments and the calculations made from them were truly useless compared to the strength of Keskarrah's image.

Hood also realizes that this trek across the barrens, using instruments and numbers instead of the image, is represented by "his father's name. Drawn long across this land." (233) It is his father's name which has brought him to this point of destitution. Hood is not referring here to a universal destitution, reflective of the ultimate destiny of spirit, as Žižek and other Lacanians would have it, but a contingent destitution, an alterable starvation of spirit, which is the distinct legacy of the father's name. Not then the universalizing father's name, which is understood to be unavoidable and constitutive of all subjectivity, but a very particular father's name, his father's name, whose work

was avoidable. It is a historically specific father's name: an English father, an English father's words, lacking the maternal connection. This is why Hood dreams of the mother, in horror at the father, his father, his English father.

Then Richardson begins to read from Leviticus the passages of the burnt offering which was condemned by God. One passage says that they "offered strange fire before the Lord." (234) And in response to this strange offering "there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them." (234) The people are devoured because they cooked over the fire an offering which was false. What is the nature of this false offering?

Michel is cooking over the fire red meat and they eat "stringy meat from shreds of bone." (235) Although he claims that this is the remains of a wolf, Richardson is skeptical. Richardson is skeptical because he has an intimation that the meat they are eating is not a wolf's but that of Belanger, the voyageur who was to accompany Michel to them. He suspects that Michel has killed Belanger, carried his body to this place and stashed it, going out to the stash and returning with meat.

The experience of death by members of the Expedition comes through the death and sacrifice of the other. This is a death that is distinctly different from the death that comes when the animal gives itself up through dream, or when the wolf and the raven lead the human to food. It is a death that comes from the gun, that instrument Keskarrah and Greenstockings and Hood hate so much. Instead of eating meat that is properly sacrificed, we have here a false sacrifice, one that comes through murder by the gun.

The name of the English father which has led them here, a name emblematic of a culture of the word and the gun, has produced a sacrificial logic, not a universalized sacrificial logic where destitution allows for the openness of desire, but a particular, specific, individualized, sacrificial logic. There is, though, another form of sacrifice available, one that eats the meat provided willingly by the animals through the dream connection. This is a sacrificial logic where the subject becomes destitute in a return to origins, a return not to the gaping abyss, but to the embrace of the mother. One where the subject experiences the embrace of the father, not as name of the father, but as father-mother, the nurturing father, the father who has himself embraced the maternal connection.

If two forms of sacrifice can be distinguished here, how do we make sense of Michel's involvement? When Michel is informed by Richardson that Franklin's party probably has not arrived yet at Fort Enterprise, he becomes enraged. He says he will leave the three English here, that he should have never come back to help them. He is afraid he will die here with them, and that they will eat him. He says that when he is dead "he knows what they will do. They will eat him, the way they ate his brother on the Ottawa River, that is what Whites do to Mohawks, if you can't help them they just tear you apart and eat you – bones and all!" (239)

The murder of white Belanger and the eating of him come in the wake of an earlier trauma where the Mohawks have been eaten by the Whites. The destitution wrought here is continuous: eat the other or be eaten by the other. Not a mutual giving but a traumatically induced and murderous eating, born in the pain induced by a lack of love and continuing on in that vein.

Richardson, Hepburn and Hood are stunned by Michel's "unthinkable words." (239) They propose that Hepburn go with Michel to reach Fort Enterprise. Hood says that "we must not, sacrifice, him too." (239) The unthinkable words that Michel has uttered have allowed Hood "to utter at last the impossible word: *sacrifice*." (239)

The distinctive sacrificial logic of the English masculine subject is working its way through here. This is a logic that demands that sacrifice be tied to your duty as an English sailor. A duty that has sent them on the Expedition to chart the "numberless rivers and rocks and shorelines and lakes," but yet that duty has "helped them discover very little English vocabulary." (240) English words are helpless, destitute in this land, and the English are left with the impossible word: sacrifice. The English male subject, the English sailor in his duty, is reduced to nothing, "encircled by undifferentiated namelessness." (240) And all that is left to utter is the word 'sacrifice.'

