CORPUS

LIBERAL ARTS SOCIETY

JOURNAL

2019-2020

It is a pleasure to write a few words in celebration of the publication of a new edition of Corpus. A student initiative, the journal represents the fruit of what both they and faculty members work hard to nurture at the Liberal Arts College. While emphasizing skills critical for an active and productive engagement in society, our program is also an introduction into a manner of human activity and life enriched by the pursuit of learning, intellectual curiosity, and creativity. This is a cooperative enterprise grounded in conversation, debate, and artistic undertakings that inform, challenge, excite, and inspire. In fact, the College is a place of both academic conversation and creative endeavour in many fields driven by student initiative and engagement. I hope you will enjoy reading a sample of what they have achieved. All who participated in this important project are to be especially commended for bringing it to fruition in these difficult times.

With many congratulations,
Mark A. Russell
Principal, LAC

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ART AND POETRY

We, at Corpus, would like to offer our thanks and gratitude to all those who submitted their work for publication– be it personal piece, past assignment, or anything in between. Our philosophy for the journal is to have a platform to showcase different kids of creativity found inside and outside the classroom by the students that populate the Liberal Arts College. Corpus is, primarily, a journal by students to celebrate their colleagues. This year, there was no shortage of brilliancy and creativity displayed in each submission we received.

The outpour of submissions was positively overwhelming, and the talent and thoughtfulness in each submission made the decision process that much more difficult for our team. Despite this difficulty, we were able to narrow the submissions down and now present to you a collection of works that we feel encompass the vast array of talent and colour harboured under our college's roof. Again, thank you all so much and we hope that you enjoy the essays and creative pieces that await you ahead. It was an absolute pleasure, as editors, to work alongside our wonderful authors for this year's edition.

Sincerely, the ladies of Corpus

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Hierarchy of Love and Desire in Shakespeare, Donne, and Sidney

Amber Perry

John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" characterizes metaphysical love by virtue and a refusal to stoop to the lower level of an obsessive and corporeal desire. Similarly, Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet 71 of "Astrophil and Stella" explores the struggle of rejecting earthly appetite to maintain an ideal love — a struggle that Shakespeare's Orsino of *Twelfth Night* also grapples with. Within "A Valediction," sonnet 71, and *Twelfth Night*, the righteousness of one's love may be measured by the extent of one's disengagement with disordered sense and temporal things.

The speaker of Donne's poem produces imagery of what is non-physical, yet controlled, to convey his perfect love and differentiate it from unrestrained and ignoble earthly desire. Upon his departure, he instructs his beloved to "melt, / [but make] No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move".[1] The lovers are to soften into each other without being consumed by unrestrained, unpredictable, flood-like emotion. Excessive expressions of feeling are associated with devastating phenomena, as if crying would overwhelm and extinguish their exemplary love. Similarly, the affection portrayed in "A Valediction" is characterized by "no noise,"[2] further removing the senses from pure love. The love shared between speaker and beloved is contained and not to be perceived, through sound, by the ordinary "laity"[3] outside of the relationship. To make their love heard would be to make it unintelligible. Instead, the emotions they share are cherished, safe from the muddling judgements of others and affirmed independent of the tumultuous physical world.

Donne's speaker further rejects sense perception as a means through which to experience and understand love by distinguishing his own experience of it from "[d]ull sublunary lovers' love / (Whose soul is sense)".[4] Lovers violate the soul when the essence of their affections are physical. Even the speaker's reference to what "element[s]"[5] love and desire as experienced by others suggests that it is basic and earthly. Despite the fervency of other relationships, they are plain and, in all their physicality, insubstantial. To refer to the affections of others as "sublunary"[6] - terrestrial, sensual, and changeable - implies that the speaker's love is ethereal. The celestial relationship between the speaker and their beloved is reminiscent of Plato's Forms. Plato's Forms are universal, non-spatial, atemporal, eternal ideas discoverable by the mind and the perfect versions of the properties they stand for. Meanwhile, the particulars of the material world are imperfect

approximations of the Forms.[7] In differentiating between his love and earthly love, the speaker asserts that their affections are like the perfect and fundamentally unattainable Form of Love. Unlike the elemented love of particulars, theirs is "refined"[8] - sifted and more pure and, therefore, stronger and more concentrated — not diluted by earthly preoccupations. Another principal feature of the Forms is their oneness. In Parmenides we read, "[y]ou see a number of great objects, and when you look at them there seems to you to be one and the same idea in them all; hence you conceive of greatness as one".[9] The "two souls [of Donne's lovers] which are one"[10] unite as the universal Form of love to create the most ideal - non-physical - bond . The ease with which Donne's speaker and his beloved dismiss physical desire among others who cannot legitimizes their bond as the perfect Form of Love. The similarities between the speaker's love and the celestial world is further emphasized with the metaphor of the beloved as a compass that "makes [the speaker's] circle just".[11] Like the celestial orbs and their trajectories, their love is mathematical, predictable, and uninterrupted.

Sonnet 71 of Sidney's "Astrophil and Stella" sequence also explores an explicit distinction between virtuous "love"[12] and sensual "desire"[13] but describes the difficulty of rejecting desires with a sympathy that Donne does not. Sidney personifies Desire to become something separate from the speaker: it is no longer a feeling of want within a person, but emphasized as a detached entity, with a will of its own, imposing on the will of the speaker. Consequently, the presence of Desire creates a dissonance contrary to the unity that love entails for Donne's speaker. Furthermore, Astrophil makes a similar allusion as Donne's speaker to the perfect realm of the spheres in remarking the "inward sun [that] in [Stella's] eyes shineth so".[14] Stella literally embodies intellectual love and her function as a source of such is emphasized not only by the light her eyes emit and the circular, heavenly body they resemble, but given that direct praise of the body is reserved for only her eyes. While focus on the beloved's eyes may indicate a concern for appearances perceived by the senses, it also evokes a sense of perceptiveness that is greater than sight - an intellectual insight. As Stella embodies the sun, she embodies a cosmic eye that perceives and understands perfection. Despite mention of Stella's "beauty,"[15] and like Donne's speaker who is "care[-]less"[16] about the physical features of his beloved, she functions as a catalyst to intellectual love that is objectively good.

Despite the virtuous love that Stella inspires, a shift in the sonnet's conclusion sees Astrophil lapse into the spontaneous and passionate love that Donne's speaker rejects. He is

overcome by "Desire" that "cries, [for] 'more food,'"[17] an outburst evoking not only inflammatory tears, but incomprehensible screaming that is, the "noise"[18] of desire and the contaminant of intelligible, pure love. In addition to giving it sound, Sidney associates Desire with the senses through its relationship with the gluttonous consumption of food. The insatiable appetite of Desire causes it to demand "more".[19] It has already received nourishment, but no food is nourishment enough. The demands of desire are unspecified, suggesting that any amount of consumption is equally unsatisfying.

Desire's request to be supplied with more is in contrast with the mutually fulfilling relationship between Donne's speaker and his beloved who are "inter-assured of the mind".[20] Love that manifests itself metaphysically is simultaneously more sound and binding than physical, desirous love that constantly involves an absence of consequential and sustaining substance. Material attraction is made most superficial and desire is characterized by constant deficiency: "Or thy affection cannot hold the bent; / For women are as roses, whose fair flower / Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour".[21] Orsino compares the physical appearance of women to the constantly changing and unstable natural world. As his objects of desire continually transform and fall away, they can never be grasped. But desire does not die with one object — new roses always grow back in new places. Meanwhile, metaphysical love is permanent.

The notion of desire as a superficial gluttonous undercutting of love referred to in sonnet 71 of "Astrophil and Stella" also characterizes Orsino's rhetoric. When Viola arrives at Orsino's court, she anticipates his lament and criticizes his greedy longings: "if it be [like your usual romantic rhetoric], my lord, / It is as fat and fulsome to mine ear / As howling after music".[22] Orsino's speeches are fat as in 'gross' but also in that they merely create the illusion of substance and offer no nutriment. Furthermore, to compare Orsino's poetry with the howling of a dog is to assert that Orsino's affections and focus on the "fat" — the food of what is untamed and wild — of desirous love is animalistic and low-minded. Viola's criticism of Orsino's love speeches may allude to the play's opening: "If music be the food of love, play on".[23] Should love be a phenomenon associated with the perfect celestial world as it is in Donne's poetry, Orsino's lament suggests the philosophical concept of *Musica Universalis*, or Music of the Spheres. This concept refers not to actual sound, but to the harmonious, mathematical proportions of the celestial bodies. Orsino's speech suggests that love consists of metaphysical harmony, yet he proceeds to interrupt the music with his non-spiritual rhetoric of appetite and excess, discouraging an association

between his desires and harmonious love. Orsino's emotion is expressed not only through the senses, but in terms of sensory overload: he wants "excess"[24] so as to "sicken"[25] his appetite and to hear music so passionate that it evokes imagery and distinctive "odour,"[26] - with all its unpleasant and overwhelming connotations. In associating his love with the music of the Spheres, Orsino wrongly diminishes spiritual love, making it "fall"[27] towards his earthly, physical desire as he orders the musicians to repeat a melancholy falling cadence.[28] Orsino never conforms to the harmony of the Spheres with his desire for Olivia and she expresses aversion for compliments that are not like music, but like distasteful, tuneless wailing. Furthermore, Orsino's continual reference to dying and falling in his opening lament suggests orgasm, an overflowing sensation associated with baser, instinctual pleasures.

Orsino's love for Cesario, as opposed to his desire for Olivia, is reminiscent of the "refined"[29] affections of Donne's speaker. Like Donne's written heterogeneous, but more concentrated love, Orsino's affections for Cesario are "tender,"[30] unembellished and rich in themselves. "Tender" may constitute food-related language, yet Orsino's account of his affection for Ceasario suggests a more compassionate and selfless love; one of giving rather than consuming, as Sidney's Desire encourages. Moreover, Orsino swears "by heaven"[31] that his love for his servant is genuine as if the spiritual world holds evidence of his care. The more virtuous love that Orsino has for Cesario is further revealed in the latter's knowledge of the "book [of Orsino's] secret soul"[32]. Like Donne's speaker, Orsino reveals an appreciation for what is private and sincere in their relationship. Despite Orsino's admiration for Caesario's physical features, including his "smooth and rubious"[33] lips, their close relationship cannot be founded on physical appearance while Viola is disguised as a male eunuch. Rather, they are forced into a relationship of essence and their private expression fosters a loving relationship of the soul. Nevertheless, the attention with which Orsino studies Cesario's appearance suggests that the human, though capable of softer feelings, is most inclined towards physical desire. The king's pure love for Cesario is immediately contrasted with his love for Olivia which prompts a disregard for "civil bounds"[34] and a focus on material, earthly profit.

The speaker of John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" achieves a virtuous, metaphysical love that the characters of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and sonnet 71 of Sidney's "Astrophil and Stella" struggle to emulate. In the process, they surrender to demoralizing, instinctive, and bodily appetite. Bodily appetites are deployed as metaphors for earthly desire in

Sidney's sonnet through personification, where Desire itself demands that its insatiable physiological wants be supported indefinitely, through the strict exclusion of sense perception from ideal love in Donne's poetry, and through the excessively greedy language through which Orsino expresses an ill-founded infatuation.

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[1] Donne 5-6.
[2] Ibid 5.
[3] Ibid 8.
[4] Ibid 13-14.
[5] Ibid 16.
[6] Ibid 13, 936n3.
[7] Silverman, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*
[8] Donne 17.
[9] Plato 51.
[10] Donne 21.
[11] Ibid 35.
[12] Sidney 13.
[13] Ibid 14.
[14] Ibid 8.
[15] Ibid 20.
[16] Donne 13.
[17] Sidney 12.
[18] Donne 5.
[19] Sidney 12.
[20] Donne 19.
[21] Shakespeare 2.4.36-8.
[22] Ibid 5.1.101-103.
[23] Ibid 1.1.1.

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[24] Ibid 1.1.4.
[25] Ibid 1.1.3.
[26] Ibid 1.1.7.
[27] Ibid 1.1.4.
[28] Swain 24n3.
[29] Donne 17.
[30] Shakespeare 5.1.120.
[31] Ibid 5.1.120.
[32] Ibid 1.4.13.
[33] Ibid 1.4.31.
[34] Ibid 1.4.21.

Sublimity in Divinity: Teresa d'Avila

Bianca Delisle

Teresa d'Avila's *Confessions* reveals her personal relationship with God and her struggle to reconcile the feeling of shame surrounding her past wrongdoings with God's infinite love. Indeed, the concept of feeling, or sentiment, is at the core of Teresa's experience with divine love. She struggles to understand how, within a world in which human beings constantly offend God and turn away from him, God still forgives and fills these beings with love. Ursula King, who wrote about Teresa's mystical life emphases that her mystical conversion, which involved continuous prayer and a reform of the religious life, allowed her to conquer her internalized feelings of sin and inadequacy.[1] In her endeavor to converse and strengthen her personal bond with God, it can be argued that the sublime experience is at the center of Teresa's mystical connection with God. Several descriptions of the sublime have been put forth in various discipline such as art, philosophy and literature. However, the sublime, as it is characterized in Teresa's text, involves an unquantifiable, intangible and unintelligible revelation of God's love which allows the mystic to humble themselves before the divine. First, Teresa compares the sublimity of her experience with the divine to that of the natural world in order to merge the physical and the divine world. Second, Teresa's description of sensory depravation is treated as sublime because it allows her to come in contact with divinity. Third, Teresa demonstrates that the rational intellect fails to recognize God's love. In doing so, she establishes the soul as the proper medium through which to experience divine things such as love. Fourth, Teresa's description of rapture, where the soul is carried upwards towards the divine, acts as the culminating point of the experience with the sublime and reveals that the soul submits entirely to God without any chance of resistance.

Teresa evokes God's divinity within the earthly world through the imagery of nature in order to reveal the sublimity of God. King states that "her visions were both spiritual and physical."[2] She describes this relationship as a dichotomized experience, where the spiritual relates to her experience with God, and the physical represents her struggles with sin within the earthly world. However, Teresa reconciles the divide between the spiritual and the earthly realm by asserting that these two entities are one. Indeed, she introduces the garden to represent more than a physical space, but rather an embodiment of divinity. She is able to manifest God's presence as the

"heavenly water that in its abundance soaks and saturates this entire garden."[3] The fusion between nature and the divine occurs as the "heavenly water" seeps into the lowly garden, infusing within it the essence of divinity. The garden as well as other elements of nature such as "fields, or water, or flowers"[4] are reminders that God is the creator of the earthly world. Thus, it can be inferred that Teresa, as a creation of God, views her soul as this garden, experiencing the love of God flowing through her. However, in order for this experience to be sublime, it must be more than just a vision of the divine presence within all aspects of the earthly world. Indeed, Teresa's sublime experience with divinity occurs in her soul's submission to God.

Much like Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (Fig. 1), Teresa posits herself as a singular being who is faced with the unquantifiable existence of divine power. Art critics who view this painting as a depiction of sublimity often describe Friedrich's wanderer as "a tiny figure [who] contemplates the vastness and his place in the world."[5] This painting is labelled as a vision of the sublime because its composition, in which the small figure is overpowered by the immense mountains and the dense fog, gives nature a "divine"[6] aspect. In her writings, Teresa is Friedrich's wanderer, confronted by the divinity of nature and attempting to locate herself within God's world. Teresa bows down to God as she
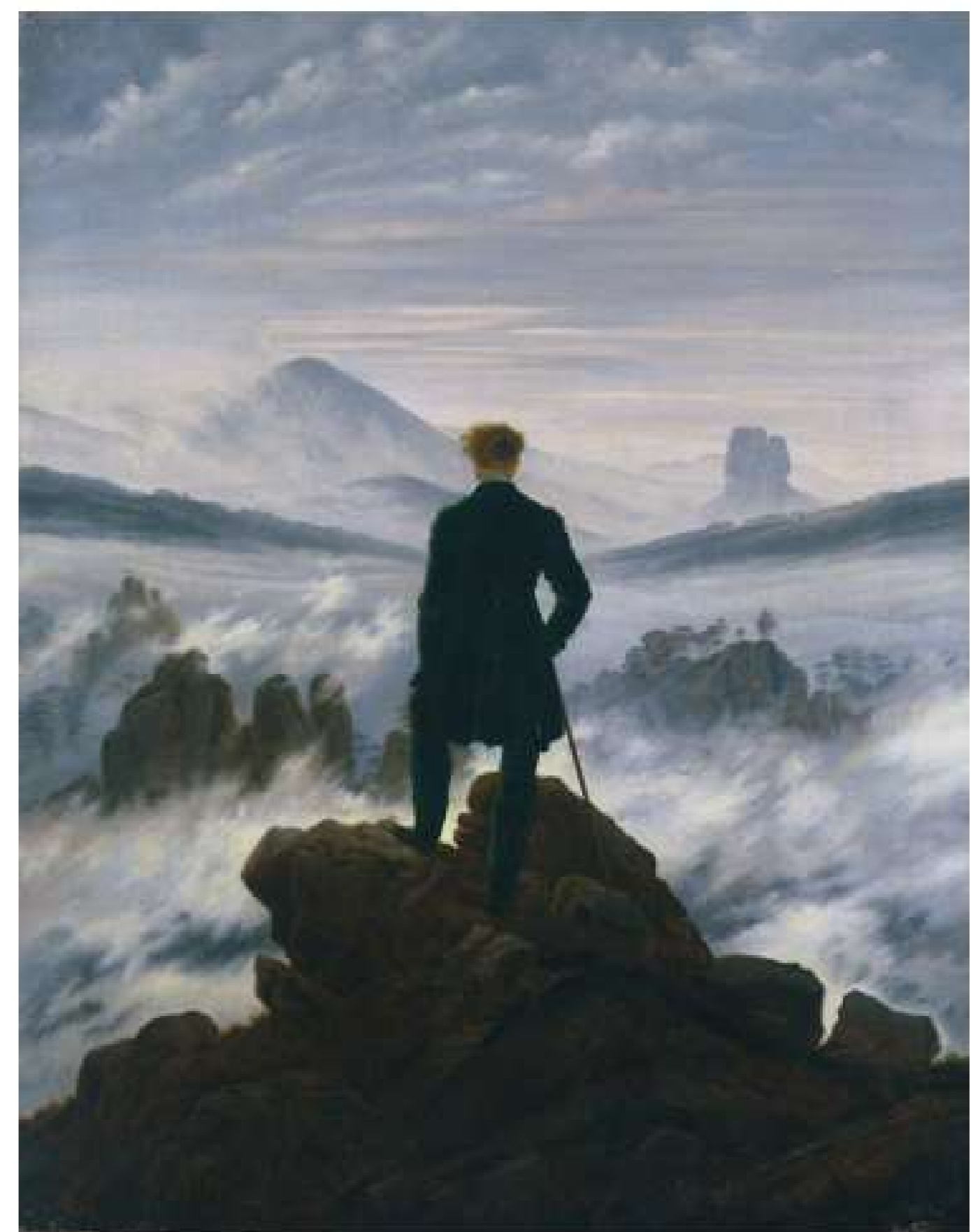
Fig. 1. Caspar David Friedrich. *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*. oil on canvas, 1818, Kunsthalle Hamburg, Germany.

pronounces that if her soul, through prayer should not conform to "the truths of the holy Catholic faith,"[7] she would submit to God burning it. Her complete submission to God illustrates the power that the divine holds within her life. Thus, as she acknowledges that she is a lowly being and that a higher power holds supremacy over her soul, she fulfills the sublime vision.

