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Veiling with Abjection: Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*
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While some readers find biographical information to be irrelevant when reading a novel, or simply are not aware of the author's personal life until after reading, there are some cases in which the addition of biographical details can enhance one's reading and understanding of the text. Carson McCullers was widely known as the successful young author who seemed to be able to write in a way that showed the world differently than other writers of her time. When studying McCullers' texts, one must keep in mind the time period that she wrote in, as well as look to biographical information in order to get an overall idea of what her works attempt to say. *Reflections in a Golden Eye* tells the story of three main characters who each, in their own respect, can be seen as a representation of McCullers herself. A close examination of the novel's characters finds that the emotionally absent Private Williams is, in fact, a projection of McCullers and her own desires. This can be understood more clearly once one incorporates Julia Kristeva's theory on abjection, Sigmund Freud's theory on the uncanny, and information from Virginia Carr's biography of McCullers. I will argue that in *Reflections of a Golden Eye*, Private Williams is a projection of McCullers, due to his being a representation of the abject desire that McCullers experienced for women, and that the abjection is the very reason why his character comes off as strange, impersonal, and uncanny. Opposing critics would say that Williams' impersonal nature disqualifies him from being McCullers' representation; however, while McCullers purposefully uses the uncanny feelings she creates around Williams to distance herself from him, we should see through this.

Growing up in Columbus, Georgia, and coming into adulthood in the 30s and 40s, Carson McCullers never, to the best of

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our knowledge, directly commented on her sexuality. This is highly important to understand in a study of her work because it must be acknowledged, as Jan Whitt reminds us, that McCullers lived in a highly “heterosexist culture and [grew] up without adequate information about sex” (92). This means that we cannot expect McCullers to directly take a stance on her sexuality, as she lived in a time in which there was not only little knowledge about fluid sexuality, but also a black-and-white, right-and-wrong view of heterosexuality and homosexuality. From her marriage to Reeves McCullers and her relationships with women that we are aware of, it is probable to say that “all the evidence suggests, [she was] either bisexual or homosexual” (Free 429). While it may seem like it is an “important fact that she never identified herself as a lesbian or bisexual or straight woman,” one must be aware that those terms at the time “were less a part of a scholarly discourse than they are now,” so to expect her to use modern terms would be unfair (Whitt 88).

Much of lesbian criticism deals with the knowledge that lesbian writers in the past were often unable to write their true views into a novel, and that one must seek to look past the writer’s mask for what is underneath. In an introductory article on lesbian criticism, Lois Tyson explains that the critic must “analyze how the sexual/emotional orientation of lesbian writers has affected their literary expression” (328). One must then look at what the writer in question did during her life, the relationships she had, and what they might allude to about one’s sexuality. From Virginia Carr’s biography of Carson McCullers, we understand her emotional orientation towards women as very apparent when Carr comments “Carson was completely open to her friends about her tremendous enjoyment in being physically close to attractive women” (295). This is where historical context is necessary because of the “conceptions of homosexuality and the social conditions that enabled and produced the inability to name oneself or articulate one’s desires” (Free 430). After understanding the historical conceptions about sexuality at the time, one is able to solely examine her actions in life as signs in understanding her sexuality. Another significant detail in affirming McCullers’ muddled sexuality is that she also was afraid of sex with men in general. Carr explains that a friend of

McCullers, Eleanor Clark, stated “Carson told me of her hatred of sexual intercourse with men, including Reeves” (288). It is not necessary that McCullers ever actually apply specific labels to describe her sexual orientation; rather, it is important that she was open about being attracted to women, and her actions reaffirm this.

After gaining a correct understanding of the vague sexuality of Carson McCullers, one can read *Reflections in a Golden Eye* and see her represented in almost every character. Yet after more analysis with Julia Kristeva’s theory on abjection in mind, one finds that Private Williams comes to represent the abject of McCullers’ desire and sexuality. Kristeva defines the abject as “a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated” (1). It is that which the self is afraid of and has repressed; yet, it is still somewhat remembered in the process of repressing. While the person may not remember or even know what exactly it is, the fear and disgust of feelings is enough for one to be aware of the presence of the abject. The actual thing can be forgotten while “it is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object” (Kristeva 4). This means that whatever one attempts to repress becomes the abject that in itself, terrifies and scares because its presence represents the rejection of rules, borders, or the system in which we live.