How is this sacrificial destitution in which one is reduced to the void of namelessness different from the sacrificial logic operative in Keskarrah's lodge? In the lodge, Hood is returned to origins that are not a primordial lack of nameless nothingness, but a love and embrace of the maternal presence. In the face of the failure of the father's name, Hood is left destitute. But in his destitution on the barrens, where murder and eating the other are the response to trauma, he

dreams himself back to Greenstockings' lodge, and to his mother's nursery rhymes. In response to the specific trauma of an unloving father, Hood experiences both kinds of sacrifice: both the sacrifice of the male subject to the void, a nameless nothingness experienced out on the barrens, and a sacrifice of the male subject to the maternal presence in Greenstockings' lodge.

These reflections may help us understand Michel's trauma and anger. Richardson and Hepburn have grown increasingly afraid of Michel's anger. Hepburn says that "strongest is the worst … they can…kill you first … when you're too weak…to protect yourself." (241) Hepburn knows that the strongest are the slaves, the paddle-slaves, who slave away for the master English. In Michel's case, we have a slave who is seething with anger over the murder of his brother by the Whites, who is traumatized by the cannibalistic annihilation of his brother.

Recognizing the superior strength of the slave, yet misrecognizing the anger as uncivilized nature, the English believe that only a strong hand can do. Richardson says that "Franklin was wise … to send the strongest voyageurs ahead with Mr. Back." (241) Why? Because Back can control: "A leader must always…control…men, before they are uncontrollable." (241) The contrast between Back and Hood is again relevant. In these matters, Hood's unmanly traits are useless. Back is a manly man, "the smallest but strongest officer … and certainly the quickest gun. And ruthless." (242)

The Franklin Expedition is, in a sense, on a mission of sacrifice, a death-wish, ordered by a historically specific death-drive. In their trek through the North, these strangers are looking for the non-object of desire which is the source of all desire. Yet, they can reach this source only through complete destitution. Is it only when one is completely emptied that the non-object is discovered, where emptiness comes from a very material process of emptying (eating) each other? Certainly, Hood's plight seems to, at one level, reflect this pursuit. Yet, on another level, his plight points to a different search, for a different source, called love.

Žižek, in *The Fragile Absolute* (2002), speaks of a distinctive form of Christian love. This is a love that paradoxically comes through hate, hating your neighbour, specifically, hating his ego so that the death of the ego will save him. The love that Hood experiences is different from this. It is a love grounded in the maternal presence, one that moves not into namelessness but into childlike security. Is

this dream of Hood's for childlike love an escape from the more real pursuit (in Lacanian terms, the pursuit of the real) that marks the true logic of sacrificial destitution? One where you face the trauma of the real head-on, without the sweet smell of maternal retreat?

As the particular sacrificial logic of destitution that the English Expedition embraces plays itself out on the barrens, Richardson reads Biblical passages. He reads passages of prohibition against uncovering the nakedness of the father, the mother, the sister, and the son's daughter. Hood suddenly laughs, much to the amazement of the others. He says, "My f-f-father … never read…that…vespers!" (243)

Why would his father not read this passage? What form of foreclosure lies here? It seems that the father violated some norm of nakedness such that his reading of this passage constitutes an acknowledgement that the norm had been violated. Hood asks Richardson: "Is there anything, about a daughter's…nakedness, or a son's?" Richardson thinks: "what childhood abomination has Leviticus led this poor boy's dying memory back into?"

Hood's search has finally led him to this. Not to the traumatic real, the source of all desire, but to the reliving of a specific trauma about a father who is remembered as abusive. As he lies on the barrens, in a destitute skeletal nakedness, the floodgates open and he is pulled back to another time of nakedness, the nakedness of the son in the presence of the father. He remembers longing for the love of the father and feels strongly he was denied it.