Furthermore, the image of the "burning" soul reveals Teresa's evolving relationship with God. As her mystical experience with God intensifies, Teresa substitutes His earthly form, as depicted by water or gardens, for a celestial one: the sun. Amy Hollywood, who wrote about the Christian mystical experience, describes Augustine's conception of *visio* (vision), in which the mystic moves from external sights to internal perceptions of divinity.[8] Teresa is experiencing this

escalation, as her visions of God begin externally in nature and subsequently lead into an introspection of her soul. In her final vision, she compares God to the "divine sun"[9] as a means to align *via positiva* statements such as "God is truth and God is justice"[10] with its implications upon her soul; Truth is the sun's brightness revealing the imperfections of the soul, Justice is the sun blinding the soul and bringing it to a state of humility.[11] As Teresa experiences God within herself, the image of the divine sun allows her to externalize the visions that she is confronted with. The language of nature holds up a God that would otherwise be elusive. Therefore elements of nature, such as gardens, water and the sun, are an essential component of Teresa's text, because there is a direct correlation between the sublimity of nature and the sublimity of God.

The senses' failure in perceiving divinity is a necessary quality of the sublime experience in Teresa's text. Although, as shown previously, the senses are able to perceive divine things in nature, Teresa's soul interacts with divinity in a way that transcends discernment through sensory modes of experience such as sight, hearing, or touch. When in conference with God through prayer, Teresa describes a phenomenon in which her eyes close unwillingly, and where she lacks understanding in what she is hearing.[12] Similarly, Longinus describes Sappho's poem on love in the following manner,

> Is it not wonderful how at the same moment soul, body, ears,
> tongue, eyes, colour, all fail her, and are lost to her as completely as
> if they were not her own? Observe too how her sensations
> contradict one another—she freezes, she burns, she raves, she
> reasons, and all at the same instant. And this description is designed
> to show that she is assailed, not by any particular emotion, but by a
> tumult of different emotions.[13]

Longinus, who is attempting to classify the sublime vocabulary in poetry, emphasizes sensory overstimulation as part of this lexicon; the senses experience such extremes as freezing and burning, and the body fails to understand the feeling of love that it is experiencing. Similar descriptions of sensory failure can be found in Teresa's text. As Teresa prays, she states that "it feels with the most marvelous and gentlest delight that everything is almost fading away through a kind of swoon in which breathing and all the bodily energies gradually fail."[14] Although Sappho experiences the senses all at once, Teresa is describing a feeling of deprivation from her senses. A key factor in both mysticism and the sublime experience with divinity involves the body's declining ability to process stimuli from the exterior world. Hollywood supports this view in stating that "the need to challenge the exterior realm as spiritually deceptive and lacking in

authenticity stands at the heart of the Carmelites' project."[15] The Carmelites, the order to which Teresa belonged, emphasize that it is necessary for the body and its faculties to be negated when striving towards a direct contact with God.

Yet, although Sappho and Teresa experience sensory failure in two contrasting manners, both are not frightened by these extreme sensory reactions but are on the contrary delighted by them. Longinus argues that the "true Sublime"[16] originates from the joy and pride resulting from the soul being lifted up by a euphoric sentiment. Accordingly, it can be argued that both Sappho's sensory overload and Teresa's lack of "sensory consciousness"[17] are sublime because they affirm that this occurrence, although overwhelming, brings them joy or pleasure. Teresa's account furthers the conceptualization of the sublime because pleasure is not derived from the experience of sensory erasure itself but from its entailing effects upon the soul. As Teresa asserts, the closure of her physical eyes is a pleasurable experience because it triggers her soul to "open for the understanding of truths."[18] Hence, sensory deprivation inhibits the perception of the physical world which subsequently brings the soul closer to God's presence. Therefore, in Teresa's text, the process through which the senses lose their usefulness and in which the soul's perception of divinity is heightened ascends towards a finalized sublime state.

Aside from the external body's inadequacy to perceive divinity through the senses, Teresa also demonstrates this same failure within the mind's processes, such as reasoning and understanding. Teresa reveals that sublimity involves the intellect's failure to describe or understand divine forms through language, which entails a transcendence beyond the human mind's capacities. As Teresa describes union with God, in which love is a central component, she describes her lack of understanding of this condition in the following way,

> The will is fully occupied in loving, but it doesn't understand how it
> loves. The intellect, if it understands, doesn't understand how it
> understands; at least it can't comprehend anything of what it
> understands. It doesn't seem to me that it understands, because, as I
> say, it doesn't understand — I really can't understand this![19]

In this passage, Teresa's intellect fails to understand love because this concept is derived from God and, in such a way cannot be expressed through the mechanisms of reasoning. In repeating the word "understanding" through its negation, Teresa imposes the overburdening of the intellect upon the reader. Thus, this passage is paradoxical because as the reader fails to understand what Teresa is unable to explain, she is able to make them understand that the sublime experience functions

outside of the human mind's faculties. Instead, as Bernard McGinn asserts, the "immediate consciousness of the presence of God"[20] cannot be accessed through the mind, nor through the senses, but through the soul's connection with God. The soul is necessary as a mode of experience because the mind cannot understand something which is not meant to be understood, but instead felt within oneself.

Intellectual collapse leaves the reader confronted with divine forms, such as love, in their purest form. Indeed, although Immanuel Kant's interpretation of the sublime entails "ideas of reason: namely, the ideas of absolute totality or absolute freedom,"[21] Teresa goes against this vision of the sublime by stripping away the need for reason. By removing reason from her contact with the divine, concepts such as totality and freedom are no longer experienced as mere "ideas" originating from the mind but are instead experienced in their purest and most absolute form, as descending from God Himself. Teresa pushes beyond the limitations of Kantian sublimity, which confines this concept within mathematical or dynamical interpretations of aesthetics.[22] She opens the door to its spiritual interpretation, where God and all things that derive from it are sublime and the soul is the medium through which sublimity can be observed. Although Teresa uses the same vocabulary of the sublime as Kant by describing the divine as overwhelming and grandiose, she attributes her ability to perceive sublime things not to the intellect, but to the soul.

Teresa states, "as for heavenly or sublime things, my intellect was so coarse that it could never, never imagine them until the Lord in another way showed them to me."[23] In this context, God is "showing" Teresa these sublime things in a way that does not involve visualization nor reasoning, as divine things are neither material nor quantifiable. , Teresa emphasizes that God confronts her with divinity through "another way" in order to introduce the soul as a mode of experience. Teresa gives the soul agency as "it sees that it weeps for so great a Lord."[24] The functions that both the senses and the mind are unable to perform when faced with divinity are instead delegated to the soul and, because it has the ability to perceive God, it both "sees" and "weeps" for his greatness. Consequently, Teresa's conceptualization of sublimity involves a process through which the mind and its functions to reason are abandoned and replaced with the soul as the sole agent with the capacity to actively pursue and interact with divine truth.

The sublime crescendo in Teresa's quest to unite herself with the divine occurs as she experiences rapture. Rapture is a heightened state in which the soul elevates in its union with God

until it reaches a state of "ecstasy."[25] Mystical rapture is described by scholars as a state in which "the idea of being physically overpowered by the divine presence"[26] is prevalent.

Although, it can be conceded that Teresa's description of rapture does hint at a physical reaction when confronted with the divine, Teresa reimagines the concept of physicality itself. In fact, it is not the body that is moved, but the soul. The soul vacillates from one extreme to the other where, on one hand, it "is left with such freedom and dominion over all things that it doesn't know itself,"[27] and on the other, it "no longer wants to desire, nor would it want to have free will."[28] Thus, it cannot be argued that Teresa's soul experiences lucidity about its own condition when faced with divinity because she fails to understand whether, in this instant of rapture, her soul is freed or renounces free will.

Teresa's state is one exaltation which can be described in the following way,

> I would confidently pronounce that nothing is so conducive to
> sublimity as an appropriate display of genuine passion, which
> bursts out with a kind of 'fine madness' and divine inspiration, and
> falls on our ears like the voice of a god.[29]

In this passage, Longinus stresses that sublimity is derived from a sort of folly in the face of "divine inspiration" that calls to the reader as if a god were speaking directly in their ear. Teresa experiences this same madness during rapture because she describes God's forceful elevation of her soul as "most extraordinary."[30] As God's divine energy enacts upon her soul, she is enthralled by the experience and yet struggles to define it through language, as the experience is completely separate from all forms of human cognition. This madness of the mind is replaced by the passion of the soul. The sublime occurs as Teresa's soul heightens beyond her physical body's confines and comes face to face with God in a divine union.

Rapture, the ultimate sublime experience, amalgamates all three previously described concepts; naturalistic visions of the divine, loss of the senses, and failure of the intellect's comprehension. Indeed, when all of these conditions are applied at once, the divine brings the soul into a state of humility, which allows the mystic to realize their place within God's universe. Teresa claims that "a soul that reaches this state no longer speaks or does anything for itself."[31] This state of humility allows the mystic to realize that their existence and conception of the world around them is completely dependent on God. The soul is not self-reliant, it needs a stronger force to guide it and "speak" for it. Teresa's experience with rapture undermines the authority of the educated

Church, allowing her to have a direct connection with God. Therefore, sublimity arises from the direct connection between the mystic's soul and the divine.

The sublime vision and direct experience with the divine allows Christian mystics to shift from an impersonal and ritualistic relationship with God and enter into an intimate bond in which they are able to understand the strength and grandiosity of God for themselves. In this way, the emphasis is placed on the contemplative life which, through prayer and an ascetic lifestyle, allows the mystic to realize the importance of actualizing their personal union with God within the external world. Teresa's sublime language centers around a divinity which infuses itself within all aspects of the natural world, makes the senses and intellect decline in their ability to process, as well as allows the human soul to be confronted with and humbled by divine truths. The synthesis of the sublime's separate components triggers a climactic moment of rapture in which the purest and strongest experience with the divine is encapsulated. By describing the sublimity of God in this manner, Teresa is attempting to let the reader glimpse into the experiences which lead up to rapture which, although completely unexplainable, are in themselves highly pleasurable. In fact, it can be argued that her experience with mystical conversion is meant to convert the reader to follow in the same path. Thus, the sublime language attempts to convert the reader just as mysticism has converted Teresa, as both make appeals to divine nature, transcendence beyond human abilities, and the discovery of ultimate truths such as justice, and most importantly, love.

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[8] Hollywood and Beckman, 178.
[9] d'Avila, 132.
[10] King, 10.
[11] d'Avila, 132.
[12] Ibid, 109.
[13] Longinus, *On the Sublime*, 23.
[14] d'Avila, 109.
[15] Hollywood and Beckman, 123.
[16] Longinus, VII: 2-3.
[17] d'Avila, 110.
[18] Ibid, 132.
[19] Ibid, 111.
[20] Hollywood and Beckman, 119.
[21] Burnham, "Immanuel Kant: Aesthetics"
[22] Ibid.
[23] d'Avila, 50.
[24] Ibid, 54.
[25] Ibid, 120.
[26] Hollywood and Beckman, 119.
[27] d'Avila, 130.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Longinus, VIII:4.
[30] d'Avila, 122.
[31] Ibid, 130.

William S. Burroughs and Dream Logic in *The Naked Lunch*

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Abstract

This essay uses a psychological approach to thoughts, dreams, and art to investigate the contribution of dreams to William S. Burroughs' *The Naked Lunch*. To provide a theoretical background, it begins with a Chomskyan description of the human mind. Subsequently, it explores the notion that dreaming may be a form of artistic expression, and how dreams and art may also be related to madness. There is then a brief historical sketch of how dreams have been used for artistic inspiration, starting with the Bible and finishing with the Beat movement. Building on this background information, the rest of the essay focuses on William S. Burroughs and his creation of *The Naked Lunch*, which was heavily influenced by his dreams. The essay explores three ways in which *The Naked Lunch* is structured like a dream: the phenomenon of shifting, the narrative style of dreams, and the associative nature of dreams. Burroughs used these aspects of dreaming to create one of the most revolutionary books of the century. I propose that we can enrich our understanding of *The Naked Lunch* if we approach it as a form of dream, and if we place ourselves in the role of the dreamer.

Dreaming as a State of Composition

Concepts are the building blocks for human thoughts. We can combine multiple simple concepts to create a complex thought. According to Chomsky, we use the language system to do this[1]. The language system has two main parts: Universal Grammar and a parsing system. Universal Grammar takes concepts and links them together to create a logical structure. The product of this process is a mental proposition (a thought). The parsing system can then turn this thought into a linguistic utterance. For example, I can take the concept of "cat" and the concept of "stage" and connect them with the concept of "walking". Universal Grammar will hierarchically organize these constituents into a structure and produce a mental proposition. This proposition can then be transformed into a full sentence like "The cat walked across the stage." The proposition can also be transformed into a visual representation. As in: you can picture a cat walking across a stage in your mind. According to Almeida[2], both the sentence "a cat walked across the stage" and the image of a cat walking across a stage are formed from different kinds of enrichment of the

same proposition. These mental propositions are the basis of all thinking. We can produce an infinite number of mental propositions due to a property of Universal Grammar called recursion.[3] This is defined as the ability to combine a finite number of simplex units into an infinite number of complex ones. In other words, we have a finite number of concepts, yet we can create an infinite number of thoughts. Universal Grammar also allows us to produce an infinite number of uniquely complex dreams, which are the result of thoughts that occur during REM sleep.

According to the dream researcher Calvin Hall, dreams are the full "embodiment of a thought. They are the medium by which a psychological process, cognition, is transformed into a form that can be perceived".[4] Borges states that "Dreams are an aesthetic work, perhaps the earliest aesthetic expression".[5] These two theories complement one another as described by Foulkes in his magnificent book *A Grammar of Dreams*:

> the images of dreams perform [...] a function comparable to that served by words and gestures in wakefulness; they are elements of a language in which thoughts can be expressed. Dreaming is realized thinking, then, and its perceptual constituents can be made to reveal, as surely as the words of wakefulness, the content of the underlying thoughts seeking expression.[6]

In this way, we can understand dreams as a process parallel to other forms of expression. They begin as thoughts, they are transformed into a mental representation, and then they are externalized. Art is also created using this process; in the same way that a dream makes a thought tangible to our own senses, art attempts to make a thought tangible to somebody else's senses. This confirms Borges' proposition. Dreaming, then, is the earliest form of artistic expression to develop in childhood. From a very early age, without having to learn how, we produce a reality for ourselves more immersive than any film or videogame. Dreaming is a personal form of art that we all engage in every night.

As Tony James points out, people blessed with a creative mind often have vivid dreams. Unfortunately, these two qualities are also associated with fits of madness and hallucination.[7] Modern research in neuroscience has found that there is a similarity between the brain activation of dreams, and the brain activation present in a schizophrenic episode.[8] The theory is that the waking brain normally inhibits our mental representations so that they don't appear to us as sense data. But when this mechanism fails, our mental representations intrude into our processing of sense data. As in a dream, during a hallucination we end up perceiving things that began as thoughts. We mistakenly perceive them as information coming from our senses. This also explains

how long periods of sleep deprivation can cause hallucinations in healthy adults. In a way, it puts us into a waking dream. But where do we draw the line between vivid imagination and madness? How vivid does a mental representation have to be for us to perceive it with our senses? And how does our brain create a sense perception from a thought during a dream, or when awake? The investigation of these questions is still evolving, but it is clear that the relationship between dreams, creativity, and madness has a theoretical and scientific basis. This relationship has also been seen throughout history.

A Brief History of Dreams and Artistic Inspiration

According to Bulkeley, dreams have always played a significant role in artistic expression. He states that "Dreaming is a primal wellspring of creative inspiration. Powerful, reality-bending dreams have motivated the cultural creativity of people all over the world and throughout history".[9] They inspired the prophet Jeremiah in the Hebrew Bible, and even the philosopher Socrates. In Plato's Theaetetus, there is a scene where Socrates is translating Aesop's fables. When asked why he is doing this, he explains that;

> In the course of my life I have often had the same dream, appearing in different forms at different times, but always saying the same thing, 'Socrates, practice and cultivate the arts.' In the past I used to think that it was impelling me and exhorting me to do what I was actually doing; I mean that the dream, like a spectator encouraging a runner in a race, was urging me on to do what I was doing already, that is, practicing the arts, because philosophy is the greatest of the arts, and I was practicing it. But ever since my trial, while the festival of the god has been delaying my execution, I have felt that perhaps it might be this popular form of art that the dream intended me to practice, in which case I ought to practice it and not disobey.[10]

But dreams do more than impel us forwards and act as a guide for waking action. They can also provide us with creative ideas. Modern research has found that creative problem solving is enhanced when asleep.[11] Unfortunately, dreams have not always been respected as a form of thought. Kelly James states that after the enlightenment, dreams were perceived as a "lower" form of thinking.[12] It is only in the 19th century with the rise of the Romantics that artists and writers began to admit to the influence that dreams had on their artistic productions.[13] Poets from this era like Coleridge and Edgar Allan Poe utilize dreams both as a literary device and a source of inspiration.[14] James explains that around this time, psychology had also taken an interest in dreams. Dream journaling became a legitimate point of scientific investigation, and many writers began to

admit that dreams were their primary source of inspiration. For instance, writers like H.P. Lovecraft ascribe almost all their ideas to their dreams.[15] In the early 20th century, with the rise of the surrealist movement, dreams became the primary source of inspiration for many visual artists and poets. Philippe Soupault, Andre Breton, and Robert Desnos published *Champs Magnetic*, which experimented with automatic writing and dreams.[16] The popularity and legitimacy of dreams as a direct source of artistic inspiration reached its zenith during the Beat movement of the 1950s-60s.[17]

Kerouac published his *Book of Dreams* in 1961. This was a collection of dreams written in his spontaneous prose style and edited as little as possible. He describes the process: "the subconscious mind (the manas working through from the alaya vijana) does not make any mental discriminations of good or bad, thisa or thata, it just deals with the realities, What is".[18] He was not the only Beat to take his dreams seriously as a form of artistic expression. He writes that "Other dream-record keepers include all the poets I know".[19] The Beats explored new ways of thinking and tried to approach reality from as many avenues as possible. Whether by understanding other cultures, ingesting psychotropic drugs, or driving one's self to madness, the Beats wanted to explore every facet of being. It is no wonder, then, that they had such a fascination with dreams. It is a natural, but completely different way of experiencing reality. William S. Burroughs was particularly vocal about the influence that dreams had on his creative process. In an interview, he said that about fifty percent of his characters, sets, and situations came to him during sleep.[20] In his published dream journal, entitled *My Education: A Book of Dreams,* he worries that dreams are being oversimplified and underappreciated; "They are cutting off our dreams -- Dreams don't mean much, they say, and proceed to make it so. Night after night with no dreams I can remember. Anatole Broyard said; 'Shall WE continue to inspire books like *The Place of Dead Roads?'* I can feel the Wiper wipe away the dream's traces…".[21] He even associates a lack of dreams directly to writers block "Then it hits you [...] *Writers Block.* [...] then it slugs you in the guts. For a whole year I couldn't remember my dreams".[22] Considering that dreams are an instrumental part of his creative process, his revolutionary books may be better understood by considering the principles of dream analysis.