Kristeva explains how the abject is connected to the pre-Oedipal stage, the stage before meaning, the symbolic, and sexual distinction. After we have become so used to living in the post-Oedipal stage with order, rules and systems, anything that does not adhere to this structure causes us anxiety. Whatever this object is for each person individually is represented in the abject precisely because it throws away and demolishes the rules that we depend so heavily on. This is why the human response to these objects is to “drive them out, dominated by drive as he is, and constitute his own territory, edged by the abject. A sacred configuration” (Kristeva 6). Thus, one begins to play a contradictory game of relying on the presence of the abject staying in the boundaries that one has placed it and attempting to forget it to distance oneself from the disgust

one feels about it.

After being aware of this duality, Kristeva theorizes that the writer, aware of the abject, focuses on it in his works in order to attempt to understand his abject and the world around him. This is because the writer is aware of the fallibility of religion, morality and law – the exact things that we find solace in while living in the post-Oedipal stage. Writers are able to acknowledge the arbitrariness of them and “their power play, their necessary and absurd seeming” in which the writer can write about the abject (Kristeva 16). In literature then, the writer can “imagine the abject, that is, to see oneself in its place and to thrust it aside only by means of the displacements of verbal play” (Kristeva 16). This is exactly what we see McCullers do with her characters in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, specifically with Private Williams.

While McCullers seems to write characters who are all morally frustrating in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, Private Williams is an exception to this rule because of his indefinability. This is largely due to his being a representation of her abject desire. In the opening of the novel we are given a substantial description of Private Williams, yet it is one that does not tell us anything of who he really is. McCullers describes him as “a silent young soldier [who] had neither an enemy nor a friend. His sunburned face was marked by a watchful innocence . . . in his eyes . . . there was a mute expression that is found usually in the eyes of animals” (4). Here the reader can start to understand that by McCullers’ use of the term “watchful innocence” in relation to a man who seems to have no enemies or friends, McCullers means that Williams is a private, calm, and reserved guy. The reader does not get anything more from this description, yet somehow this seems like the same superficial conclusion one would come to when meeting this character in real life. Here McCullers attempts to give us some type of description, but we are aware that it is not really a complete picture of a personality.

A few lines later, she explains that he seems heavy and awkward at first but that this is a deception: “he moved with the silence and agility of a wild creature or a thief” (McCullers 4). Here the reader begins to wonder if there is more to this basic man than she is telling us because he has the ability to deceive people. Yet Mc-

Cullers attempts to dull our suspicion of Williams as she continues describing him as a man who doesn't "smoke, drink, fornicate or gamble. In the barracks he kept to himself and was something of a mystery to the other men" (McCullers 4). The testimony of his moral nature and mystery, in relation to the other soldiers, right after the off-putting knowledge about his deception, seems to dispel any strange feelings the reader might have about Williams. Yet there is still the feeling that one does not have a complete understanding of who Williams really is. This uncertainty about his nature creates undefined feelings that come from McCullers' interplay of attempting to define the abject and dispel it through Williams.

Thus the reason for our inability to completely understand Williams is because he is a representation of Carson McCullers' abject desire. Williams and McCullers share similar backgrounds on the view of women sexually. McCullers, living in middle Georgia in the 30s, would have been told that homosexuality was a sin and that her desire for women was wrong. Quite the same, from an early age Williams "had learned [from his father] that women carried in them a deadly and catching disease which made men blind, crippled and doomed to hell" (McCullers 18-19). This type of teaching seems to be exactly what the consensus would have been about a woman's desire for another woman. Williams later, unknowingly, catches sight of Captain Penderton's wife, Leonora, taking her clothes off, and sees her naked. This is the first time that Williams sees a woman naked and immediately becomes captivated with the sight, so much so that "he had not found it in him to go away. He stood motionless in the silent night with his arms hanging loose at his sides" (McCullers 19). Melissa Free explains that this first instance of seeing a naked woman creates an obsession because he "can only watch the object of his infatuation silently. Desire denied, whether homosexual or heterosexual, refuses to be contained and persists in the grotesque form of stalking" (433). This desire denied parallels McCullers' life and her relationship with Annamarie Clarac-Schwarzenbach.