This is the playing out of the English sacrificial logic of destitution for which Hood is the victim, the scapegoat for the father. And Hood is a victim and a scapegoat not only for his own father but for the English Expedition as a whole. Taking our cue from René Girard in *Violence and the Sacred* (1985), we can speculate that Hood might just be that one person who comes to bear all the sins of the Expedition, the sins of the English in the North.

Memories of his father bring Hood back to the familial scene on Sunday. The laughter he experienced when Richardson read the prohibitions against nakedness (which his father did not read) again grips him. He sees "his father reading that ponderous text so long after Trinity." (244) In a hallucinatory state he recalls fragmentary passages his father read from the book of Job, chapters 28 and 38 on the twentieth Sunday after Trinity. Why would his father, a priest in the Anglican Church, read the book of Job so long after Trinity? What his father read from the Scriptures would have been governed

by the Table of "Lessons Proper for Sundays" in the Book of Common Prayer. On Trinity xx, this Table appoints chapter 2 of the book of the Prophet Joel to be read at Morning Prayer, and chapter 6 of the book of the Prophet Micah at Evening Prayer. Trinity xx falls in October, while Job is read at daily Morning Prayer in June.

Hood's distress – his suffering, his fear, his pain – is leading him to hallucinate the fragmentary passages from Job at the same time as remembering a Trinity xx of his childhood. He hears his father reading Job because these passages feel, to Hood, like the true words of his father, the words of a father who has sacrificed his son. Later, Hood searches for "the exact words and every detail of punctuation … every iota frozen aloud into him that he is now condemned to recall here in this mocking inescapable land, they burst blazing as ice inside his head." (248) Some of the words are from Jonah, chapter 4, but also from the rhyme "Who killed Cock Robin?" God the father sends a worm to destroy the little shade Jonah has from the sun. This is true for Hood in reverse: Hood is deprived of any comfort from the cold. And again Hood sees "the thick words" of Scriptures and remembers words from Luke 12, except that the passages are interspersed with the word "kill," which is not in the text. The words of Luke 12 admonish men to empty themselves. In relation to memories of his father, Hood experiences not a comfort following emptiness but a killing of the spirit.

And at the same time, Hood recalls the nursery rhyme Robbin-a-Bobbin. (250) He also recalls the reframe from "Who killed Cock Robin?" (251) Nursery rhymes were rhymes of comfort when remembering his mother, but with memories of his father they feel like rhymes of killing – kill (Robbin-a-Bobbin) or be killed (Who Killed Cock Robin?) This is the logic that now surrounds Hood out on the barrens.

Hood tells Michel that he will not show him how to use the compass. Michel leans close to him and hisses in his face: "I tell you. I kill you, all the time, I tell you, before you die, I tell you I kill, you." (251) Hood now knows that these are "words that have whispered themselves into this landscape week after week through winter and spring and the exhaustion of summer, until he recognizes them like starvation." (251) The words "before you die" have eaten away at him for nine months, ever since the time in Greenstockings' lodge when Birdseye spoke those broken words of English, referring directly

to the Cock Robin rhyme. The despair he experiences now is centred on now knowing, in a state where "you have exhausted the last jot and tittle of suffering" (252), that you will be killed, even though this has been foretold long ago.

Hood is recognizing what was fatefully true all along, ever since those first traumatic encounters with his father. Hood feels like he was killed by the father then, but only knows it now at the level of self-consciousness. He has, in a sense, subjectivized the trauma, leading not to anything like curative enlightenment, but to pain and suffering because of the betrayal of love.

Yet, we certainly cannot leave things at that. For what we have articulated so far is the particular subjective state of Hood as depicted by Wiebe. It is a narrative of the son's complaint against the father and the alliance between the son and the mother against the father.