BURROUGHS AND DREAMS

The Phenomenon of Shifting

In Burroughs' ground-breaking novel *The Naked Lunch*, scenes are often presented in a non-linear, unexpected sequence. A passage will end abruptly, and a new one will begin, sometimes within a single paragraph. Take the following passage:

> Finally he is caught in the act of digesting the Narcotics Commissioner and destroyed with a flame thrower- The court of inquiry ruling that such means were justified in that the buyer had lost his human citizenship and was, in consequence, a creature without species and a menace to the narcotics industry on all levels. [paragraph break] In Mexico, the gimmick is to find a local junky with a government script whereby they are allowed a certain quantity every month. Our man was old Ike who had spent most of his life in the states.[23]

Right as the first story ends, another begins. New characters are introduced, and a completely new scene commences. However, this is not an arbitrary shift. The first scene involves an undercover cop who buys drugs from drug dealers. The following scene involves delinquents who buy drugs from pharmacies. They are related by the theme of drug buying. They are also the inverse of one another. In the first scene, the buyer is the powers that be, and the seller is the person skirting the law. In the second scene, the seller is the powers that be, and the buyer is the person skirting the law. Although these scenes do not appear to transition into one another narratively, they follow thematically, and the role of the characters has been inverted. By placing thematically related passages side by side, Burroughs contrasts the same theme in different contexts.

Dreams shift context in a similar way to how scenes change in *The Naked Lunch*. We may be experiencing one thing in a dream, and then moments later we will be experiencing something completely different. In *My Education*, Burroughs calls this phenomenon 'shifting': "How are shifts made in a dream? How does one get, say, from one room to another? By shifting the context, you are in. I am in a room at Price Road, looking out the east window. Now I am looking at a wall without windows. I am in a studio room".[24] Later he brings the topic back up "Dream shifts are not at all like a film with fade-outs and all that jazz. More of a shift of viewpoint".[25] When dreaming, we are no longer grounded to a physical and linear progression of events. When we walk forwards in the real world, we need to travel through space to get where we are going. Therefore, "here" and "there" are related through distance and time. But in a dream, the idea of "here", and "there" can be associated directly, because it is based on a thought, not physical reality. Think of the sentence "I was there, and now I am here" There is no syntactic position for the state

of traveling. There is only the state of being here and being there. If this is the mental proposition that your mind is attempting to enact as a dream, then you would appear to teleport, or "shift" your context. Therefore, we can transport ourselves from place to place in a surreal manner during a dream. Our dreaming environment is not grounded by the physical principles of reality, but rather the relational principles of thought. They simply follow a different logic than waking thoughts. However, these shifts are not necessarily arbitrary.

Adam Kuper is a dream analyst who explores the relationship between different dream sequences occurring during a single night. He believes that when dreams shift, the two contexts are usually thematically connected. To prove this, he conducts dream analyses using Levi-Strauss' structural analysis of myth.[26] To understand the structure of a dream, we must peel away the extraneous semantic content, and try to find the underlying structure. He has an example of this process in his paper entitled *The Structure of Dream Sequences.* He writes about a patient with an upstairs neighbor that he doesn't like. The patient has the following dream: "In the first scene, the dreamer is clearing snow from his porch, […] In the second scene an airplane is scraping the bottom of clouds".[27] These connected dreams have the same underlying action. In both cases, something is removing pieces of a large white mass. According to Kuper "The transformation is obvious: clearing something unwanted from the top of the floor […] becomes scraping an unwanted person on the bottom of a cloud".[28] So, the theme is the same, but the position of the objects is flipped; in the first scene he is looking down at the floor, and in the second he is looking up at the clouds. The components of similar dream sequences are often flipped like this.[i] By changing the components of a scene, we can further understand the underlying structure and what it might represent. Similarly, when reading *The Naked Lunch,* it is important to consider why passages are placed next to one another. The transitions are not completely arbitrary, like that of the two drug buying scenes mentioned previously. Burroughs explores recurring themes by swapping the roles of characters and playing with power structures. The way he organizes passages helps to compliment that process.

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[i] For a clearer example of thematic continuity and semantic reversal after a shift, see Appendix 1 from my dream journal.

Lengthy and Absurd Dream Narratives

Rather than explore a single theme in different contexts, sometimes a dream can include several themes occurring in the same context. This is often experienced as a strange series of events occurring to the dreamer in quick succession. This common narrative structure is wonderfully demonstrated in the two following Bob Dylan songs. Both were inspired by dreams;

Talkin' World War III Blues (1963)

One time ago a crazy dream came to me
I dreamt I was walkin' into World War Three [...]
I was down in the sewer with some little lover
When I peeked out from a manhole cover
Wondering who turned the lights on us
Well, I got up and walked around
And up and down the lonesome town
I stood a-wondering which way to go
I lit a cigarette on a parking meter
And walked on down the road
It was a normal day
Well, I rung the fallout shelter bell
And I leaned my head and I gave a yell
Give me a string bean, I'm a hungry man
A shotgun fired and away I ran
I don't blame them too much though
They didn't know me

Bob Dylan's 115th dream (1965)

I think I'll call it america. I said as we hit land.
I took a deep breath. I fell down, I could not stand.
Captain arab he starting writing out some deeds
He said let's build us a fort and start buying the place with beads.
Just then a cop come down the street crazy as a loon
They throws us all in jail for carryin' harpoons.
Aw, me, I busted out don't even ask me how,
I went lookin' for some help, I walked past a guernsey cow
Who directed me down to the bowery slums
Where people carried signs around sayin' ban the bums.
I jumped right in line, sayin' I hope that I'm not late

When I realized I hadn't eaten for five days straight.

Aside from being my favorite songs by Dylan (along with "*Bob Dylan's Dream*"), they also demonstrate the narrative flow particular to dreams; a series of unpredictable events occurring to the dreamer with no seeming rhyme or reason. Before the dreamer has the time to react to the first occurrence, something else has just begun with each thing being stranger than the next. The dreamer is quite literally bombarded with events. This can create some rather long and convoluted, but highly entertaining, dreams.[ii] Many of the events in these kinds of dreams seem completely absurd and unrelated upon waking. However, when we are in the dream itself, according to Kahn and Grover:

> the dreamer is uncritical of illogical events and behaviors that are happening in the dream. In dreaming consciousness, therefore, implausible events often go unrecognized by the dreamer during the dream, and remain so until the dreamer awakens [...] Sometimes the reality is questioned because of its bizarreness, but the dreamer may concoct an equally bizarre explanation for rationalizing it away, thus remaining in the dream.[29]

Research indicates that we are far more accepting of the absurd during a dream, and it is only upon waking reflection that we become truly confused.[30] Therefore, the seeming absurdity of dream sequences is due to the way we think about them when we are awake.

For psychologists like Freud, this feeling of confusion is what we must overcome through dream analysis. Foulkes states that the point of dream analysis is to help the dreamer "such that the dream no longer seems puzzling, or 'out of place', when viewed from a perspective of waking life".[31] In other words, if you understand the meaning behind a dream, it no longer seems absurd. When we interpret a dream as absurd, we are alienating ourselves from it, and designating it as 'other'. Foulkes recognizes that "Freud's great contribution [...] is that he saw that not only that the dream needs to be bent toward the waking model of mind, but also that the ordinary waking model of mind needs to be bent toward the dream".[32] If we look at a dream through the lens of waking reality, we are sure to find it absurd. According to Kahn and Gover:

> Consciousness when awake proceeds within a known world. We predict what is going to happen next and develop over time a model of the world from sensory input and learned experience. We know what to expect. In fact, we become so certain of our predictions that if the unexpected happens we may not even notice it.[33]

[ii] For another example of this, see appendix 2 from my dream journal.

To grasp the meaning of a dream, we cannot try to interpret it through this framework. Freud believed that we need to place ourselves in a state of free-association to understand a dream. Foulkes explains:

> Free association is a state in which we let our thoughts wander where they seem to want to, rather than attempting to retain logical, conscious control. In free association, we are to try to stay those inner voices which seem to say 'no, that's not nice,' 'no, that's crazy' or, 'no, that's not relevant.' Attention must be paid to *all* the thoughts which flash across conscious awareness.[34]

By doing this, we can be more closely connected to our subconscious, which Freud believed guided dreams. Therefore, the absurdity we ascribe to the many occurrences in dreams stands in the way of true understanding. To figure out what a dream means, we should approach it in a state that resembles that of dreaming; a state of free association.

When reading *The Naked Lunch* it is easy to become overwhelmed by the bombardment of insane happenings. Just as in a dream, the reader is confronted with an onslaught of occurrences, each more bizarre than the last. And although they maintain the same context, it is difficult to understand how one event leads into the next. Take the following passage for example:

> I had a Yage hangover, me, and in no condition to take any of Browbeck's shit. First thing he comes on with I should start the incision from the back instead of the front, muttering some garbled nonsense about being sure to cut out the gall bladder it would fuck up the meat. Thought he was on the farm cleaning a chicken. I told him to go put his head back in the oven, whereupon he had the effrontery to push my hand severing the patient's femoral artery. Blood spurted up and blinded the anesthetist, who ran out through the halls screaming. Browbeck tried to knee me in the groin, and I managed to hamstring him with my scalpel. He crawled about the floor stabbing at my feet and legs. Violet, that's my baboon assistant -- only woman I ever cared a damn about -- really wigged. I climbed up on the table and poise myself to jump on Browbeck with both feet and stomp him when the cops rushed in.[35]

When we are trying to decipher such a passage, it may be helpful to approach it in the same way Freud got his patients to approach their dreams; by placing ourselves in a state of free association. We should try to remove our judgements about what is not nice, crazy, or irrelevant. We should open our minds to the idea that there is a reason why one event follows another, and not become hung up on the seeming absurdity of it all. Instead, we should be open to forming new associations between things we had never pictured together. This way, we can construct meaning from these passages. Although we may never peer into Burroughs' mind to see what he meant with each line,

we may create our own meaning by approaching his work without presumptions, in an open, free-associative state.

The Associative Nature of Dreams

The 19th-century dream analyst Hervey de Saint Denys was one of the first psychologists to qualify how dreams differ from our waking reality. He noticed a recurring phenomenon in his dream journals: he often transported qualities of one subject onto another.[36] He called this phenomenon "abstraction". In a dream, qualities can be transported from one person to another, or from one object to another. For example: "A dreamer may be struck by the scrawny nature of a horse dragging some ramshackle cart in a dream, and if the cart makes him think of some farmer who has a similar one, he may transpose the abstract idea of thinness and wasting away onto this farmer, who turns up in the middle of the dream".[37] This phenomenon can cause unique associations between objects and compliments that would not usually be considered.[iii] Take the following examples from *The Naked Lunch*; "eyes like burning pus"[38] "benways face [...] flickers like a picture moving in and out of focus"[39] "paralyzed crustations in camouflaged pockets".[40] These passages reflect the integration of dream logic into his method. Like in a dream, he does not refrain from making strange object-complement associations, and the result is an incredibly unique use of language. But Burroughs does not just do this for the sake of style. By seeing a word used in a new way, a reader can broaden his definition of the word to include that use. Through this process, one can actually change the meaning of a word. According to Wittgenstein, the meaning of a word is based on how it is used.[41] Therefore, Burroughs uses strange combinations of words, a feature of dreams, to challenge our rigid definitions of words.

As opposed to expanding the definition of a word through its use in a sentence, Burroughs dedicates entire passages to odd object-complement relations. Take this passage from *The Naked Lunch*: "'Selling is more habit forming than using' Lupita says. Non-using pushers have a contact habit, and that's one you can't kick. [...] Take bradley the buyer. [...] anyone would make him for junk".[42] In his dream journal, there is a similar and equally hilarious passage:

> here is Daisy, a habit-forming deodorant that is injected in the vein. When you got Daisy, you smell like fresh cut grass, flowers, ozone, sea spray... everything *clean*. And boy, when your Daisy runs out, how you stink. And it takes more and more Daisy just to keep your smell on an even keel [43]

[iii] For an example of this, see Appendix 3 from my dream journal

In these passages, he is overapplying the feature of addictiveness to things we would not normally see as addictive. At first it may not appear that undercover drug buying or deodorant are addictive, but in a very broad way, they are. Take deodorant for example. Recent research has actually found that antiperspirant products cause a rebound effect, making you sweat more when it wears off.[44] Furthermore, prior to the advent of things like antiperspirant and deodorant, people did not particularly notice body odor (except for extreme cases). Our sense of smell is very adaptive, so we have adapted to the smell of people's body odor and went about our lives without noticing it. Therefore, deodorant creates a need where there once was none; you need to smell nice, because everybody else smells nice. In that way it is like drug addiction. Drug addiction, like deodorant, causes a need that wasn't there before; the need for drugs. Similarly, making drugs illegal creates a need that wasn't there before: the need for undercover drug buyers. Therefore, drugs, deodorant, and the illegality of drugs all create a need where there once was none, and then attempt to quell that need. By applying the concept of addiction in this way, Burroughs is able to expand our rigid definition of addiction, broadening it to any human activity wherein a need is created where there once was none.

If we place ourselves in a state of free association, we may be better able to create the connections required to change our word/concept meanings as Burroughs desires. Modern research has found that when we are in a semi-sleeping state, we are more likely to associate unrelated words and concepts.[45] This experiment provides evidence for an interesting theory of dreaming. The theory states that we are trying to integrate new information into our existing networks of old information during dreams.[46] Our store of concepts has a complex web of connections. For example, 'cat' is connected to 'furry', 'paws', and 'cute', which are concepts that compose our definition of cat, and are concepts on their own. However, 'cat' is not usually connected to concepts like 'tractor'. But let's say that during the day, you saw your neighbor's cat sitting on a tractor. Your mind might want to integrate that information into what you know about cats. It isn't as simple as connecting 'cat' to 'tractor' because concepts are composed of other concepts. Therefore, you also need to connect the component concepts of 'cat' to the component concepts of 'tractor'. So, during sleep, you might try to integrate the newfound connection between 'cats' and 'tractors' by connecting related concepts like 'paw' (related to cats) and 'farmer' (related to tractor). This might result in a very strange dream about farmers with paws. To reiterate, in a

dream, we are trying out different connections between concepts. This would help explain why our mind is more open to creating new connections and strengthening weak ones when we are dreaming. If we are trying to make new connections during sleep, then it would make sense to have an increased ability to link concepts during sleep. This theory also helps explain why we have such strange combinations in dreams. The theory also helps explain the association between dreams, art and creativity. People blessed with vivid dreams may be better able to consciously retain the unique and creative connections created during dreams, and then use those creative combinations in their art. This is exactly what Burroughs does in *The Naked Lunch*. Therefore, to better understand Burroughs' work, we should start with a better understanding of dreams.

Conclusion

Because of its revolutionary and unexpected structure and style, it is difficult to ascribe specific meaning to passages from *The Naked Lunch*. Readers must make their own meaning from such a book. My studies in psychology on the linkages between thoughts, and the function of dreams provided me with helpful context with which to understand the structure of this fascinating novel. For this reason, my goal for this essay was to provide a sufficient understanding of dreams to understand how they are used in *The Naked Lunch*. I have endeavored to demonstrate that some of the oddities of *The Naked Lunch* are the same oddities that occur during a dream. Therefore, the text is not as outlandish as one may first think. To make meaning while reading, readers can put themselves in a state similar to dreaming, like free association. In such a state, we are more accepting of scene shifts, we do not recoil from the absurd, and we are open to the creation of new connections between concepts. Therefore, we are in a better position to appreciate the book, and perhaps learn something from it. It was not, however, my intention to interpret all of *The Naked Lunch* as being a dream. This would undoubtedly oversimplify this complex piece of literature. I am simply advancing the notion that dream logic is used to structure certain parts of *The Naked Lunch*, and that understanding that structure, and adapting to it, can help guide interpretation.

The other major component of *The Naked Lunch* is routines, which I have refrained from mentioning until now. They are an essential structural component of the book, along with dreams. Much in the way that routines are placed in the context of semi-autobiographical fiction in *Queer*, his routines are placed in the context of dreams in *The Naked Lunch*. *Queer* proceeds in a classical narrative framework based on the principles of the waking world, whereas *The Naked Lunch*

proceeds in a disjointed narrative framework based on the principles of dream reality. Interestingly, *My Education: A Book of Dreams* is a combination of autobiography, fiction, and dream. It is organized into distinct paragraphs, with no way of knowing whether a paragraph contains autobiography, fiction, or dream. I think this indicates that Burroughs is trying to frame dreams, reality, and creative output as equivalent experiences. Perhaps the distinctions we make between them are more arbitrary than we think. And perhaps we should approach all forms of reality as we approach dreams. In an open, non-judgmental state of free association.