Just as Williams is unable to satisfy his desire for Leonora, McCullers' desire for Annamarie, to whom the novel was dedicated, was never fulfilled. While Annamarie was Carson's friend, she nev-

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er really reciprocated Carson's feelings. Virginia Carr describes Carson's desire for Annamarie almost as an obsession. Carson viewed Annamarie as worthy of discipleship, so much so that she explains "no one in her entire life had seemed so fascinating or more deserving of her total commitment" (Carr 101). A relationship that was very much one-sided, Annamarie and Carson's relationship continues to have remarkable similarities to that of Williams and Leonora. Williams is aware of the estrangement of Leonora and the Captain as he listens in on their dinner conversations while he peeps through a window (McCullers 27). Carson was also well aware of Annemarie's unhappy marriage and found it to "pose no problem" (Carr 103). Even though Carson and Annamarie were friends, Carson's desire for more was restricted just as Williams' desire for Leonora is restricted.

During his time of watching outside the window, Williams would suddenly stop and stand in a trance and when questioned about what he was thinking, he responded "he was thinking about nothing at all," yet we are told "The young soldier spoke the truth. Although his face wore an expression of still concentration, there were in his mind no plans or thoughts of which he was aware" (McCullers 28). That night, rather than just looking through the Pendertons' window, he sneaks into Leonora's room. There is no thought process to decide this just as there are no thoughts in his mind when he falls into trances, which can be seen as abjection of desire. For Williams the desire of looking or being near a woman is something he has been taught is disgusting and ghastly. He cannot come to terms with the reality of his desire for the thing he hates, so he turns it into the abject and doesn't think of it. He avoids it so that he does not have to confront its rejection of the rules of desire he has accepted in his life until now.

His confrontation with the abject, however, provides pleasure. McCullers writes that "the young soldier felt in him a keen, strange sweetness that never before in his life had he known... On a few occasions before this Private Williams had had this look of suddenly awakened happiness in his face, but no one on the spot had seen him then" (53). Williams' reaction to confronting and seeing his desire up close brings him happiness. As Kristeva thought,

McCullers is able to write her abjection into the novel through Williams and imagine what she would hope to be the end result of confronting her desire. However, we know that Annamarie and Carson's relationship never matured to anything more than friendship, yet through Williams, Carson is able to play out her desires as she imagines them to be. Yet Williams' thoughts during the process of watching are not something McCullers is able to write because of her fascination with "the abject, [as she] imagines its logic, projects [her]self into it" (Kristeva 16). She can only go so far as to imagine the desire and the actions of desire played out, but the actual thoughts of the mind during the confrontations of the abject would be something that would still be repressed.

Critics also conclude that the boundary of reimagining her desire is as far as McCullers could go, and consequently, as far as we as readers can ask her to go. Jan Whitt concludes her article on McCullers by stating that "because of her sexual ambivalence," she gives us characters "but does not name them or let them speak about their own identities" (104). McCullers is able to project herself into her characters, but she still seems restricted in allowing them to come out or to confront these desires and figure out what the desires mean in relation to their lives. Jan Whitt sees also that "while McCullers critiques queer abjection, she certainly does not take the next step of celebrating the pleasures of queer love, sexuality, community, or identification" (431-32). This can be explained by Kristeva's explanation of the desire to confront the abject while simultaneously being disgusted by it and wanting to hide it. Further backed up by her lack of actually naming her desire, her portrayal of Williams' desires as her own is McCullers' attempt to explain it, while also rendering Williams, and her, mute on the topic so that they may not name or completely understand it.

In analyses of *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, the consensus seems to be that readers do not know what to think about Private Williams, and readers are wary of this. The lack of understanding may cause readers, and opposing critics, to say that Williams cannot possibly be a representation of McCullers because of how strange and impersonal he is. This distance and lack of personality are what cause the readers to feel uneasy about Williams; McCullers

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attempts to use these negative feelings as a way to distance herself from the character. The very strong and uneasy feelings we get from Williams are explained by Sigmund Freud's theory on the uncanny.