Perhaps, though, Hood's father has his own complaint in this story, a complaint that his son refused the hand of the father, preferring instead to cling to the mother and her love. This is then the other side of the register, one conspicuous by its absence in Wiebe's narrative, namely that the son, consumed with the maternal connection, refuses the paternal function, and in so doing continually refigures the father as a haunting presence, a monstrous figure from the real. Perhaps the son's continual return to the mother's love is a sign that announces his refusal to mourn the loss of an impossible father, and to reconcile himself with the everyday tragedy of the human father.

The conflict over Job is thus symptomatic of the feeling of a father spurned by his son and a son spurned by his father. And doesn't the father have a case here? Hasn't the son placed the father in the real as an impossible object? The father is expected to be just like the mother, only completely different. He is bound to fail on both counts: if he tries to provide maternal love, he pales in comparison to the mother, and if he tries to provide paternal distance, he suffers the complaint of abandonment. Thus in this scenario, it is all too easy for the impossible father in the real to turn into a monstrous figure from the real, haunting the son continuously. Is this what is going on in Hood's relationship with his father?

It is the issue of paternal distance turning into the complaint of abandonment that is important here. In essence, Hood turns paternal distance into paternal abandonment. The question is: was this necessary? My answer is yes, but my yes answer is a complicated

one and in order to understand why we need to turn to the work of Julia Kristeva.

Kristeva has argued strongly for the importance of the imaginary father as a figure of identification for the child that is separate from the figure of the mother. (1987). What is not as strongly emphasized in the interpretation of Kristeva's work is her equal insistence on the presence of the oedipal father. This emphasis emerges more clearly in her recent two works on revolt. (2000, 2002)

Let's begin with the imaginary father. Kristeva (1987) wants to explore the relationship between love and narcissism, and to rescue the concept of narcissism from the negative position it holds in Lacanian thinking, where narcissism is a state to be overcome through the oedipal process. For Lacan, narcissism, as a form of self-love, is tied to the stable image established through mirroring, which allows the individual to misrecognize himself as a unity, a coherent self. And because mirroring is established exclusively through the mother-child dyad, the pre-oedipal relationship between mother and child, and the merging that is presumed to take place there, has often been referred to in the Lacanian tradition as the source for narcissism and the imaginary ego.

For Kristeva, narcissism needs to be distinguished from autoeroticism. Narcissism is already a new action that supplements the autoeroticism of the mother-child dyad. In contrast to the Lacanian image of merging, narcissism represents an early presence of a third that comes in between the dyad. At the same time, though, it is a structure that precedes the oedipal ego, and even the mirror stage. (21, 22)

Narcissism appears as the first attempt to deal with the emptiness brought about by the early experience of lack and absence. It is the first attempt to deal with emptiness through language, through the symbolic function, meaning that narcissism does not represent an absence of the symbolic, but rather its early presence. In this way, it represents the first separation between what is not yet a subject and what is not yet an object, meaning that subject and object are separated, but never clearly separated. (23, 24)

The structure of narcissism develops into an "amatory identification" which rests on the assimilation of another person's feelings. The object the child identifies with is a strange object, one that is

separate from him but incorporates elements of the oral phase where what he incorporates he becomes. It is not really a separate object he identifies with, but a model or a pattern to be imitated, where identification is not so much having, but being-like. Yet, rather than identification being opposed to the establishment of the symbolic, Kristeva claims that in identification the connection to language is important, because the binding to the other that occurs through identification is to the speech of the other, a speech which establishes a pattern to be imitated. Certainly, there is a kind of fusion here, but it is a fusion wherein the child is transferred to a new psychic space, a third realm, one that is still quite primal, one where he is able to chew, swallow, and nourish himself with words. (24–26)

Kristeva calls this emerging structure of narcissism the "imaginary father" in order to point to a third realm that is beyond the fusion of the dyad. This is, however, a strange father, one very different from the oedipal father. Kristeva maintains that when narcissism predominates, there is no awareness of sexual difference. Thus, the term "father" refers to both parents as embodiments of the ideals of fusion and separation. For there is neither mother nor father as logically separate objects, but an immediate, direct identification with a figure who nurtures both connection and separation. The connection is here to what Kristeva calls a "mother-father conglomerate," a relation to the mother and her desire for the other, for the outside world of language and difference. (26)