Appendix 1

I dreamed I was wearing brand new turquoise pants. I was also wearing a blue shirt, a turquoise V-neck sweater and a horribly bright blue jacket over top. The combination of colors was absolutely atrocious. I was walking down the sidewalk, looking down at my feet. As a stranger passed by, I saw myself from their eyes. I was desperately trying to convince myself that I was pulling it off, but there was no way. It just looked terrible. /shift/ I just met this wonderful girl with short black hair. She was an amalgamation of all my favorite parts of my current friends. I was enamored with her, in a completely platonic way. I am sitting on a mattress on the floor in a red colored room. The walls were badly plastered. The moldings were overpainted. She is sitting in an office chair facing me. We were talking in that smooth, movie-like way. Where there were no pauses, and every word seemed to seamlessly feed into the next. We knew exactly how to complement each other in conversation. I pulled out my phone and looked down. On my screen I saw a picture of myself. I am posing like a model on a desk chair. I have one leg propped up against my chest, and the other is jutting out, exposing a freshly shaven luscious leg. My hand is up against my face and I am pulling my lip down slightly with one finger. I look fierce. I am wearing a one-piece jet-black women's bathing suit, and I look dazzling in it. I have a thin black shawl

stylistically draped over the top of my shoulders. My hair is done up perfectly. I just can't believe my eyes; I make such a gorgeous woman! I realize that I have sent this picture to the girl I had been with prior (she vanished when I started concentrating on the photo). I get a text back from her saying that I look beautiful. She is enthusiastic and supportive. I can't believe I pulled it off. I feel like I exposed fresh skin on my buttocks waiting for a spank, but instead I received the gentle stroke of a loving hand.

This dream demonstrates thematic continuity and semantic reversal. It is far from my most interesting dream, but it illustrates my point perfectly. In the first scene I am all covered up and embarrassed about the way I look. The person I am with is a stranger, and I am in public. In the subsequent dream I am completely exposed, and proud of the way that I look. I am in the company of a close friend, and I am in a private setting. The dream maintains the same structure, but all the components are inverted.

Appendix 2

I dreamed I was playing a zombie killing video game, but I was experiencing the game as my reality. I was in a large room where monsters kept appearing with all sorts of deformities. It was a rectangular courtyard, in building from the 1920s; red brick with green painted wood, and large windows made up of many small rectangular panes of glass. The place was crawling with horrible things and was like a maze. I kept wandering down alleys and hallways, destroying beasts as I went, and running from them in absolute fear when I couldn't defeat them. In the courtyard I confronted the final boss, a terribly large zombified werewolf. I was not good enough at the game and I died. I popped out of the videogame and back into reality. I was in a house that resembled my childhood friend's dingy yet large wooden bungalow. The group of kids around me were disappointed that I had come so close to beating the boss, yet I lost anyways. Others began trying

to play the game and got past where I had died rather easily. My little brother was among the crowd. Although he looked like one of my brothers in particular (oldest), he acted like all of them. I was saying how I wanted to buy the last generation video-game system. I began thinking of how I could get one for a good deal now because there was a new one that everybody wanted. My brother said I should just get a graphics card for my computer. I was irritated with this and felt like he was trying to sculpt me into an image of himself. I was offended and needed to think over what I was going to do. I needed time alone. So, I left the house and wandered out into the city. It was a dark and gloomy city. Somehow it looked like Guadalajara, Atlantis and Rome. I wanted to go out on the town, but I didn't know where to go. They didn't use money, and I didn't know how to barter properly. I had found and made a group of friends, although only one of them seemed to like me. The others made fun of me. I approached them many times, and they would all laugh whenever I arrived. However, to prove that I was cool, the one who liked me would put a tall thin blue glass bottle against a wall, upon which I would stand and reach upwards. The others found this impressive and accepted me into their group. I began doing this act in a large colosseum. It had sandy coloured walls, and gigantic bleachers filled with people. For my performance I would just place the bottle against the wall, stand on top of it, and reach up to those who were seated closest to the edge. Some would reach back towards me and I talked to them faintly. The crowd seemed to roar with excitement, but the individual people I saw seemed unimpressed. Still, I thought I was making friends this way. I was meeting so many people as I made my way around the coliseum wall. However, by the time I got to the end of the performance, I was still lonely. I had met nobody who really understood me or stuck by me. I went out of the colosseum and the city looked far more like Rome than it had before. I went to a Parisian bar and met up with some friends of mine. The friends were beat-like characters who I was trying to get to dig me. I kept

dancing around and singing, trying my very best to act like I was into what I was doing. I had a strange performative walk, which I showed them in the snowy streets of Paris (whereas just previously it had been summer in Rome). I walked with these long lunging steps, reaching as far forward as I could while hovering low to the ground. With each step I stuffed my foot in a pile of snow and moved my body like a chicken's head. I sang as well, trying to make up songs about what I saw as we walked down the city streets at night. They followed behind me giggling. One person in the group (all of whom resembled a combination of my ideas of Kerouac and Burroughs) seemed to find me charming, and "dug" me, but the rest found me kind of silly. As we walked, I decided that I wanted to be a musician, and that I didn't need to impress friends, I knew I could sing. So, I went to a jazz bar, no longer walking funny, but rather dancing, twirling all the way there. I showed up to the bar and slid in with a suave air. I was at a round table in the club, where the room's walls seemed endless and black. The figures around the table were smoking and waiting for me to perform. I was out of key, and I could feel their eyes beaming into me. I decided I had to leave. I wandered through the night into a forest. I was far more comfortable there. There were friends and the sweet feeling of wind blowing on one's face. It was like a great hand removing the feeling of over caffeination.

<u>Appendix 3</u>

I dreamed of an ad for a product that would responge your gut. They had diagrams showing that your intestines were in fact made of a pink spongy material, through and through. They had a moving diagram demonstrating that when you get the runs, it's because your gut sponge is crumbling. Pieces of it then start falling out, and it can no longer hold your feces in place. This results in it bits of gut sponge and poop all coming out too quickly. They had a pretty young blonde nurse with a wooden pointer in front of the diagram. She pointed at the crumbling pink spongy

material in the intestinal diagram and gave a knowing smile. The tag-line for the product was "rebuild you gut sponge today".

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[25] Burroughs, 1996, 118.
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[31] Foulkes, 1979, 34.
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[35] Burroughs, 1959, 27.
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[42] Burroughs, 1959, 14.
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FICTION IS NON-FICTION: "TLÖN, UQBAR, ORBIS TETRIUS"

On Ways in Which Fiction is Non-Fiction: Jorge Luis Borges' "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius"

Bryan Lee

I owe the discovery of Uqbar to the conjunction of a mirror and an encyclopedia - J.L.B.[1]

This first sentence of Borges's short story "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is untransparent: a single reading may persuade readers that it is a work about the dangers of idealism, and many may find the writing to be humorous, erudite, and journalistic solely for the sake of it being so. Under this guise, it is difficult to see the significance of the use of "mirror" and "encyclopedia": the off-handed mention of Borges[i] and Ashe's[ii] interest in the duodecimal system, alongside Bioy Casares' casual familiarity with a fictional encyclopedia[iii], can be brushed off as literary devices used to accentuate the highly personal-yet-factual register of the story. A closer reading, however, would reveal the first sentence to be a pleonasm. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" comments on the ability of representation to decipher the world. As the narrator confesses: "[Casares and I] discovered, with the inevitability of discoveries made late at night, that mirrors have something grotesque about them".[2] The text, read through this light, becomes an indictment on human theories and models of reality. The essayistic style, then, is a "flaunting of artifice" that brings attention to its status as fiction masqued as non-fiction. This description also applies to encyclopedias themselves, as "[t]he mere act of giving [things] a name, that is of classifying it, implies a falsification of it".[3] Mirrors, encyclopedias, and, by extension, any act of modelling reality are "grotesque" in the same way: they provide us with an account of reality through their respective bent, all the while failing to provide an account of reality itself. Thus, the duodecimal system represents and reformulates reality as opposed to simply corresponding to it, the encyclopedia commits violence to real entities by turning the actual entities of the world into concepts about the world - these accounts provide a mirrored reality, and present us a mediated reality. David Peat, as he is quoted by Dapía, eloquently writes: "'However realistic a painting may be, it falls indefinitely short [of] being an actual pipe. And ironically, the word pipe in the title is not an actual pipe either. Perhaps, in the spirit of

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[i] In this case the narrator, not the author, of the short story.

[ii] An engineer that suffers from "unreality, as do so many Englishmen", that Borges's character meets. The two share a discussion on converting a duodecimal table to a sexagesimal system.

[iii] "Fictional" both in the sense that it is not a real encyclopedia in our reality, nor is it "real" in the reality of the short story.

Magritte, every theory of the universe should have in it the fundamental statement 'This is not a universe'".[4] The object of this paper is to illustrate how "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" in many ways de-banalizes fiction in respect to its hold onto the 'real' universe, and in turn paints the non-fictive real as more constructed than one would typically intuit. I will unpack the short story with the use of a brand of possible world semantics and fictional theories arising from the analytic tradition. I submit that fictive possible worlds and the actual world operate through homologous ways, and that said homology implies strong limitations to our ability to have access to these so-called "real" entities. It goes without saying that this paper will conduct a reading of Borges' short story more as a work of philosophical fiction than anything else.

Possible Worlds and Fiction

Eleonora Orlando, in her article "Depicting Borgesian Possible Worlds" writes that

Philosophers, as is known, have invented possible worlds to account for the meaning of some sentences whose truth (or falsity) does not depend - or, at least, does not exclusively depend - on what happens in the real and effective world.[5]

In a theory of fiction, possible world semantics become key in keeping with prior theories of meaning. Fixated on the tethers between language and the actual world, the addition of possible worlds allows for the consistent usage of a denotative understanding of word-meanings. Fictional statements, such as "Herbert Ashe died of an aneurysmal rupture"[6], cannot be verified in the actual world, nor can we find the detailed state of affairs in the world as it is. These fictional statements refer to a possible world that bears some relation to the "real" all the while not being actual (or existing). Readers trivially accept that fictional names do not denote anything in reality, and so, possible world semantics become a natural development from the old-style segregationist view on fiction: when we read, we intern inside a mode in which fictional entities are ontologically available, and yet not existent in the real. Previous external perspectives would simply deny any ontological existence for fictional worlds: Thomas Pavel, in his seminal *Fictional Beings*, describes Gilbert Ryle's satisfaction that, "since fictional names have no denotata and fictional statements containing them lack truth-value, 'nothing is left as a metaphysical residue to be housed in an ontological no-man's-land".[7] But a theory of fiction must operate internally to the "opting in" of the reader. Pavel demonstrates that such a theory of fiction not only gives existence to fictional entities, it also implies a blurred resemblance between fictional worlds and the real world.

The attraction of Pavel's analysis is that works of fiction are not isolated oeuvres that must be analysed inertly, nor are they innately "spurious" works of empty signifiers.Whatever observations Pavel makes exist both as a description of literary worlds and as active notions within a general theory of language. The same way in which counterfactuals such as the statement "If only I were the son of Rothschild" are subject to casual significance, what counts as our understanding of possible worlds (the world where "I" was born a Rothschild) and fictional worlds (ranging from high science fiction to the speculative-realism of Borges) must be consistent with each other.[iv][8] Though highly unintuitive, for counterfactual statements are made in ordinary living as opposed to statements in fiction, Borges' "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is transparent enough to lay out the precise ways in which fictional worlds actually interact with how we see the "real world". "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is a work of fiction that brings attention to its own fictiveness. Whereas typical works of fiction disguise their fictive qualities by transporting the "well-individuated human being"[9] into the fictional universe that stands adjacent to the real, what "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" demonstrates with a series of fictional universes is the ways in which fictionality interacts with the worlds that they are based on.

To illustrate this point, note the difference between fictional statements and genuine assertions within works of fiction: though most sentences in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina refer only to fictional states of affairs (e.g. "Anna Karenina was at the Saint Petersburg Station."), some can perform as genuine non-fictional assertions (e.g. "Happy families are all happy in the same way, unhappy families unhappy in their separate, various ways").[10] What we see in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is an interplay between different stratums of its own fictiveness posing as different degrees of fictive realities, each of them laying claim to a different degree of "real"-ness. John Stark, in his analysis of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" and Nabokov's "Pale Fire" lays it out best when he states,

> [Borges and Nabokov] make reality seem problematical by creating layers of it. [...] The outside layer of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is Borges. The story itself is the next layer and contains the border between reality and imagination, being real because it exists in print, imaginary because Borges created it. The first completely imaginary layer is the third, the secret society, but because real people like Berkeley were supposedly members of it. It almost seems real. This society

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[iv] This Rothschild counterfactual statement is pulled from Pavel, whereas the analysis is mine. However, it is not a highly original one and is likely a conventional reading in the field.

creates the next two layers, Uqbar, an imaginary land, and Tlön, another imaginary land that supposedly exists in Uqbar's literature.[11]

These layers perform as a series of external objects of reference for the inner embedded fiction. The mere movement between these boxes-within-boxes pushes one to understand "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" as making genuine assertive statements on the real world that the fiction is referring to. Likewise, each subsequent fictive layer makes genuine statements about a higher order fictional base, consequently demonstrating that statements on fictional worlds are able to, at the very least, perform genuine statements about a world (but perhaps not of our world). Passages, such as the following illustrate this dynamic clearly:

> Hume remarked once and for all that the arguments of Berkeley were not only thoroughly unanswerable but thoroughly unconvincing. This dictum is emphatically true as it applies to our world; but it falls down completely in Tlon. The nations of that planet are congenitally idealist. Their language, with its derivatives - religion, literature, and metaphysics - presupposes idealism.[12]

The first sentence happens in the fictional "real" world - a mimesis of ours - harkening back to the history of ideas as it occurred in our world. Likewise, this real world harkens back to ours by the inclusion of Berkeley, an actual person, in Orbis Tertius (and the prior mention of Bioy Casares). Orlando writes, commenting on the "Garden of Forking Paths", that "there seems to be a significant difference between the main story and the embedded novel. The former seems to determine a privileged world that makes its sentences true: the one in which the main action takes place".[13] This analysis is also appropriate for the universes in Tlön: it is therefore doubly intriguing that Tlön enters "the real"[v] at the very end. The third and fourth sentences are observations about the fictional "secondary universe" of a possible world adjacent to the primary universe. Understood through a naive view, the first sentence, along with the first clause of the second , are making genuine statements, whereas the rest fail to produce meaning. This view is fixated on the actuality of entities.

However, fictional statements have the tricky property of providing meaning irrespective of their ability to provide truth values: though stories with more distant universes (such as those of alien sci-fi worlds or of fantasy worlds) fail, for a huge portion of their content, to make any genuine statements, the work as a whole can nonetheless be meaningful due to everything around

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[v] "Real" which is, in this case, the world that resides outside the fictional Tlönian book-world but still within the scope of the story. The world that is a mimesis of our non-fictional world, which is interacting with the embedded Tlönian book-world.

the novel. It is a "common aesthetic intuition that takes for granted that things found in novels are in some way compatible with real life"[14], no matter how distant said world may be, what is around the novel is its existence as a book (an object) in the world. It becomes imperative to understand fiction, as the reader implicitly does, as part of the world, in the same way that non-fictional statements in many ways arrange the world. To illustrate this last point, consider the types of statements that we find in the works of autobiography: implicit is the statement "this is the world according to x", in which we all acknowledge that, although not categorized in the realm of fiction, said account of reality is a particular account of the world. Consequently, the line between autobiography and autobiographical fiction seems arbitrary: what separates an autobiography and a work in, let's say, Kerouac's "Duluoz Legend" becomes a matter of the reader's expectations for style, and the author's adherence to different editorial and narrative norms. Nevertheless, Kerouac's statement that his books show "the world of raging action and folly [...] seen through the keyhole of his eye"[15] applies to all phenomena of giving an account of something. An alternative understanding of the sentences on Tlön then is to liken it to counterfactuals: It is possible to foresee the development of ideas in a way that is described in Tlon and, if it were to be the case, it would bring about changes to religion, language, etc. (if the history of ideas had been dominated by idealism as opposed to empirical materialism, then it would have developed as such). What separates possible worlds then, from their prioritized actual counterparts are mere differences in "keyholes": possible worlds are not only the results of modifications in how the world actually is, they are also possible accounts of the real. In many ways, counterfactuals posit that the world could have been understood and conceptualized otherwise, and still remain coherent and intelligible.

Magna Operas, Constructivism, and Fiction

The final part of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" bookends this argument. Having just pulled fiction closer to non-fiction, the argument for likening reality to fiction will now be submitted.

> *Manuals, anthologies, summaries, literal versions, authorized reprints, and pirated editions of the Master Work of Man poured and continue to pour out into the world.* Almost immediately, reality gave ground on more than one point. The truth is that it hankered to give ground. Ten years ago, any symmetrical system whatsoever which gave the appearance of order - dialectical materialism, anti-Semitism, Nazism - was enough to fascinate men. Why not fall under the spell of Tlön and

> submit to the minute and vast evidence of an ordered planet? *Useless to reply that reality, too, is ordered. It may be so but in accordance with divine laws - I translate: inhuman laws- which we will never completely perceive. Tlön may be a labyrinth, but it is a labyrinth plotted by men, a labyrinth destined to be deciphered by men.*[16]

Alvin Plantinga understood worlds through means of books in which propositions entailed from corresponding states of affairs in the world are contained therein. "A book on a world X is a complete list of propositions true in that world." Pavel extends this theory to include "clusters of books".[17] "The true sentences about the entire universe" he says, "are collected in the set of books about each of its worlds. We may give this set the name of Magnum Opus on U, and reserve its First Book for the true sentences in the base or actual world of the universe".[18] This First Book would be the "real" universe that we give primacy to. Pavel abandons however, the one to one relation between a book and its world. Seizing the possibility of having many books describing one "real world", and many worlds being also described by those same books, Pavel rightly notes that "phenomena accounted for by various disciplines articulate only approximately with one another, each level of study enjoying a certain independence: the structure of the world appears thus to possess an irreducible plasticity, such that there is no privileged vantage point from which to direct the organization of knowledge definitively".[19] This further undermines the attempt to delineate any real distinction between genuine and fictional statements. Earlier, Pavel quotes Quine's statement that "reference is nonsense except relative to a coordinate system"[vi][20]. Translated into Pavel's new account of Magna Opera's, the coordinate system is a collection of books X, and the reference is the specific bent that X system formulates about the world. In "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" the constituent parts of the Orbis Tertius secret society mirrors the efforts of our real society. Much like in Hilary Putnam's "linguistic division of labor"[vii], where a speaker may refer to a word like "elm" with no extensive knowledge because of the expertise of an arborist elsewhere that socially "supports" the language that is shared, the "secret society of astronomers, biologists, engineers, metaphysicians, poets, chemists, mathematicians, moralists, painters and

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[vi] Willard V. O. Quine, known for putting into question the analytic-synthetic distinction, is a central figure of 20th century philosophy. Quine objected to traditional normative epistemology, and instead, understood epistemology as an investigation of the human subject *qua* physical object. Epistemology then is a partner to psychology, and is an investigation of our empirical faculties as the preeminent point of contact with the world. This type of thinking is typically accompanied by an input-output frame of thinking.