In *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, an attempt to explain why and what exactly the uncanny means, Freud combines psychoanalysis and literature to figure out what causes uncanny feelings to arise. He begins by acknowledging that while we cannot directly define the feeling of the uncanny it is "related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense" (219). He then goes through literary examples and attempts to figure out what it is about each case that causes the uncanny; in almost every instance the uncanny relates to a confusion or lack of knowledge about what is animate or inanimate. Both of these fears, ultimately, are rooted in the anxiety of losing or lacking power over oneself.

This castration can be further applied to the feeling of the uncanny in literature whose power is solely in the hands of the writer. Freud states that when reading literature "we adapt our judgment to the imaginary reality imposed on us by the writer;" so that the reader can establish the type of reality in a piece of writing and then process the uncanny in relation to that establishment (250). For example, in a fairy tale a severed hand seemingly moving about by itself would be a bit more acceptable than in a piece with the rules of a normal reality. The writer then further has power to manipulate the uncanny by "keep[ing] us in the dark for a long time" about the rules of the world or "he can cunningly and ingeniously avoid any definite information on the point" (Freud 251). This is exactly what McCullers does with Private Williams; she begins to portray him as a normal man but then doesn't give us insight to his intentions or desires as she does with other characters. This withholding of knowledge about Williams and refusing to form a character as complete as the others creates the sense of powerlessness in the reader. The reader's anxiety about this, Freud explains, comes from the feeling of helplessness in attempting to distinguish what is real/fake, animate/inanimate, alive/dead, and human/non-human. When the writer does not provide us with this information, we again feel castrated of our power to discern, to see,

and to understand. This creates an uncanny feeling that we want to reject.

In *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, Private Williams is the least personal character and lives based on feelings rather than thoughts. The reading experience is uncanny because we are used to understanding mostly what the personality of a character is so we can discern what that character thinks is right/wrong, good/bad, etc. However, because Williams is a representation of McCullers' abject desire, she attempts to distance herself from him by denying the readers information about his intentions and desires; he is uncanny to us specifically because we cannot predict anything about him due to our lack of knowledge concerning what drives him to do things. In the beginning of the novel, we are told that Williams does not really participate in normal social activities, "nor had he ever been known to laugh, to become angry, or to suffer in any way" (McCullers 4). This is immediately off-putting while the reader is attempting to figure out what type of person his character will be. Being told he has never been known to show any emotion, happy or sad, makes the reader unable to distinguish if he is human or not. The traits that one looks for in other humans are not present in Williams, creating at the start of the novel an uncanny feeling surrounding him. Carson was known to be a joyful and pleasant person to be around; the stark contrast between the personalities of Williams and McCullers is used as a veil to convince the reader Williams is just a weird person and nothing more.

Another distinction that, when blurred, contributes to the uncanny is that of animate and inanimate objects. The thought process is what often distinguishes these two. Private Williams proves time and time again that he does not think. This first can be observed when he is standing behind the Pendertons' back yard, probably less than twenty feet away from Leonora, and yet does not register her presence. This is not because he is distracted but rather "he saw her, but she did not enter the dark sphere of his consciousness until she spoke to him" (McCullers 7). McCullers creates a weird way of thinking for Williams so that the reader is put-off by his strangeness. This uneasy feeling of not being sure if he is an animate thing with thoughts is further pushed on us when we are told

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of the four times he made decisions without thinking about them: “Four times in his twenty years of life the soldier has acted of his own accord and without the pressure of immediate circumstance” (28). Thus Williams continues to blur the line between human and non-human causing the reader to question whether his lack of thoughts means that he may be animate and yet non-human. The lack of distinction between the two is something that Freud suggests creates in us an uncanny feeling that McCullers uses to distract us from the idea that Williams is her.

Further creating an uncanny feeling that the reader wants to reject is the fact that because we cannot understand or even follow his thinking, because there is none, we cannot discern the intentions behind any of Williams’ actions or predict them. Once Private Williams begins entering the Pendertons’ house to observe Leonora, the reader is not given any information on his thought process as he clearly intrudes on her privacy. McCullers only tells us “The door of The Lady’s room was open, and when he reached it the soldier did not hesitate. With the lithe silence of a cat he stepped inside” (53). Normal descriptions – such as terror, excitement, or fear that Williams should be feeling at this point in the novel – are left out. The reader is given absolutely no insight to his mind as he “very slowly tiptoed to the side of the bed and bent over the Captain’s wife . . . he was so close that he could feel her warm even breath” (53). The scene is made more uncanny by the fact that he hovers over Leonora until dawn.