The imaginary father is the one who, through identification, returns an ideal image to the child, and therefore embodies what Freud has referred to as the ego-ideal. Although strongly tied to the child through identification, the imaginary father is still nevertheless an other not fused with the child. He nurtures the desires of the subject (rather than what Lacan describes as the ego) because they are not immediate requests or demands. (32, 33)

For Kristeva, the idealization of the other in love, the idealization of the imaginary father, gives rise to transference of the primal body to the position of narcissism. The idealized other is be distinguished from the autoerotic exchange between mother and child. A third party is introduced which becomes the condition for the life of the subject, for a loving life, one that is not built on fusion. In this connection, Kristeva distinguishes between two kinds of mothers, a clinging mother and a loving mother. The loving mother (not necessarily a biological female) is someone who has an object of desire outside of

the child, a third who directs the desire of both the mother and the child to the outside. Without the relation to the third, the child will either hate the mother or cling to the mother. Clinging to the mother results in an inability to love that is tied to autoeroticism. The auto-erotic cannot allow himself to be loved except by a maternal substitute who clings to him, who is undifferentiated from him. (34)

It is through identification with an ego-ideal, rather than the super-ego celebrated by Lacan, which, for Kristeva, turns the ego into a subject. The ego becomes an erotic body that is transferred from fusion to the love of the other. And again, contrary to the Lacanian prejudice against identification and the ego-ideal, symbolic language is active here, because identification causes the subject to exist within the signifier of the other. There is a transference to the place of the other, what Kristeva calls a "metaphorical relation of love." (30) Metaphor implies a relation of substitution, where the fusion with the m/other is substituted with an ideal image or signifier established by language. This emphasis on metaphors of love contrasts with the importance Kristeva sees Lacan placing on the metonymy of desire. Metonymy implies a relation of displacement where our movement away from fusion with the m/other and into symbolic language means that we will be constantly displaced from one image or signifier to another image or signifier. According to Kristeva, it is the oedipal name of the father that, for Lacan, transfers us to such a symbolic process, a process which represents a clear break with imaginary fusion. Here, metonymy is understood to be more fluid and less fixed than metaphor, which still is stamped with narcissism and the imaginary. (29–31)

Kristeva wishes to rehabilitate the work of metaphor from the grips of Lacanian criticism. For her, the object of identification is a metaphorical object, a substitution for the maternal within language. This means that the idealized object is both distanced from the maternal, and yet still close to the maternal and the bonds of connection embodied there.

Yet, the emphasis on the imaginary father does not mean that the oedipal father is put aside. For Kristeva, the oedipal father is essential, especially in relation to the subject's separation from the archaic mother. We see this emphasis in her recent work on revolt.

Kristeva views revolt as tied to an overcoming of the archaic, in particular the archaic mother. Indeed, as her arguments develop in these works, it becomes clear that she understands revolt in decidedly

paternal terms. Kristeva tells us that in order for revolt to be effective in securing freedom, there must be a confrontation with an obstacle, a prohibition, a struggle with authority and the law. (2000: 7) Referencing Freud in *Totem and Taboo*, Kristeva says that revolt's success comes through a displacement of the father's authority on to the sons, and the formation of a symbolic pact which protects the sons from the impurity of the maternal space. (21–24)

There are, however, two fathers for Kristeva, one imaginary and the other oedipal, and both are necessary for revolt, both necessary in securing a space of separation from the mother. The imaginary father is the father of identification and idealization, one who, through the effect of the mirror, presents the subject with an image of the ego that allows a space from the maternal container. Kristeva is at pains to emphasize the importance of this formation of the narcissistic ego for aesthetic representation, and surprisingly, for the emergence of the death drive. By loving itself, an image of itself, the subject engages in a kind of de-eroticization, a disengagement from the drive of Eros, thus exposing itself to the death drive. Kristeva comments that when "we invest not in an erotic object (a partner) but a pseudo-object, a production of the ego itself, that is quite simply its own aptitude to imagine, to signify, to speak, to think." (2000: 55) In its narcissistic withdrawal, the ego makes use of the negative, assumes the risk of the death drive, and forms a new object, which is not mommy or daddy, not an external object, but an internal object that is then capable of producing speech.