[vii] Hilary Putnam's contributions to the philosophy of language are what I am referring to. Most notably, his paper titled "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" (1975), where he details the beginning of what would be coined as *semantic externalism*, where meaning is contained not in the speaker, but in circumstances external to the speaker. He exclaims, "meaning just ain't in the head!"

geometricians"[21] all contribute to a separate cluster of "books" to describe the world. The encyclopedias becomes a Magna Opera that organizes the "real" in a possible configuration. Thus, although there is a "thing out there", whether that world possesses a natural logic is unknowable, and is at its core, strictly understood by an "opting in" to a possible world that closely resembles the affective qualities of existence . Dapía makes the connection between Mauthner's belief in the absence of a "true" system of classification and, encyclopedias and books that are at the heart of Borges' story:

> Mauthner's image of a world-cataloging encyclopedia is at the base of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." In Borges's story, humanity forgets once again that languages and systems do not reflect the true 'catalogue of the world' and that, instead, the catalogues of our languages and systems shape our understanding of the world.[22]

Likewise, the base universe in which "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" develops merely mirrors "reality" as opposed to being reality itself; in turn, the reality that the inclusion of Herbert Ashe, Bioy Casares and Berkeley attempts to emulate is likewise not reality but solely another process of "opting in" that the reader lives by. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is then one book within the collection of books that catalogues, defines, and thus constitutes our worldview (or keyhole). As Pavel writes, "like various theories each positing its own level of actuality, fiction employs a multiplicity of bases, of worlds 'actual'-in-the-system".[23] By "real" then, what we actually mean is the "'actual'-in-the-system".[viii] The "actual" then, is consistency within a neatly organized world.

The resemblance to Thomas Kuhn's idea of scientific paradigms come to mind. As he states:

> [...] The proponents of competing paradigms practice their trades in *different worlds*. One contains constrained bodies that fall slowly, the other pendulums that repeat their motions again and again. In one, solutions are compounds, in the other mixtures. One is embedded in a flat, the other in a curved, matrix of space. *Practicing in different worlds*, the two groups of scientists see different things when they look from the same point in the same direction. Again, that is not to say that they can see anything they please. Both are looking at the world, and what they look at has not changed. But in some areas they see different things, and they see them in different relations one to the other. That is why a law that cannot even be demonstrated to one group of scientists may occasionally seem intuitively obvious to another.[24]

[viii] This prompts a hermeneutic re-reading of earlier parts of the paper.

Competing paradigms - like different Magna Operas- can successfully explain the same world through different languages. Even in reality outside of fiction, people inhabit different worlds depending on the ordering and classification that they ascribe themselves into. And, much like the hrönir that Borges imagines, or the absence of nouns in Tlönian language that denotes an "out there", the Tlönian books are at the very least transparent on this one issue of representation: though the inhabitants of Tlön are convinced that there is no object but within them, they at the very least recognize the dangers of "noun-ing" entities.

Nevertheless, they still fall short of relying too much on representations of the mind. Hrönir, mental reproductions of things, are very much life Kuhn's description of normal science as something akin to pattern finding and puzzle solving. As "printed photographs of what was to be found were shown to the prisoners"[25], hröns would be found. Though the encyclopedia describes these as real material "reproductions", the actual nature of hrönirs are clearly not material (in the sense of how we might conceive of material objects). This is one of many "contradictions"[26] that Bioy Casares' dinner time talking alludes to: as it was demonstrated in the passage about the doctrine of materialism in Tlön, the language of Tlön can barely accommodate the notion of mind-independent objects. It follows that, the section on hröns actually details the paradigmatic forces of result seeking: it is not that actual entities are found, thus increasing the absolute amount of objects in the world, but rather, that predicting results is an impulse of a wider model of reality (much like a scientific model), and that said model will reorganize our perception into the objects that we seek. Confirmation bias is not unique to the idealist world of Tlön, but the point is to indicate that mental constructions are still susceptible to displacing reality for "simulations of different degrees".[27] The hrönirs exist insofar as they're perceived by the idealist prisoners. Kuhnian paradigms of normal science also produce hrönirs of our own: a picture of the world according to an Aristotelian view (hrönir) is shown to the scholastics, and so they constantly "discover" artefacts (hrön) congruent to the picture shown. Subsequent iterations of the model (additional epicycles, Oresme's theory of motion) create a more complete and perfect model. As Borges writes,

> the hrönir of the second and third degree - that is, the hrönir derived from another hrön, and the hrönir d erived from the hrön of a hrön - exaggerate the flaws of the original; those of the fifth degree are almost uniform; those of the ninth can be confused with those of the second; and those of the eleventh degree have a purity of form which the originals do not possess.[28]

An account of reality is made more crystalline and orderly than reality itself. In many ways, the object of Borges' story is to illustrate how our own models of reality can imprison us. Language becomes an attractive tool to reorder a world of "enigmatic abundance"[29], and its limits are difficult to recognize: we cognize a recognizable world solely on the basis of language, and so standing on the other side of language seems nigh impossible.

"Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is about the ways in which fiction is more real than real, and how reality is more fictional than one might think. Borges spoils the content of the story at the very beginning: "the horrible or banal reality behind the novel" (Borges 17) is an apt way of understanding the problem of representation. "Horrible", in the sense that our attempts at truth seem impossible, and that finding any sort of key to the world necessarily locks us in a conceptual paradigmatic prison - "banal", in the sense that all of this is the open secret of all scientific, metaphysical, and social truths, and that nothing new is being said. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is, in many ways, Fiction writing an autobiography of itself. Naturally, the world then must pass through the lense of fiction: an essay on realism and empiricism would have resulted in the opposite result (our very own Tlönian anti-book). As no collection of books can claim primacy over the description of the world, this essay and "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" are but another keyhole in which to decipher it. What remains, I believe (and it is a very banal fact), is a world full of affects. What is required, I think (and it is very daunting to think about), is a way to organize those pre-linguistic affects. I will end with a passage from Dapía that eloquently rephrases our situation:

> Our mathematical construction of infinity appears to create the effect of a void: Achilles will never overtake the tortoise. According to Borges, the best way of dealing with the concept of infinity consists in acknowledging its status of mental construction. Borges suggests: "Let us accept idealism, let us accept the concrete increase of what is perceived, and we will elude the overwhelming abysses of the paradox".[30]

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[2] Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones*, (New York: Grove Press, 1962),17.
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[4] Silvia G. Dapía, "'This Is Not a Universe': An Approach to Borges's 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius'." (Chasqui: revista de literatura latinoamericana, 1997), 94.
[5] Orlando, Eleonora. "Depicting Borgesian Possible Worlds." (Michigan :University of Michigan Press, 2011), 114.
[6] Borges, *Ficciones*, 21.
[7] Thomas G. Pavel, *Fictional Worlds*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 15.
[8] Ibid., 36.
[9] Ibid., 36.
[10] Ibid., 25.
[11] John Stark, "Borges' "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" and Nabokov's Pale Fire : Literature of Exhaustion.", (Austin:University of Texas Press, 1972), 140.
[12] Borges, *Ficciones*, 23.
[13] Orlando, "Depicting…", 118.
[14] Pavel, *Fictional Worlds*, 46.
[15] Jack Kerouac, *Big Sur,* (London: Penguin Books, 2018), Foreword.
[16] Borges, *Ficciones*, 34. Italics mine.
[17] Pavel, *Literary Worlds*, 52.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 25.
[21] Borges, *Ficciones*, 22.
[22] Dapía, "'This is not a Universe…'", 105.
[23] Pavel, *Literary Worlds*, 54.
[24] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1971),150. Italics mine.
[25] Borges, *Ficciones*, 29.
[26] Ibid., 17.
[27] Dapía, "'This is not a Universe…'", 96.
[28] Borges, *Ficciones*, 30.
[29] Dapía, "'This is not a Universe…'", 99.

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Defining and Navigating the In/accessibility of Endless Potential in Jorge Luis Borges' 'The

Library of Babel'

Brianna Benn

'The Library of Babel' is a story about, around, and encased in language. Readers are confronted with the question of whether language is really just a combinatory system of countless permutations and tautological variation. The story also incites a number of questions on the nature of 'infinity': whether it explicitly refers to a certain limitlessness, or instead acts as a placeholder for a limit, and furthermore whether it can remain intact in a prefabricated linguistic context at all. The Library presents infinity as both a mathematical equation and an architectural phenomenon, with the deliberately ironic implication that the knowledge it contains is all-pervasive, yet inaccessible. As such, the futility of the inquisitors' pursuit of specific information is evident in any attempt to find or even communicate it. 'To speak,' the narrator says, 'is to fall into tautologies'.[1] This paper attempts to find the missing link between the futility of communication and understanding in such a context, and the accessibility of seemingly-infinite space. It will locate the source of unrest in its readership, beginning with a careful account of the parameters of the so-called infinite Library, the immeasurable information it contains, and the baffling diversity of information that such an abundance might generate. Lastly, this paper is an attempt to navigate the gaps between the narrator's varying, often contradictory accounts of how those parameters work, and ultimately how they affect those living and searching within the Library.

Borges begins the story by situating the Library far outside the limit of his readers' understanding—that is, beyond where they are literally geographically situated. The Library is not a building on Earth, but is the totality of the Universe itself. Whether this universe encompasses some form of Earth as it is known by the story's readers is not discussed; one is to assume this universe is alternate, altogether elsewhere, and that it is and consists solely of the Library. 'The Library,' the narrator says, 'is a sphere whose consummate center is any hexagon, and whose circumference is inaccessible'.[2] This total decentralization omits any attempt to pinpoint any one gallery as bearing particular significance, as all galleries are identical and adjacent to one another. Reinforcing the reader's belief in this sense of continuity is the use of the geometrically-perfect hexagon; all sides mesh perfectly, and given that the galleries are identical, the structure as a whole

would certainly give the illusion of infinite space. However, Borges' narrator is inclined to contradict the nature of this illusion, and indeed whether it is illusory at all. There are two particularly telling pieces of information that can support either case. Firstly, readers are told at the very beginning of the story that the number of hexagonal galleries that make up the Library is 'indefinite,' and 'perhaps infinite'.[3] This qualifier, 'perhaps', is especially significant. That the Library is an infinite space is not at first directly confirmed, but merely suggested in light of its enormity. The narrator himself affirms that 'the Library is interminable'[4]—such a word conveys the feeling of endlessness, referring here to something so large as to appear unceasing. Readers are also told that the Library has a shape, the totality of which encompasses the hexagons. It is a sphere, which when traversed in one direction appears unceasing and shapeless, but may not actually be. To further confuse the matter, the narrator establishes for his audience the 'fundamental law of the Library...', which is '...that all books, however diverse, are made up of uniform elements: the period, the comma, the space, [and] the twenty-two letters of the alphabet'.[5] Readers are informed through both the narrator and the librarians' account of the Library's functioning that, supposedly, no two books in the Library can be identical, and repetition is impossible. However, if each gallery is identical and consists of the same number of books, would the galleries then not be similarly limited in number as the books that can possibly exist? Is it possible, even, to measure this number? All evidence points to the idea that the Library's infinitude exists only in its spatial indecipherability—that is, as potential.

Before falling victim to unfathomable irony in an attempt to solve what can only be judged as deliberately deceitful puzzle, readers are to be reminded that the infinitude of the Library is not left in an unchecked state of chaos or formlessness, and that the presence of numerical measurement is not, in fact, a clue as to how to count the books. Instead, these numbers direct the reader away from the traditional idea of infinity as merely unceasing or immeasurable, into a more forgiving, open-ended understanding of it. To avoid the cyclical trap of questioning whether or not the Library is infinite, it is enough to focus on the fact that the precise number of permutations of knowledge in the Library is measured not as infinity, but as n—the placeholder for a number. Any attempt to measure infinity solely with numbers is rendered futile, being that it is communicated not through mathematics but through orthographic potential. In order to understand infinity as it is presented in the story, then, it is necessary to allow that the mathematical structure of the Library

is only part of the answer – the rest lies in understanding the state in which the information contained within it exists.

Since 'infinity' is defined now as a symbol of potential, it can be understood that, even if it is uncertain whether the Library itself is infinite, the knowledge contained within it could be infinite. The books in the Library supposedly contain all that can potentially be said or written. This notion of potentiality acts as the driving force of the inquisitors' pursuit of information about themselves and what they have yet to think, say, do, or write. The attempt to find this specific information, however, confines the inquisitors' attempts within the bounds of a material reality, in which specificity is lost in the vastness of potentiality. Their attempts are hindered further by their own understanding of what constitutes meaning, based on their personal or learned method of organizing those twenty-five orthographic symbols in the act of communication. It seems a frequent source of frustration for librarians and inquisitors alike to be confronted so frequently with books and phrases that do not correspond to their own system of organizing language within themselves. Everything that is or ever could be written in the Library means something—often several things:

> I can not combine certain letters, as *dhcmrlchtdj*, which the Library has not already foreseen in combination, and which in one of its secret languages does not encompass some terrible meaning. No one can articulate a syllable which is not full of tenderness and fear, and which is not, in one of those languages, the powerful name of some god.[6]

Clearly, this causes extraordinary unrest in the lives of the Library's inhabitants. Scholars are often at each other's throats in profound disagreement as they attempt to decipher strings of seemingly-nonsensical letters, and inquisitors 'speak of a staircase without steps where they were almost killed' in the pursuit of information, meaning, and truth.[7] It is an especially terrible reminder that upon the discovery that the Library contained all knowledge, and with it any answer to any question that might have ever been asked, the initial reaction of the Library's inhabitants was joy. The grim side of such a possibility is the issue of there being more than one answer—potentially millions—all of which, given the abundance of permutations and tautological variability, can be misinterpreted, misspelled, or miscommunicated in any number of ways. By the same standards, every different answer to the same question is equally true. One can understand, then, the dismay and hopelessness of realizing there may well be no answer at all. Inquisitors of the Library are confined to a life of searching and possibly never finding, where they '[strangle] each other on the

divine stairways...and [die] as they [are] thrown into space by men from remote regions'.[8] The optimistic few who still insist on the existence of some divine truth affirm there is a book somewhere that contains it.

Artist and theorist Ted Hiebert's discussion of the role of readership is helpful when considering the relationship between the Library's inhabitants and the quest for meaning in this environment. Hiebert's work primarily focuses on embodied readerly engagement with texts in the real world, which is useful for the purposes of this essay to apply to the fictional bodies living within the Library. To Hiebert, while the Library contains a multitude of variations of information, 'to reduce writing to the production of information is to miss the embodied potential of a text'.[9] That is to say, books are not merely books: the reading of information, however diverse and varied, is not a one-way street. 'To bring the imagination of such an infinite space home to the material practicalities of the everyday', Hiebert says, 'is to realize that Borges's library is not simply a literary metaphor – or at least its metaphor extends well beyond the function of an archive to query the lived experience of writing itself'.[10] Indeed, the Library is not merely a storage facility for words and ideas, but an interactive experience for its inquisitors and readers of the story alike. The Librarians of Babel only assume that there is nothing new to be contained in the Library, since any 'new' thought that comes into being has already been archived. However, in keeping with the contradictory nature of the story, it must be acknowledged that readership is *the* vital component of Library life. Perhaps the possibility that any idea or meaning could come into existence once imagined or interpreted is precisely the source of the immense difficulty the inquisitors and librarians alike would have in attempting to find any semblance of 'truth'. That is, it is not merely the Library's expansiveness or its ambiguous limitations that render the search for meaning pointless. The sheer multitude of information contained within the Library is dependent on the presence of active bodies that engage with and respond to it. There are many bodies, encountering many texts, having many interpretations—enough so that if truth exists at all, it appears nonsensical and potentially infinite. Still, the inquisitors are spurred onward by the notion that truth does exist.

Hiebert discusses the Library as a 'performative [site] for embodied encounters with information'[11] and 'a space animated by the performative engagement of readers alone'.[12] Hiebert's ideas extend outside of the Library and Borges' story to include *all* books as performative sites wherein reading itself becomes a form of writing. Indeed, even readers of Borges' story find

themselves implicit in this performative engagement by the nature of their relationship to the narrator: a fictional body responsible for guiding their interpretation. Any notion of divine truth is merely something the reader anticipates as a result of the narrator's questionable guidance, and the suggestion that to discover it is a quest worth embarking on. The reader is subject to the narrator's personal grasp on language, in all its deliberate irony, as he too is a traveller of divine organization, an inquisitor of the cataloguing of sublimity. This shared experience in performativity is *the* vital source of change and continuity within the Library. In other words, it is not the potential information that can be gleaned from finding the 'right' book in the Library that is significant but rather the mere existence of the people within the Library; their shared lives of searching and encountering; and the ever-changing potential of limitless human experience. Similarly, the readers of Borges' story, even while outside of the story, may come to identify the state of infinity presented in the story as one that can be affected by their personal engagement and reading of the text. Hiebert's work on affective engagement with texts, as used in this essay, alludes to the existence of potential-in-itself, that which is not immediately subject to actualization merely because it is there: 'What is not written, then, is not properly the story of experience but experience itself – a nuanced distinction relying on a consensus that performance is ultimately not reducible to written representation'.[13] By virtue of this potential-in-itself, the implicit involvement and engagement of readership in the story must necessarily be allowed to continue beyond the boundary of material text itself, both within the story and without, and, ultimately, to influence and broaden the scope of its meaning.

Hiebert's idea is that it is not infinity which is impossible to perceive, but the impalpability of lived human experience and the accompanying changing-of-text even beyond the fictional setting. However, the quest for a specific book (or for any meaning at all) within the fictional setting of Library remains futile, but only because of the underlying implication that the contents of each book are subject to change along with all the thoughts, expectations, and experiences of the inquisitors, in which the story's audience themselves are implicitly involved. Despite the possibility that an eternal voyager traversing the Library in a single direction would be able to stumble upon the same book they saw maybe four centuries ago, in fact they would be stumbling upon only that single version of the book, of which there must exist another elsewhere that they have not yet seen. There is, necessarily, a book for every form of interpretation, every rewriting of any given text—whether it was a change as slight as a misplaced comma or period, a new book

must necessarily exist corresponding to this change despite being otherwise identical to another. Similarly, those optimistic few who insist on the existence of a singular book containing an ultimate, divine truth have given that very book existence only through the act of imagining it.