This passage is especially haunting and uncanny for the reader because Williams sees the development of this obsession but has no basis of thought or intention to be prepared for what he will do next. The lack of thought makes the reader react strongly against Williams as he associates him with the uncanny feeling his impersonality causes. This feeling is then heightened by the realization that it is not the reader who is lacking information, but it is Williams who is lacking thought, meaning that literally anything can happen to Leonora, there are no boundaries or lines, and the reader is left powerless. The opposition to my argument would use this as evidence that someone who is so strange and bizarre could not possibly be a representation of McCullers. However, as stated

before, McCullers is only attempting to use these instances to scare the reader away from realizing the truth; Williams' overwhelming desire for Leonora is a representation of McCullers' unreciprocated desire for Annamarie. She drives Williams to observe and touch Leonora through her ability to relate to unrequited desire.

While the uncanny feelings surrounding Williams are at the highest, the reader then sees the progression of his obsession increase as he begins to touch Leonora's hair. At this point, the reader is rendered helpless in knowledge and is left at the mercy of McCullers. The only way to find out what Williams is capable of is to keep reading and allow him to continue to act in ways which cannot be predicted. The reader's uneasy feeling that surrounds Williams because of the lack of knowledge about what exactly he is capable of is how McCullers distracts us from seeing him for what he is. Aware of this, McCullers then tells us in the next paragraph that Williams does not think and that his mind is "imbued with various colors of strange tones, but it was without delineation, void of form" as she also tells us that in an argument over manure some years ago "he had stabbed a Negro to death and hidden the body in an abandoned quarry" (90). The uncanny feeling cannot be ignored at this point as Williams has killed a man and committed the worst of all sins.

This new information blurs the lines between life and death and shows that for him, there is no respect for that boundary. He does not adhere to the laws of life and the rules of acknowledging and following boundaries. The reader at this point is completely disgusted and repelled by Williams because the reader cannot relate to him, understand him, or even predict him. McCullers uses this knowing that the fact that Williams does not play by the rules or structure of the normal human world and completely is at a loss for any comprehension of his character is something that will alienate the reader from reading too much into him. The feeling of a loss of distinction between life and death, as Freud shows the uncanny feeling produces, makes the reader hate Williams and fear what will happen to Leonora for the rest of the novel, ultimately abandoning any trace of thought that he may be a representation of McCullers. When examining Private Williams, critics tend to attribute his

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sensuality and lack of thought to factors other than McCullers' projection of her abject desire. Larry Livingston Finger writes in his dissertation that Williams' "sensuality is due apparently to his exposure to fundamentalist religion" (110) referring to the passage in which his father, a minister, taught him to believe women have diseases. However, Finger does not give any explanation to further address what that sensuality can represent or how it affects the reader. While he does state that "all of the characters, then, are either physically or intellectually inadequate" (110) as a testament to the grotesqueness of the characters in the novel, he does not dwell too much on Williams other than in the above passage. This could be because there is not anything physically or emotionally grotesque about Williams due to the lack of detail surrounding him because of his representation of McCullers' abject desire.

One may wonder how much credit we should give to McCullers for being progressive on the subject of gender. In Sarah Gleeson-White's book *Strange Bodies: Gender and Identity in the Novels of Carson McCullers*, she points out that McCullers' sometimes vague and sometimes stereotypical portrayal of homosexuality can be damaging in combination with a novel that portrays the queer as grotesque. However, Gleeson-White also gives credit to McCullers that "her discernible struggle to depict a new configuration of homosexual desire, which is productive, testifies to the difficulty of her radical project and forces us to think more deeply about gender's complex relation to bodies and sexuality" (38). This statement is completely true and supportive of the fact that historically it would have been hard for McCullers to push the boundaries any further than she did, and that the complexity of sexuality that she experienced is represented in her writing.