Yet, despite the importance of the imaginary father as a paternal structure, Kristeva insists that the paternal must be transformed through the figure of the oedipal father. Rather than separation through love, we now have separation in relation to the agency of the law: "I must identify in relation to the law at the same time as I separate myself from it in order to create my own place." (2000: 84) The figure of the oedipal father does not support me but threatens me with sanctions, puts in front of me his authority, as a block to my path. This authority is unique, however, because it is grounded in negativity: the oedipal father exercises his authority in the belief that he can lose it. He is both presence and death. He presents me with his authority but he also lets me know that I can displace him, put his authority to death.

This oedipal movement brings with it a form of freedom, one more radical than that associated with transference and the imaginary

father. Yet there is a commandment associated with the law, in that once we subject ourselves to the prohibition, freedom can only come through its violation. Kristeva argues, citing Lacan, that separation brings about a freedom that is grounded in an ethics beyond the commandment. The subject with such an ethics is one whose "desire is not subject to a commandment outside itself." (2002: 227) The subject's commandment is one that raises the drive to a higher level, to the level of the death drive, a level beyond the constraints of the ego, and one that is bound to a subjective interiority that is radicalized.

On the basis of these considerations of Kristeva we could interpret Hood's flight back to the mother as one that is done in the context of his longing for the love of the father. Hood's father abandons him at the age of fourteen to the navy, and this is a double abandonment. It is an abandonment that denies him the love of the imaginary father and it is an abandonment that denies him the love of the oedipal father. In this sense, Hood is denied both the love provided by ideal identification and the love provided through actively struggling with prohibition and the law. His separation from the maternal presence is not aided by a father who is like the mother and is not aided by a father who is not like the mother. In the absence of these two aspects of paternal love, Hood's only outlet for love is a return to the archaic mother of his early childhood, the mother of warmth, coddling, and nursery rhymes. Yet, I think it is clear that, as he lies out on the barrens, he desperately longs for paternal love but can only find it missing.

Perhaps the story of the prodigal son is relevant here. As we all know, the story charts the journey of a son who leaves the father's home and squanders the father's resources, but who returns home and is welcomed back by the father. At first glance, the story of the prodigal son does not fit at all with the story of Hood. Hood's memories do not reveal a father who provided for the son, let the son go, and welcomed him back, but rather a father that, at least in Hood's recollection, abandons him at a tender developmental age. Yet the tenor of Hood's memories, despite the dark melancholic cloud hanging over them, might also reveal a longing for the welcoming father of the prodigal son story. As well, perhaps Hood's secret desire is for a more conventional interpretation of Job, one where reconciliation occurs after feelings of abandonment.

Hood now finds “his skeleton body sinking to this earth, bowed under the heavy, heavy memories that have always pulled him, he realizes now, down.” (251) He sees now that “he was such a silly, gullible child, a child who thought he knew everything because he knew only the confident, simple world of English games, and endlessly elaborated, confident duty, words.” (251) English games are instrumental in building the ego of English masculine character, a sense of control over the world. This is here extended in the duty of the English navy, which also provides the ego with a sense of mastery and control. But now the mastery and control of the ego is lost, and all that he is left with is trauma. And as he feels the “reassuring solidity of English steel against his hair” (251), he recalls the stanza from “Robbin-a-Bobbin” where the pigeon, the crow, the wren, and even the brother have been killed. Especially the line “and that will be all for gentle men.” (252) Yet, Hood is “never able to complete … the last syllable.” (252) Gentle men do not stand a chance, especially gentle boys in the face of paternal abandonment. The last syllable floats in the air for Hood: “men … men … men.”