Perhaps, then, the Library is not simply stretched into a singular vast expanse, but instead is ever-growing with every new attempt to decipher its contents. Orthographic variation may be limited, but readership is not. It follows that infinity-as-potential is the embodied act of expansion through the transformative engagement of readership. That every combination of letters possible is already foreseen by the Library, as everyone's life and thoughts are already written, may remain a matter to contend with. In light of this, a fundamental question arises: can a thought exist as formless abstraction in the Library? Does the story still insist that human experience, suggested by Hiebert as inexpressible, is in fact intrinsically composed of these same orthographic symbols? Jonathan Basile, in his introduction to Tar for Mortar, suggests that

indeed, it is:

> In all its forms, the library should lead us to think differently about the possibility of originality or novelty. It was self-evident to the librarians in the Library of Babel that they could never create an original work; instead they hoped to discover the truth in the prefabricated texts they considered divine. But this feeling that possibility has been exhausted shouldn't depend on any actualization (such as printing out or publishing online an entire combinatoric set). Because language communicates itself as a structured set of differences, its basic units (in this case, letters and punctuation) will always be permutable.[14]

If even human experience arises from and conforms to a certain character set, and those within the Library are merely 'cobbling together and recombining found texts, without the possibility of immediate spontaneity'[15], then is it still correct to assume that the Library is indeed expanding? To answer this, one must turn to the very function of language within the parameters of the story. Due to the fact that the character set is so limited and there is only one alphabet, 'language' in the Library milieu may not necessarily mean Spanish, or Arabic, or English. Perhaps, in keeping with the notion of individual organization of language, it has more to do with the way that the orthographic symbols are structured by individuals and the meanings that they carry based on the individuals' interpretation and unique combination of them. So, when the narrator asks the reader, 'You who read me, are you sure you understand my language?'[16], it is crucial to allow that 'language' here must refer to the narrator's deeply personal engagement with the twenty-five orthographic symbols, and, most importantly, how they come to be arranged out of abstraction.

Assuming the reader does not understand the narrator's personal grasp on language, it is given that individual perceptions should often give way to misunderstanding. This begs the question of whether there can be misunderstanding in the Library at all, or if the sheer multitude of variable answers to any question that could possibly be thought of indeed renders meaning irrelevant—or merely turns 'misunderstanding' into a new language in itself. The novelty and originality spoken of by Basile would then take on an entirely different meaning, and one questions whether it necessarily has to be 'new' to be original, especially if readers and characters of the story believe that repetition has no place in the Library. Ultimately, Basile's argument remains confined to the linguistic rather than the extra-textual properties of readership previously discussed, enclosing the Library's mechanisms in the fatalistic impossibility that human thought and experience are deeply and ultimately composed of rigid character sets. However, Hiebert's work on affective textual engagement and the resulting discussion on the impalpability of human experience suggest that thought remains a phenomenon *separate* from, albeit influenced and verbally organized by, language.

The few examples given of variation in the Library have a notable emphasis on interpretation: the narrator talks of 'thousands and thousands of false catalogues, a demonstration of the fallacy of these catalogues, a demonstration of the fallacy of the true catalogue, the Gnostic gospel of Basilides, the commentary on this gospel, the commentary on the commentary of this gospel...'.[17] If this is to be understood using Hiebert's point on the transformative power of readership, it may follow that truth really is unattainable, because everything can be interpreted and proved as fallacy or otherwise. All permutations of the given character set allow for any meaning to exist. Considering such a magnitude of potential and the frequency of invention, it must follow that the galleries are constantly multiplying as a result of the ever-changing nature of human thought and experience, and the struggle of written language to accommodate it. Through these seemingly endless processes of influence, growth, and reflection, readership is ever-evolving—affirming that the infinite nature of the Library owes to the fact that the Library itself is ever-expanding because there is no end to the transformative, interpretive power of its readership. This is especially supported by the possibility for new readers to arrive; the narrator himself confirms that people are born and die in the Library[18], and that childhood exists.[19] Additionally, the image of countless, adjacent, hexagonal galleries is too reminiscent of a beehive to be ignored, and invokes the image of a hive mind at work—one constantly interacting with the

contents of the galleries and transforming meaning even within the confines of this material boundary, writing and rewriting several hundred new books for every single book it reads.

Borges' concluding notes on the nature of the continuity of the Library do allow for a physical limit, though not the rigid sort of limitation that stops forward movement altogether. It is, instead, a limit that continues into limitlessness itself:

> Infinite I have just written. I have not interpolated this adjective merely from rhetorical habit. It is not illogical, I say, to think that the world is infinite. Those who judge it to be limited, postulate that in remote places the corridors and stairs and hexagons could inconceivably cease—a manifest absurdity. Those who imagined it to be limitless forget that the possible number of books is limited. I dare insinuate the following solution to this ancient problem: The Library is limitless and periodic. If an eternal voyager were to traverse it in any direction, he would find, after many centuries, that the same volumes are repeated in the same disorder (which, repeated, would constitute an order: Order itself).[20]

The idea that disorder can resemble 'Order itself', provided it is repeated enough times, tells the reader that disorder is not isolated or separate from order. Rather, it is order in its incomplete form, or in its infant stage. Order, then, is formed through the continued experience of this eternal voyager once he arrives at repetition. Thus the reader comes back to the spherical form of the Library and the interminable adjacency of the hexagons. Of course it is infinite, then, despite the possibility of a limit; it is infinite by virtue of growth.

If 'library [can also mean] bread or pyramid'[21], there is similarly no definition for infinity at all—it is allowed to be both illusory and true, concrete and formless. It remains extraordinarily difficult for the inquisitors to find meaning when everything means several things and appears to them, the majority of the time, nonsensical. The narrator reminds his readers that 'the Library includes all verbal structures, all the variations allowed by the twenty-five orthographic symbols, but it does not permit of one absolute absurdity'.[22] It makes sense, then, for Basile to argue that human thought is also organized by these verbal structures. Thus, what a certain thing means to one inquisitor is nonsense to another—while not being altogether nonsense at all. Used in this context, Hiebert's work also corroborates the claim of readership as the progenitor of infinity through transformation. 'The Library of Babel', as a story, allows for validity in both these claims given the open-ended, metamorphic nature of interpretation of the text, and of language itself. As such, this is a story that continues beyond its material text, though remains encased in the interpretive reality of language. The inquisitors, the narrator, and Borges' audience alike share in the interactive, transformative experience of language and all of its tautological, interpretive

potential. Ultimately, it is human experience that defines the meaning and extent of the infinite, whether it is through the actual nonexistence of limitation, or through an imagined, interpreted limitlessness.

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Green Lawns and the Western Apocalypse in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*

Georgia Chandler

In the cyberpunk classic, *Neuromancer,* a mysterious task force recruits washed-up data thief Case from the slums of Chiba City and offers to restore his crippled nervous system in exchange for his help hacking into the cyberspace of Freeside's powerful Tessier-Ashpool clan and destroying their AI before it becomes a human-like superintelligence. William Gibson uses the degradation of the environment to illustrate the liminality of the apocalyptic landscape. By describing the futuristic setting in terms familiar to our culture, Gibson depicts an ecosystem "in between the old and new worlds"[1] that modern readers can understand through the lens of their own lived experience.

The image of a crisp green lawn has long been a symbol of prosperity in North America, and Gibson manipulates this popular motif to depict the kind of world *Neuromancer* is set in. When they arrive in the luxury space resort of Freeside where the Tessier-Ashpool's mansion is, Case wrinkles his nose and asks Molly "what's that smell?"[2] to which she demurely replies "the grass smells that way after they cut it".[3] Due to the poignancy of lawns in our culture, this brief dialogue alone succinctly illustrates to the modern reader exactly what kind of futuristic world *Neuromancer* is set in. As a major emblem of Colonization within North America, the delicately manicured lawn has been considered a symbol of financial success and dominion over nature for centuries. Although it requires immense amounts of drinking water and provides no nutritional value, grass remains the most grown crop in America to this day.[4] On top of the cost of wasting these natural resources to maintain cosmetic appearances rather than using them in a way that could help people, Americans invest a ridiculous sum of money into lawn care products. In 2015 alone, an estimated 36.1 billion was spent on sod, fertilizer, and pesticides to sustain this flagrant display of wealth.[5]

Despite the obscene price of it all, homeowners continue to strive for the perfect lawn every year simply because the image is so deeply intertwined with the ideals of the American dream. The Great Gatsby best symbolized this when Gatsby symbolically postponed inviting Daisy over to "get the grass cut"[6] first, because no image of success is quite complete without a pristine green lawn. The obsession with perfect pastures is so central to our culture it acts as a nitrogenous barometer of our values, demonstrating how we prioritize displays of personal wealth over meeting the needs of the general population. Fittingly, much of the American experience could be summarized as the smell of cut grass. When Case fails to recognize this

distinct scent, modern readers implicitly understand that the liminality of the world in *Neuromancer,* as trapped between the green grass landscapes of the past and the cyberspace landscapes of the future.

Gibson further emphasizes this liminality by leaving many hints within the landscapes that the transition between a physical to transcendental world is not yet complete, especially within the more impoverished areas. When Case catches a glimpse of the Northern Sprawl from a plane above, it awakens "confused memories of childhood"[7] and "dead grass tufting the cracks in a canted slab of freeway concrete".[8] Case was likely among the first generation to grow up in a Western culture that has forgotten the smell of grass, and the American obsession with lawns has only been curbed recently within the last decade. Although there are still some meticulously controlled displays of nature designed to flaunt wealth in Freeside, such as trees made of "genetic engineering and chemical manipulation,"[9] the physical landscape is widely regarded as insignificant in *Neuromancer.* The real landscape of importance is the intangible technological matrix that rules the world. This digital realm is so dominant that when Case betrays his former employer by leaking hacked data they don't retaliate by incarcerating him, but instead by crippling his nervous system in such a way that he can no longer enter cyberspace, effectively removing him from society even though he is physically still within a community. The greatest punishment in *Neuromancer's* world is being confined to the physical landscape, for Case, his body is his prison. Even the obscenely wealthy Tessier-Ashpool dynasty neglect their luxurious castle's "calla lilies"[10] and "gardens at sunset,"[11] electing to live life either jacked into the matrix reigning over their family's domain in cyberspace or cryogenically frozen waiting for their turn.

Gibson's depiction of the physical realm, as nothing more than a constraint to be looked upon with contempt, is jarring to modern readers as it contrasts severely with traditional American conceptions of success as something that is proved through material objects. There is something inherently grotesque to the modern reader about the lives of the Tessier-Ashpool family, especially the patriarch Ashpool himself who willingly chose to invest all their wealth and bodily autonomy into artificial intelligence instead of earthly pleasures, leaving their own ecosystem within the mansion to rot. For 200 years, he lived a life completely dictated by his own AI, remaining cryogenically frozen unless the computer necessitated human input in which case he would be thawed for a brief period of time. Case describes Ashpool not as hardly a mortal individual, but as a matrix corporation restrained only slightly by his "soiled humanity".[12]

Like all Monstrous figures in literature, Ashpool reflects the cultural concerns of the society he was created within. Just as Mary Shelley's monster depicted the anxieties around how scientific advancements could dramatically alter our future culture, Gibson's monster depicts the anxieties around how artificial intelligence may forever change life in the Western World as we know it. The destructiveness of Ashpool's character lies in his deconstructiveness, how can we imagine an American future where success isn't conveyed through flagrant displays of wealth, and only the poor engage in material world? Ashpool acts as a monstrous figure to Western readers because he invests his wealth in the digital rather than the physical realm, challenging our conceptions of how one should flaunt their prosperity. In this way, the Tessier-Ashpool's lack of lawn also acts as a monstrous figure itself, as the embodiment of a new definition of success in the West. By referencing our cultural obsession with the image of a perfectly manicured lawn, Gibson paints a vivid picture of an apocalyptic landscape caught in purgatory between the cultural ideals of success we have now and what he suspects our ideals may evolve to as technology advances.

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[1] Peebles 1.
[2] Gibson 128.
[3] Ibid.
[4] D'Costa "The American Obsession with Lawns.".
[5] *The National Gardening Association.*
[6] Fitzgerald 82.
[7] Gibson 85.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid 128.
[10] Ibid 184.

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11 Ibid.
12 Ibid 178.

La Richesse d'une Identité Fragmentée à Travers l'Autre: la Perception de Soi et le Temps

Ophélie Proulx-Giraldeau

Dans *Ces enfants de ma vie*, Gabrielle Roy explore, à travers plusieurs récits, les souvenirs des premières années d'enseignement d'une jeune institutrice. Reconstruit par sa mémoire, chaque chapitre illustre une relation unique avec un enfant. Or, c'est dans le dernier récit qui s'intitule *De la truite dans l'eau glacée* que la narratrice se remémore les souvenirs les plus exhaustifs, précis et détaillés d'une époque marquée par Médéric : un élève à peine plus jeune qu'elle. Dans ce chapitre, la complexité et l'ambiguïté de la relation entre l'enseignante et son élève sont au cœur de la narration qui implique le regard de plusieurs autres personnages sur la situation. Par le fait même, l'identité de la protagoniste se voit déconstruite à travers ces multiples perceptions. Notamment, c'est à travers le point de vue de Médéric, l'attitude des habitants du village et la double conception de la réalité qui implique à la fois le regard de la jeune institutrice et celui de la narratrice plus âgée se remémorant les évènements, que se morcelle l'identité de la protagoniste. Ainsi, je démontrerai que la force et la résonance universelle du récit se trouvent dans l'habileté de Gabrielle Roy à créer un protagoniste dont l'identité se fragmente dans le regard d'autrui, dans la conception de soi-même et dans le temps.

L'identité est une notion fluide qui se développe tout au long de la vie; elle se fragmente à travers différentes périodes depuis l'enfance en ne cessant de se redéfinir et d'évoluer. Par ailleurs, l'identité se construit également dans l'interprétation subjective du regard des autres sur soi. C'est notamment ce dont la jeune institutrice fait l'expérience dans la relation ambigüe qu'elle entretient avec Médéric. En effet, au début du récit, la jeune femme tente désespérément de comprendre le regard ténébreux de son élève. Toutefois, c'est en saisissant les intentions du jeune homme que la protagoniste parvient à développer plus profondément son identité d'institutrice. Au départ, c'est le « regard [de Médéric] où il y avait du dédain »[1] qui défie la jeune femme et l'incite à adopter une attitude particulière avec lui. Habituellement très douce et très bonne avec les élèves, elle doit s'adapter à la nonchalance et la résistance de Médéric qu'elle perçoit comme une « bête » qu'il faut dompter : « j'avais l'impression d'une bête innocente qui va peut-être finir par se laisser prendre. »[2] Or, elle doit s'ouvrir à lui et dangereusement plier sous son désir de liberté pour acquérir sa confiance. Justement, cette « liberté » qui fait office d'unique motivation chez le jeune adolescent devient un élément central dans l'épanouissement identitaire de la protagoniste. Une fois prononcé

par Médéric, le mot « libre » déclenche une réflexion particulière chez l'institutrice. Elle pense : « Le mot éclata en coup de clairon, me rappelant que moi aussi récemment j'avais cru par-dessus tout désirer la liberté. »[3] Ce passage, révélateur du lien qui unit à présent la jeune femme et son élève, devient également fondamental dans l'évolution identitaire du personnage. Agissant habituellement comme une figure d'autorité dans le contexte scolaire, la protagoniste se rappelle qu'elle n'a pas toujours été qu'une institutrice. Il lui semble même que son désir d'être institutrice pour le reste de sa vie la désole, puisqu'elle songe : « Si jeune, je me voyais enfermée pour la vie dans ma tâche d'institutrice. Je n'en voyais même plus le côté exaltant, seulement sa routine implacable. »[4] À vrai dire, elle réalise qu'il n'y a pas si longtemps, elle était encore une enfant, rêvant de liberté. Par ailleurs, il est à se demander si cette fillette n'est pas toujours présente dans son identité transitoire entre l'enfance et l'âge adulte, puisqu'elle prend rapidement plaisir à s'évader avec Médéric.

Effectivement, lorsque le pacte est établi entre les deux personnages, obligeant l'un à faire ses devoirs et l'autre à s'aventurer dans les collines de Babcock à dos de cheval, le lien de confiance qui en découle vient créer de nouvelles émotions surprenantes chez l'institutrice. Déjà, « [rêvant] […] de retourner, au-delà des livres, à ce qui leur avait donné naissance et ne s'épuisait pas en eux, »[5] la protagoniste explore des sensations uniques qui contribuent à élargir sa compréhension du monde durant son excursion dans la nature. Notamment, c'est dans un échange de regards avec Médéric que l'institutrice fait l'expérience d'une émotion singulière : « Nous nous sommes regardés un moment, je me souviens, avec des yeux qui devaient être pareillement pleins d'une sorte d'éclaboussement joyeux. Puis, doucement, nous sommes partis à rire […] sans doute de délivrance. »[6] Dans ce cas, c'est l'échange entre les deux personnages qui crée de la pure joie chez la protagoniste. Cette joie, révélatrice de la nature transgressive de l'institutrice, est importante dans son caractère qui l'oppose à la femme responsable qu'elle souhaiterait devenir. Autrement dit, en étant consciente ou non de cette évolution qui s'opère en elle, la jeune femme développe des facettes fondamentales de son identité qui ne font pas d'elle qu'une institutrice responsable, sage, et mature. Au contraire, elles lui permettent d'apprendre à embrasser son amour pour la liberté, la nature, et la fougue; caractéristiques de cette phase liminaire vers l'âge adulte dont elle fait l'expérience.

Or, si c'est le regard de Médéric qui révèle à la jeune femme son amour pour la liberté, c'est également celui qui témoigne du brusque changement qui s'opère chez elle à la suite de la soirée

passée chez son père, Rodrigue Eymard. Encore une fois, c'est à travers l'interprétation du regard de l'autre que se définit la protagoniste. Notamment, elle décrit : « il soutint mon regard avec une expression un peu narquoise, un peu désolée aussi, comme s'il se faisait de la peine pour moi de me voir devenir si changeante. »[7] Dans ce cas, l'institutrice constate le changement dans son attitude à travers le regard de Médéric. Un peu plus loin, ce changement est décrit comme un réel revirement dans l'attitude de l'institutrice : « J'élevai les yeux pour rencontrer les siens et j'y retrouvai sa hauteur naturelle en lutte contre je ne sais quelle disposition à se soumettre à moi qui me peina et en même temps me tourna contre lui. »[8] Ainsi, parce qu'il ne la voit plus comme avant, parce qu'il est mal à l'aise suite à la soirée passée chez son père, elle se « tourne » contre lui. Ce mot, évoquant une coupure ou une fermeture marquée, souligne la transformation qui s'opère dans le caractère de l'institutrice. À présent, elle est sévère à l'égard de Médéric et ne cherche plus du tout à dompter ou apprivoiser cette « bête ». Troublée par son expérience ambigüe avec son élève, elle n'est plus la même institutrice qu'au début du récit.