In contrast, Gleeson-White sees Penderton's homosexual reaction to the woman's body as a representation of the grotesque; she states the woman's body "often central to McCullers's presentation of the homoerotic couple because male same-sex desire has a virilizing force" (47). This is where she falls short in realizing that the rejection of the female body by Penderton is not the only representation of the grotesque and that the male-male desire is not the only desire worth analyzing in the novel simply because the

two characters are of the same sex. Here Gleeson-White falls short by assuming that Penderton's repressed desires for Williams are the only portrayal of homosexuality in the novel. It is very clear that the grotesque is also found in Williams' desires for Leonora, which are completely heterosexual, so here the grotesque is associated with two heterosexual characters. In addition to this, the grotesque that we see in this situation is associated with Williams' desires and therefore the male of the situation, demonstrating that McCullers does not only portray the grotesque in relation to women.

Melissa Free attributes the uncanny feeling of Williams to his silence, which she comments is created from a "distortion produced by its relegations to silence" (426). Free further finds evidence with support from psychoanalytics and gender theory as she explains that McCullers' contortion is of what is expected – "(the queer as grotesque) into what the unexpected (the grotesque as an objection to abjection and silence" – produces a text that is both visual, from the text on the page, and yet a form of ghost-writing to solidify her presence and silence (Free 429). Here Free acknowledges that there is the abject in the text, and that McCullers maintains a distinct closeness and distance from it. This is accurate in understanding McCullers' contradicting desire for representation and desire for distance in Williams.

However, Free attributes McCullers' use of the grotesque to signal the homosexual as the abject and sees a violence in this. This comes from mistaking the homosexual character, Captain Penderton, as the abject when he is not; rather he is something that is very clearly defined. She does believe that the grotesqueness of Williams is found in his silence, yet she fails to recognize this as the abject. This then constrains McCullers to the limits of projecting her abjection onto a homosexual character by assuming that McCullers' homosexual desires could not be represented in a novel by heterosexual desires among characters. This argument would find its basis in the assumption that homosexual and heterosexual desires are not similar, an assumption that is not only narrow-sighted but also not text or evidence based.

In reading *Reflections of a Golden Eye*, one can see Private Williams' desire for Leonora as a representation of McCullers' ab-

ject desire for women. One can also understand the anxious feelings he experiences pertaining to Williams as McCullers attempts to distance herself from identification. She gives him uncanny characteristics, causing the reader to identify him as the strange and reject him. Other critics are thrown off by this veil and are deceived in thinking that Williams is not an accurate representation of McCullers because of his strangeness, yet they are misled. As an accurate portrayal of McCullers this means that Williams, representing her abject desire for women, being killed by Penderton, he who is homosexual but afraid of embracing it, can symbolize her oppression by the highly homophobic American society that she grew up in and lived in. Even though she did embrace her sexuality, she could never directly name it or even flat out write about it; rather she was forced into the margins like so many other lesbian writers.

In addition to this, while Penderton represents one who thinks too much about his sexuality ultimately ending in his destruction of it, Williams does not think about it at all, allowing him to embrace it. Then, Penderton as thought and Williams as feeling seems to say that the killing of Williams by Penderton represents the murder of emotion by thought in relation to sexuality, which would further reinforce the need for regulation of emotion which was a common belief regarding sexuality at the time.

Overall, Kristeva would see the killing of Williams as symbolic of killing of the abject, in which McCullers then reverts into the same cycle of repressing the abject, the very cycle she attempted to break free from by writing her abjection into a character. While the initial act of writing the character at all is monumental in attempting to understand one's sexuality, the step that McCullers takes forward she ultimately takes back in the ending of the novel. Freud would see McCullers' deliberate use of the uncanny to distance herself from a representation of her abjection as a typical human response, simultaneously being enthralled and repelled by that which blurs the lines of human and non-human. Rather than discrediting her portrayal of herself in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, the fact that McCullers feels the need to play an intricate game of closeness and distance shows that she was attempting to grasp an

understanding of her sexuality; this is a much better and healthier reaction than rejecting it all together.

Reflections in a Golden Eye is important to the literary canon because it is a prime example of how gay writers do not have to be subjected to writing characters that are straightforward representations of themselves on paper. Rather, McCullers shows how one's sexual desire is much more complicated than a basic portrayal and can even emerge as a character of the opposite sex sharing in the same type of desire and relationship as the writer. Here she attempts to break free from the boundaries that society puts on gay and lesbian writers to outline and define explicitly their sexuality. This standard is irrational and unnecessary as McCullers shows through Williams and her less than straightforward representation of her sexuality that one's sexuality can be portrayed and explained in whatever way possible through literature.

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