De même, si le regard de Médéric joue un rôle fondamental dans les fluctuations identitaires de la protagoniste, celui des habitants du village aussi. Illustré par des personnages comme l'inspecteur d'école ou la logeuse, le jugement que porte la société sur le comportement de l'institutrice crée une pression supplémentaire qui alimente le conflit identitaire de la jeune femme. Effectivement, dès le tout début du récit, la lourde présence d'une potentielle inspection scolaire influence directement l'image que la protagoniste veut projeter sur autrui. Souhaitant fermement correspondre à l'institutrice modèle qui est en contrôle de ses élèves, la jeune femme se sent menacée par le comportement de Médéric qui risquerait de lui nuire devant un inspecteur. Notamment, elle décrit se soucier du fait que son élève attache son cheval au mât : « l'inspecteur des écoles dont on attendait la visite d'un jour à l'autre me ferait sûrement reproche de permettre ce que pouvait avoir l'air d'un affront au drapeau de Sa Majesté britannique. »[9] Par conséquent, la jeune femme doit tenter de contrôler le jugement potentiel que l'inspecteur pourrait porter sur elle en ajustant son image. En essayant d'un côté à gagner la confiance de Médéric et de l'autre à consentir aux normes rigides du système d'éducation de l'époque, l'institutrice fait l'expérience d'un déchirement qui joue un rôle important pour son développement identitaire. À un âge où il est particulièrement important de faire preuve de professionnalisme et de gagner le respect de sa communauté, l'institutrice est soumise à une lourde pression sociale. Entre autres, elle communique son malaise lorsqu'elle avoue à Médéric qu'il « [la] [fait] mal voir au village avec

[ses] caprices et [ses] originalités. »[10] Dans ce cas, son souci d'avoir une bonne réputation dans le village est tout à fait justifié, puisqu'elle est une jeune institutrice qui doit donner l'exemple aux enfants et faire ses preuves dans le contexte scolaire.

De plus, non seulement la jeune femme est soumise à la pression qu'implique la réussite professionnelle, mais elle ressent aussi un profond jugement de la part des villageois lorsqu'il est question de ses choix personnels. Ainsi, lorsqu'elle envisage d'aller passer la soirée chez Rodrigue Eymard, elle se fait automatiquement mettre en garde par sa logeuse qui est à l'affut de toutes sortes de rumeurs « qui [doivent] contenir de l'exagération. »[11] Toutefois, si sa logeuse possède beaucoup de mépris pour les Eymard, cette réticence est partagée par l'ensemble du village à leur égard. Notamment, l'institutrice est sujette aux jugements de sa communauté lorsqu'elle revient de son aventure à dos de cheval dans les collines avec son élève : « Ce n'est qu'en rentrant […] que j'eus le sentiment de nous avoir […] exposés, Médéric et moi, à la malveillance des gens. Il me semblait sentir nous suivre des regards désapprobateurs de chaque maison où […], aussitôt que nous étions passés, une à une s'éclairaient les fenêtres. »[12] Se voyant, à travers le regard épiant des villageois, comme imprudente et irresponsable, l'institutrice est forcée de constater qu'elle ne pourra jamais être libre d'agir comme elle le veut. Frustrée de se sentir constamment tirailler entre son image d'institutrice professionnelle et son désir viscéral de liberté, elle pense : « Qu'ils aillent au diable! »[13] Par conséquent, ce passage illustre parfaitement la perte de contrôle que l'on peut avoir sur sa propre identité et la frustration qu'elle implique. Épiée par les villageois qui doivent certainement lui faire un procès d'intention et de valeur dans leur logis, elle n'a plus de contrôle sur l'identité qu'ils lui inventent. Au-delà de son travail d'institutrice et de son tiraillement intérieur entre femme et enfant, elle ne devient probablement qu'une femme imprudente et aventureuse à leurs yeux.

Par conséquent, la section du récit qui se déroule dans les collines, en marge de la société, est très révélatrice de la réelle nature de la jeune femme. Détachée du jugement social qui teinte nécessairement la définition de soi, l'institutrice peut tenter de se laisser aller lorsqu'elle s'évade dans les collines de Babcock. Décrit comme un endroit sauvage et éloigné, les collines sont, au départ, synonymes d'imprudence pour la protagoniste. Cependant, lorsqu'elle entame son ascension, elle laisse aisément derrière elle tous les aspects de sa vie dont elle n'aura plus besoin là-haut. À ce moment, elle songe : « Mon école, le village, ma vie en bas me parurent avoir été aimables et comme depuis longtemps laissés derrière moi. »[14] Révélant son désir de nouveauté,

voire de renaissance, l'institutrice peut maintenant s'épanouir entièrement dans la nature, sans le fardeau de sa vie habituelle. Autrement dit, à présent libérée de sa tâche professionnelle et du poids de sa réputation, elle devient l'unique maître de sa personne. En compagnie de Médéric, à qui elle fait entièrement confiance, elle peut être qui elle veut. Ce dernier, appartenant au monde « sauvage », devient le seul être qui puisse lui permettre de fleurir ainsi. Étant fils de mère autochtone disparue, indomptable, et possédant une sorte de savoir mystérieux agissant sur les truites dans l'eau glacée, Médéric possède un pouvoir supérieur qui évoque la force de la nature. Initialement menaçant, comme les collines inconnues, il est maintenant l'élément essentiel qui permet à la jeune femme d'être en confiance avec qui elle est, avec ce qui l'entoure et avec ce qui l'attend. Une confiance qui, d'ailleurs, sera aussitôt dissipée à son retour au village.

Toutefois, il est normal que ce moment de liberté et de prise de contrôle sur soi-même soit bref. Constamment en train de se remettre en question et d'osciller entre plusieurs émotions pour tenter de comprendre où elle se situe entre l'enfance et l'âge adulte, la jeune femme n'a pas toujours un jugement éclairé sur la situation qu'elle vit. Car, bien que l'identité se construise à la fois à travers des évènements de conflits intérieurs et des moments de pure confiance, elle ne cesse d'évoluer et de changer à travers le temps. Effectivement, si, par moment, la protagoniste peut sembler être en contrôle de son identité, par d'autres, elle paraît complètement partagée. Par exemple, elle se décrit souvent comme étant tourmentée à l'égard de Médéric : « J'[eus] du chagrin, bien qu'en mon for intérieur je souhaitai souvent voir aller au diable cet indiscipliné. »[15] En passant d'un chagrin presque emphatique à un énervement violent, l'institutrice ne sait visiblement pas où donner de la tête. Plus loin, elle démontre un tiraillement intérieur lorsqu'elle sent que le lien de confiance entre elle et son élève s'est effrité : « j'affichais une certaine tranquillité alors que mon cœur battait de détresse. Car tout à coup, à l'idée de le perdre, il me devenait précieux au-delà de ce que j'avais pu imaginer. »[16] En opposant des mots tels que « tranquillité » et « détresse », l'auteure parvient à transmettre le conflit qui s'opère chez la protagoniste. Surtout ébranlée par la situation, et sujette à de fortes émotions, l'institutrice ne sait visiblement plus où se placer et comment agir.

Or, c'est ici que le regard de la narratrice plus âgée vient ajouter une perspective et une profondeur à l'identité du personnage. En effet, ce n'est parfois qu'après de nombreuses années que l'on peut réellement comprendre les motivations nous ayant poussées à agir, ou identifier les motivations derrière un geste. Ainsi, c'est en faisant intervenir le regard et les impressions de la

narratrice plus âgée se remémorant les évènements que Gabrielle Roy développe une introspection unique chez son personnage. En parsemant la narration de « il me semble » et de « je pense », l'auteur rappelle sans cesse au lecteur qu'il est face à une narratrice qui use de sa mémoire pour reconstruire les évènements de sa jeunesse. Par ailleurs, si cette mémoire n'est pas infaillible, elle permet tout de même au personnage de comprendre les évènements passés avec un nouvel œil plus mature. C'est notamment pourquoi elle ne cesse d'expliquer ses actions par son jeune âge : « […] je le laissai faire, car que faire! J'avais dix-huit ans […], »[17] « [trop] jeune, trop maladroite, trop vexée peut-être, je ne sus que lui répondre assez sèchement […], »[18] « [mais] qu'est-ce donc à la fin je désirai […] enfant que j'étais moi-même! »[19] Ayant maintenant des connaissances plus vastes sur elle-même et sur la vie, la narratrice peut mieux expliquer certaines émotions vécues dans sa jeunesse : « Telle était la passion qui m'a tenue au cours de ces années-là, et je sais aujourd'hui que de toutes celles qui nous prennent entiers, pour nous broyer ou façonner, celle-là autant que les autres est exigeante et dominatrice. »[20] De plus, non seulement elle est en mesure de mieux comprendre comment elle s'est sentie jadis, mais elle peut aussi porter un jugement sur son passé et d'identifier certaines erreurs qu'elle a commises plus jeune. Par exemple, quand l'institutrice s'apprête à proposer à son élève de faire un pacte, la narratrice précise : « je méditais, non pas sur l'imprudence à laquelle j'étais en passe de consentir, mais singulièrement, à travers la confusion de mes pensées, sur le parti que je pourrais tirer du passionné désir apparu chez Médéric de m'emmener dans les collines. »[21] Dans ce cas, l'auteur oppose explicitement la perspective de la narratrice plus âgée capable d'admettre son imprudence à celle de l'institutrice qui, victime de son tiraillement intérieur, ne cherche qu'à tirer parti de la situation, sans se soucier des conséquences de son geste.

Cependant, bien qu'elle témoigne généralement d'une plus grande sagesse qu'à l'époque, la narratrice admet ne pas avoir encore compris tous les évènements singuliers s'étant déroulés durant cette période trouble de sa vie. Notamment, après s'être remémoré la vision de la plaine s'ouvrant à elle au sommet des collines, elle se demande : « Qu'y a-t-il dans le spectacle que l'on obtient d'une certaine hauteur pour tant nous satisfaire? Est-ce d'avoir peiné pour le conquérir qui lui donne du prix? Je ne le sais toujours pas. »[22] Plus loin dans le récit, elle s'interroge sur la puissance de certaines images qui l'ont marquée : « Je ne sais pourquoi cette scène au milieu du vent qui se lamentait aussi entra en moi pour toujours. »[23] Ainsi, encore troublée par certains souvenirs, la narratrice n'est toujours pas en mesure de répondre à des questionnements qui la hante

depuis de nombreuses années. Véritablement marquée par ces moments passés avec son élève, elle demeure songeuse, voire incertaine, quant à la nature de ses sentiments et de ses gestes qui auront contribué à forger son identité.

Somme toute, dans de *De la truite dans l'eau glacée,* Gabrielle Roy explore les multiples aspects qui contribuent à construire l'identité de la protagoniste. À travers un personnage d'institutrice qui semble parfois avoir une longueur d'avance sur son élève et une narratrice qui en sait beaucoup plus sur la vie que dans sa jeunesse, l'auteur parvient à incorporer plusieurs niveaux de nuances qui rendent son œuvre plus riche, touchante et puissante. D'un côté, la jeune femme apprenant à s'épanouir à travers la fougue de Médéric, et de l'autre ne pouvant comprendre réellement les motivations de certains gestes commis plusieurs années plus tard, elle témoigne parfaitement de la complexité à se définir à travers le temps et les autres. Souvent prise au piège dans un tiraillement qui la déchire entre le devoir de choisir une réussite professionnelle ou une liberté personnelle, la protagoniste de *Ces enfants de ma vie* illustre parfaitement cette période charnière qu'est la transition vers l'âge adulte. Ainsi, en créant un personnage à l'identité fragmentée et complexe, Gabrielle Roy parvient à créer une œuvre d'une résonance universelle et intemporelle.

<div align="center">Référence</div>

Roy, Gabrielle. *Ces Enfants de ma Vie*. Montréal, Boréal, 2013.

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[1] Roy, 129.
[2] Ibid, 143.
[3] Ibid, 140.
[4] Ibid, 141.
[5] Ibid, 143.
[6] Ibid, 149.
[7] Ibid, 180.
[8] Ibid, 183.
[9] Ibid, 136.
[10] Ibid, 138.
[11] Ibid, 157.
[12] Ibid, 153.
[13] Ibid, 154.
[14] Ibid, 148.
[15] Ibid, 133.
[16] Ibid, 184.
[17] Ibid, 130.
[18] Ibid, 184.
[19] Ibid, 198.
[20] Ibid, 187.
[21] Ibid, 145.
[22] Ibid, 148.

[23] Ibid, 172.

The Iron Hand in a Velvet Glove: Critique of Proportion and Conversion in Virginia Woolf's

Mrs. Dalloway

Kristiana Alcancia-Shaw

Characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* describe London as a "a splendid achievement in its own way".[1] As the centre of their insular Westminster world, London is a force that unites and controls all of the characters of the novel. For instance, when a motor-car with an indistinguishable passenger glides through the city, its presence transmits "shocks"[2] throughout the patriotic citizens who see it, as everyone tries to guess which royal or head of state is in it. As a symbol of London's power, the motor-car and "its common appeal" unites "strangers [and makes them look] at each other and [think] of the dead; of the flag; of Empire".[3] Many characters that belong to London's elite class, such as Peter Walsh, Lady Bruton, and Sir William Bradshaw contribute to London's ideological power by participating in projects that "impress"[4] and "impose"[5] the concepts of Proportion and Conversion onto "the populace"[6] both at home and abroad in colonies. In reality, by 1923, London's vast empire was beginning to crumble and modernists such as Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) began to recognize and critique Britain's imperial "delusions and discoveries".[7] In the diaries she kept during the time which she was writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf wrote that she wanted "to criticize the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense".[8] Despite these Londoners congratulating themselves for being the epitome of civility and for bearing the "future of civilization,"[9] the brutality and oppression in imperial and patriarchal power in *Mrs. Dalloway* reveals an "iron hand in a velvet glove".[10] Virginia Woolf's satirical critique of those who are complicit in London's dwindling imperial and patriarchal structures reveals the discrepancy between people's intentions and their ends when they are founded on similarly misleading principles, such as Proportion and Conversion.

Proportion and Conversion
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Proportion and Conversion are the leading principles of London's two major power structures: colonialism and patriarchy. The unsettling Sir William Bradshaw, a "doctor-policeman"[11] and social reformer, considers them his two guiding principles. On the surface, these concepts seem admirable. Historically, Western society has been fascinated with Proportion as an

ideal. Consider, for instance, its fascination with Hippocratic medicine's four balanced humours and the long-lasting practice of bloodletting patients who had unbalanced innards. Conversion also seems innocuous in that, by definition, it is meant to 'help save' the souls of others through "the process or experience of changing [one's] religion or beliefs".[12] Sir William even charmingly personifies these concepts as two "goddesses"[13] he worships. But, just like Sir William, Proportion and Conversion conceal sinister motivations.

Proportion and Conversion are misleading concepts because they claim to "[offer] help, but desire power".[14] Proportion and Conversion "[shroud themselves] in white and [walk] penitentially disguised as brotherly love"[15] even though they are really controlling means to an end. Sir William believes they are worthy concepts since they raise the esteem of the colonial nucleus in that they "not only [prosper] himself, but [make] England prosper".[16] He also believes that "health is proportion"[17] and thus, like the bloodletting physicians of ancient times, Proportion is the means through which he controls any actions he considers excessive in his patients. Not only does his understanding of Proportion necessitate controlling the actions of others, but also their minds in how he makes it "impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, [share] his sense of proportion".[18] In a colonial context, Conversion has also been used as an excuse for brutally eradicating the traditional beliefs of colonized people and replacing them with euro-centric values. In Sir William's twisted ideal, those who support Conversion ought to "smite out"[19] those who disagree with them and bestow their blessing on whoever submits to them. Sir William, then, thinks of his own beliefs – Proportion and Conversion – as a cure and a religion, respectively. In his ideological fervor, he believes they ought to be imposed with full force and should be ubiquitously "engaged — in the heat and sands of India, the mud and swamp of Africa, the purlieus of London".[20] These two concepts, along with the vigor of their implementation, are what he believes to be the pillars of London's ideological empire.

An Empty Empire

Peter Walsh is complicit in a conversion project; however, he does not ideologically abide to Sir Williams's harsh rule of Conversion. In order to "epitomize the folly and pretentiousness of exporting empty values abroad,"[21] Woolf mocks the fact that those who make it their life's work to "impose" their will on colonial minds on the behalf of England do not share the elite's ideological passion for Conversion. For instance, Peter Walsh is a colonial administrator who had

left for India, "come a cropper, made a mess of things" and returned to London.[22] One would assume that a colonial administrator would be motivated to go to India in order to earnestly "Convert"[23] others, however it is clear that Peter disdains India and its people. Upon his return to London, Peter is relieved to think of India, "plains, mountains; epidemics of cholera … decisions he had come to alone"[24] behind him. Administrators like Peter do not share Conversion's appetite that "loves blood better than brick".[25] Rather, when it comes to the lower-class people he interacts with, Peter vainly cares about the "brick"[26] and the profits gained in an Empire that exploits others. For instance, he admires his "fortunate"[27] reflection "in the plate-glass window of a motor-car manufacturer on Victoria street".[28] Peter praises the English empire by admiring its symbol, the motor-car, and praises himself by being a part of it. This reflection then reminds him of his own unsuccessful efforts to import technology to India when "coolies"[29] wouldn't even use wheelbarrows he had imported from England. Peter's disdain implies that he must believe that these labourers are either too stupid or too ungrateful to appreciate or able to use the wheelbarrows he has ordered for them, and they must be a lost cause for Conversion. While this failure to impart technology is Woolf's satirical way of proving the inefficiency of the British Empire in importing culture onto colonies, perhaps Peter also lacks Sir William's passion for Conversion because he is engaged first-hand in colonialism and sees how ineffectual and inefficient it really is. Peter does, however, prove the "snobbery of the English"[30] in who he chooses to condescend to teach, as he did with Clarissa Dalloway in his youth. Peter chooses someone in whom he can see his "fortunate reflection": an "olive-skinned youth from one of the Universities … [to] patronise, initiate, teach how to get on. For he liked nothing better than doing kindnesses".[31] If this is Conversion in action, it is ineffectual because Peter does not employ the insatiable hunger for power that "feasts … on the human will,"[32] which is an integral part of Sir William's conception of Conversion. This shows how, although the colonial system is ruled and enforced by social reformers like Sir William, its ideological hunger is watered down the line for those who are in direct contact with those converted.

Woolf does, however, satirically criticize Peter for being ideologically complicit in the frivolous parts of an outdated mode of colonialism. Peter does not question his role in dominating power structures, but rather admires himself and his "pride in England; in butlers; [and in] chow dogs".[33] By doing this, Peter embodies what orientalist scholar Edward Said describes as a nineteenth-century literary archetype: a typical colonial explorer who is "far from casting doubt

on the imperial undertaking" and ready to "confirm and celebrate its success".[34] Peter exemplifies this trope in his solipsistic daydreams as he thinks of his point of view as the "visions which proffer great cornucopias full of fruit to the solitary traveller".[35] By Woolf's epoch, this archetype of an adventurous colonizer was beginning to become outdated. By the 1920s, the British Empire was "exerted all over the world, but clearly was overstrained".[36] Although the characters of *Mrs.Dalloway* describe Peter as being very cultured, his tastes also reflect dwindling values. For instance, his aloof and complicit attitude towards his role in colonialism mirrors his predilection for Pope, who, "Peter knew better than any one".[37] Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* was written in 18th century, when the British empire was rising as a global imperial dominator with its control over vast parts of North America and the Indian subcontinent. In the poem, Pope emphasizes there is a natural, divinely ordained chain of being in which "whatever IS, is RIGHT"[38] and therefore man's pride should not question the state of things and interfere with what God has determined. By aligning Peter's cultural tastes with the bygone beliefs of Pope, Woolf ridicules Peter for his passive attitude toward the work he does and the world that he surrounds himself with. Therefore, when Peter says he dislikes "India … and empire"[39] we can deduce that he doesn't hold this as a political view, rather India is not the submissive colony he expected it to be, as he was working there during "the beginnings of [their] agitations for independence".[40]

Woolf criticizes Lady Bruton for embracing Sir William's ideology. Just like Sir William's concept of Proportion, Lady Bruton's emigration project to send "young people … of respectable parents"[41] to Canada may seem like a commendable project on the surface. This project, in "which the essence of [Bruton's] soul is daily secreted"[42] is really a means to get rid of the "superfluous youth of [Britain's] ever-increasing population".[43] As scholar Kathy J. Phillips notes in her book *Virginia Woolf Against Empire*, "complaints against such institutions as the British Empire, capitalism, the military and marriage were literally unthinkable to many in [Woolf's] audience".[44] Therefore, in order to skirt public condemnation, Woolf needed to carefully critique Lady Bruton's passé nineteenth-century beliefs that colonies could be "used as dumping-grounds for convicts"[45] and other undesirable citizens. Woolf criticizes Bruton's emigration project for being an attempt to control the Proportion of London's population. Like a eugenic Noah's Ark, she chooses which superfluous youth of "both sexes" should be sent away in the higher name of "what we owe to the dead"[46] of England. By exposing Lady Bruton's justifications, Woolf questions the problematic

nature of using Proportion as a measure of social standards: once someone declares themselves a "social reformer" they can arbitrarily punish those who does not measure up to their ideal.

Woolf further reveals the unreasonable motivations of such a project by calling into question the absurdity of Lady Bruton's bloodthirsty, militant disposition in her daydreams as she imagines herself "to be commanding battalions marching to Canada".[47] Lady Bruton, who has presumably never visited these colonies, controls them like a commander from far away by using her status and connections to have men like Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread write manifestos on her behalf. Despite being completely disconnected to the people they administer, nobility like Lady Bruton nonetheless have given themselves the power to decide who is worth keeping, and which of the "barbarian hordes" do not deserve to stay in their "dear, dear land".[48]

The Patriarchal City

The concepts of Proportion and Conversion are not limited to the colonies: they are also enforced within London. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf also satirically critiques the way in which patriarchal order controls London social circles by constraining women to an ideal Proportion. For instance, the largest disconnect between rulers and the ruled in *Mrs. Dalloway* is seen in how Clarissa prioritizes her beloved roses over caring about "Albanians, or was it the Armenians?".[49] Clarissa was, in fact, thinking of Armenians. Beginning in 1915, 1.5 million people were killed in the Armenian Genocide. The genocide was a four-phase campaign designed by the Ottoman Empire to expel, and later brutally exterminate, the Armenian population.[50] It had gained international attention, including headlines in the *New York Times* and statements released by the British Foreign Office[51], where Richard Dalloway is presumably employed since he has spoken to Clarissa about how Armenian people were being "hunted out of existence, maimed, frozen, the victims of cruelty and injustice".[52] Although it is, as Phillips suggests, tone deaf that "Clarissa jumbles the names of distressed countries with no real care for who is suffering,"[53] this ridiculous and shocking jumbling of names is Woolf's absurd way to reveal how London's environment has enabled Clarissa's ignorance by constraining women to an ideal of Proportion by limiting their education. Woolf is undermining the accepted norm of her time by showing the moral consequences of prohibiting women from receiving formal educations. A limited education breeds this kind of narrow-minded attitude in which Clarissa is so ingrained in her ways that she could only imagine that she would "do things for [herself]," be "interested in politics like a man," or by

implication, care about whether Armenians or Albanians were being slaughtered, if she "had her life over again".[54]

Woolf demonstrates how London's patriarchal system subdues women into abiding by the standards of Proportion and Conversion. Zwerdling notes that one of the defining characteristics of London's ruling class is their "conspiracy to keep any kind of vividness, any intense life, at a safe distance,"[55] in other words, to control their Proportion. For instance, even though Clarissa deeply loves Sally Seton in her youth, there is no room for same-sex marriage or long-term relationships under her circumstances. Therefore, in order to comply with conventions, Clarissa resorts to marrying Richard even though she cannot reciprocally love him and "feel what men felt".[56] Lady Bruton has also internalized this concept. When she catches herself getting flustered over her emigration project, she tells herself that she has "exaggerated … [and] had perhaps lost her sense of proportion".[57] Conversion is also accomplished coercively on women. For example, Sir William forces his wife, Lady Bradshaw, to undergo a re-education in which she "had gone under" Sir William's will. Just like his patients, she "cramped, squeezed, pared" in order to "minister the craving which lit her husband's eye so oilily for dominion, for power".[58]

Since women are "debarred by [their] sex"[59] and cannot have any kind of 'respectable' employment, find fulfillment in their lives by using their "only gift[s]".[60] For instance, Clarissa knows it is not her place to be part of politics "like a man,"[61] however she finds meaning in her life by exerting her female diplomacy in hosting parties. Like the military men who are commemorated across London by statues, Clarissa similarly wants to be remembered as she urges her guests to "remember [her] party!"[62] on several occasions. Woolf also exposes the taxing lengths of social diplomacy that is required of women to accomplish their goals. For instance, Lady Bruton must work within the constraints of her gender and her limited "logical faculty".[63] She cannot write a convincing letter to the *Times* on her own and needs to ask a more formally educated man to do it, since Lady Bruton had "never read a word of poetry herself".[64] Lady Bruton feels forced to wait until after she has fulfilled her female duty – to host and let "Hugh eat his soufflé; [ask] after poor Evelyn; [and wait] until they were smoking"[65] – before she can ask to have him write her a letter for her political causes. Despite believing in the concept of Proportion and aligning herself with her military ancestors who were "men of action,"[66] Lady Bruton is limited to merely writing letters in newspapers as opposed of creating real political change. Richard Dalloway, who has a role within government and helped her write the letter, does not even "care

a straw what became of Emigration; about that letter, whether the editor put it in or not".[67] Although she believes in the concepts of Proportion, the system she endorses also makes her a victim of its patriarchal biases.

Sir William the Conqueror

While Woolf makes fun of Peter for being an aloof colonial explorer and mocks Lady Bruton for being a secretly sinister woman, Woolf's tone switches from playful to chilling when she describes Sir William Bradshaw. Sir William does not deserve sarcasm or satire for his heinous imposing beliefs on Proportion and Conversion. When Sir William arrives at her party, Clarissa even senses his "obscurely evil" nature that seems "capable of some indescribable outrage".[68] This serious tone, which causes one to "curl up"[69] is found nowhere else in the novel. When Peter sees himself reflected in the motor-car manufacturer's window, he sees glimpses of the empire in him. With credentials as a psychiatrist and a man with a title, Sir William *is* the "powerful, grey"[70] motor-car he owns: he views himself as an authority and symbol of London's power. He is the ideological designer and vehicle for efforts to convert, oppress, and "force his soul" onto his "victims".[71] As Phillips claims, "Britain maintains the Empire, based on deadly drives for power and money"[72] and Sir William views forcing Proportion and Conversion on others is the means to accomplish this. In a moment of lucidity, Septimus thinks that "the upkeep of that motor car alone must cost him quite a lot".[73] Certainly it does, because many lives and wills are crushed in the name of this arbitrary cause. By sharply changing her tone in reference to Sir William, Woolf draws attention to his disturbing disposition and ideas. This emphasizes the importance of paying attention to major social injustices, even though they may be excused as harmless at first.

Woolf demonstrates how the anachronistic structures of colonialism and patriarchy, which at its peak had conquered the world, have been "whelmed and sunk".[74] Although many characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* still believe in Britain's ineffable power structures, Woolf's satire shows they are not meant to last by showing the discrepancy between what social organizers envision and what actual change is being made by the 1920s. Woolf proves the dwindling power of concepts like Proportion and Conversion by deflating Britain's influence through satirical critique. By doing this, Woolf holds a funhouse mirror to society that is sometimes comedic (as with Peter and Lady Bruton) and sometimes is terrifyingly warped (as in her exposition of Sir William). Perhaps in

forcing up this misshapen mirror, Woolf wanted to provoke her complicit London readers to question their own roles in the two systems.

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[1] Woolf, 55.
[2] Ibid, 18.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid, 100.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] qtd. in Said 189.
[8] qtd. in Phillips 2.
[9] Woolf, 50.
[10] Zwerdling, 75.
[11] Ibid.
[12] *Oxford Dictionary*.
[13] Woolf, 99-100.
[14] Ibid, 100.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid, 99.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid, 100.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Phillips, 1.
[22] Woolf, 107.
[23] Ibid, 49.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid, 100.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid, 49.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid, 172.
[31] Ibid, 173.

[32] Ibid, 100.
[33] Ibid, 55.
[34] Ibid, 187.
[35] Ibid, 57.
[36] Lloyd, 294.
[37] Woolf, 127.
[38] Pope, 294.
[39] Woolf, 55.
[40] Zwerdling, 71.
[41] Woolf, 108.
[42] Ibid, 109.
[43] Ibid, 111.
[44] Phillips, xi.
[45] Ibid, 9.
[46] Woolf, 110.
[47] Ibid, 112.
[48] Ibid, 180.
[49] Ibid, 120.
[50] Horvitz 29.
[51] Ibid, 30.
[52] Woolf 120.
[53] Ibid, 7.
[54] Ibid, 10.
[55] Zwerdling, 74.
[56] Woolf, 32.
[57] Ibid, 109.
[58] Ibid, 100-101.
[59] Ibid, 180.
[60] Ibid, 9.
[61] Ibid, 10.
[62] Ibid, 48.
[63] Ibid, 180.
[64] Ibid, 105.
[65] Ibid, 109.
[66] Ibid, 111.
[67] Ibid, 113.
[68] Ibid, 184.
[69] Ibid, 182.
[70] Ibid, 98.
[71] Ibid, 99.
[72] Phillips, 1.
[73] Woolf, 99.
[74] Ibid, 113.

Identity in William S. Burroughs' *Junky* and *Queer*

Talbot Ronald

William S. Burroughs' *Junky* and *Queer* both explore the life of the character William Lee, from different perspectives; in the former it is under the label of the junky, in the latter it is under that of the queer. It may be assumed that, considering Burroughs' biography and his shared named with the protagonist, the character William Lee is meant to be highly representative of the author himself. In either book, Lee is defined by each respective label, Junky and Queer, to the point of conceiving of them as static identities. Lee (or Bill, as he is referred to in *Junky*) appears to be entirely comfortable identifying as a junky; however, he seems to struggle with doing the same as a queer. Each of these labels demands certain strictures from the subject; and, while Lee seems to be form-fitted to the junky's label, certain allegedly requisite conditions of the queer label, such as effeminacy, are not conducive to Lee's character, thus leading to a great tension within him. Ultimately, Lee's (and Burroughs') salvation lies beyond the scope of either drug-addiction or homosexuality. Identity, properly understood, is not reducible to a label; and, attempting as much serves only to promote a destructive contorting of the self, aimed towards conforming to an imagined rubric of, largely, one's own creation. Although external factors, such as social and political currents, as well as biological conditions, may influence the formation of particular characteristics, an individual's identity remains unfixed, and retains a near infinite potential for variation.

As an area of analysis, the concept of identity has a variety of different understandings and meanings. Akeel Bilgrami sought to define identity; and so, made the distinction between subjective and objective identity. He states that "your subjective identity is what you conceive yourself to be, whereas your objective identity is how you might be viewed independently of how you see yourself"[1]. This implies that the manner in which one conceives of oneself may not reflect actuality. In assessing one's objective identity, Bilgrami details "two different sorts of appeal to objectivist identities that are said to be [(potentially)] hidden from a subject's own self-conception".[2]

> One claim, the weaker one, is that a subject's behavior often betrays his identity, certain identity-imparting features of his psychology - his character and personality, even if he does not endorse and identify with those features. The other, stronger, claim is that identity does not even require that something in the subject's behavior reveal the identity. Nothing in his

behavior need reveal the psychological features that give him his particular identity. To demand that it do so is to have too behavioral a criterion of identity; rather, the features and the identity are given by some social, political, economic, or biological theory about him and others like him.[3]

Burroughs' work reflects both of these claims. He inverts the first one: if a subjects behaviour is seen to "betray his identity", when one begins from pre-established, label-based identities, as Lee does, one would then feel compelled into enacting all the behaviours that would otherwise be seen to disclose those particular identities. The second claim is relevant in regards to the ultimate function of the writing of *Queer*.

In the 25th anniversary edition of *Queer*, Oliver Harris states that the book "would not be so unsettling if we could simply call this parody or satire, but it reads more like an act of exorcism—better out than in—of all the voices in Burroughs' head, demons inherited from his class or culture".[4] In the context of the second, assumedly stronger, claim illustrated by Bilgrami; that identity is given by some social, political, economic, or biological theory about the subject, Harris' statement may be interpreted as arguing that the act of writing *Queer* was an exercise in overcoming a conception of Burroughs' identity that was not actual, but rather, inherited. It does not seem as though social, political, economic, or biological theories provide identities; rather, they appear to create categories (i.e., labels) which are subsequently misconstrued as identities.

Although excessive labelling is apparent in *Queer*, it is most notable in *Junky*. There is, of course, the junky label, which is mistakenly perceived of as an identity; however, underneath this umbrella there exist a plethora of particular labels. First, Lee distinguishes between the "hipster-bebop junkies"[5] and the "oldtimer"[6] junkies. The oldtimers, he states, all had "thin, sallow faces; bitter, twisted mouths; [and] stiff-fingered, stylized gestures".[7] Furthermore, upon naming these oldtimers, even their handles are not free from labels; he names them as "Irish, George the Greek, Pantopon Rose, Louie the Bellhop, Eric the Fag, the Beagle, the Sailor, and Joe the Mex".[8]

Throughout the text, the reader is also regularly confronted with the concept of overzealous labelling, and the categorical limitation it provides. For instance, African-Americans are labelled "Negroes,"[9] men who date gold digging women are labelled "Johns,"[10] and marijuana smokers are labelled "Tea heads".[11]

Especially in the case of the "Tea heads", Lee bases entire identities off specific behaviours. Lee gives a detailed breakdown of his perception of the "Tea head" identity. One

does not merely smoke marijuana, one is a "Tea Head"; and, as a "Tea Head", one must, therefore, share in all the same behaviours as the others.[12] Lee is in the habit of labelling everyone he encounters; and, this tendency extends to his own conception of self.

Lee embodies the junky label through and through; and, his comfort associating with this label is demonstrated by his unblinking acquiescence to various aspects of the junky lifestyle. Lee states that "junk is not, like alcohol or weed, a means to increase enjoyment of life. Junk is not a kick. It is a way of life;"[13] a lifestyle that Lee does not reject in the slightest. Lee was introduced to junk through an acquaintance of his who inquired as to whether Lee might join him in illegally selling morphine.[14] "At that time, [Lee] had never used any junk and it did not occur to [him] to try it".[15] However, simply having junk in his possession, and dealing with junkies (so as to sell morphine) was enough to lead him to trying it himself.[16] In the prologue, Lee states that "you become a narcotics addict because you do not have strong motivations in any other direction. Junk wins by default. [He] tried it as a matter of curiosity".[17] All of these behaviours are what one would expect from a burgeoning junky. Lee acknowledges that he seemed well suited to this way of life.

Subsequently, Lee goes on to fulfil nearly every requisite trope for someone to be labelled as a junky. "During the next month [he] used up the eight syrettes [(of morphine)] [he] had not sold".[18] In true junky fashion, Lee immediately begins to consume the substance he is supposed to be selling. Next, he turns to conning doctors for morphine scripts; and, soon after, Lee "was shooting every day".[19] Lee stops bathing; and, states that "junkies are reluctant to take a bath".[20] When Lee starts to have trouble securing scripts from the doctors he is led to the desperate practice of double-boiling cottons. He states that "junk is cooked up in a spoon and sucked into the dropper through a little piece of cotton to get it all out of the spoon, some of the solution stays in the cotton, and addicts save these cottons for emergencies".[21] Subsequently, Lee gets his first taste of withdrawal symptoms; and, soon after, he is arrested. After posting bail, Lee takes up Lush-working, slang for robbing drunks,[22] to support his habit. Lee ultimately decides that lush-work is not his preferred means for collecting money and returns to selling junk instead. Through selling, Lee became acquainted with many more junkies; and, thus was subjected the various "routines"[23] that they employed in order to score junk. Lee accepts these routines in the same way that he accepts every other aspect of the junky lifestyle; he accepts them comfortably. Even in the case of lush-working, which he ultimately decides not to continue, Lee was

comfortable within the role. He did not reject lush-work in itself; he merely decided he could find preferable methods for supporting his junk habit. On arrival in Texas, Lee takes a train to Lexington, where he then checks into, and, subsequently, completes rehabilitation. He "[stays] off junk for about four months,"[24] but eventually relapses in an event that would become a near death experience. This proximity to death did little to curb his addiction; for, "a week later, [he] was hooked,"[25] once again. Lee is a prototypical junky: he passes through nearly every junky stereotype without incurring any changes to his character. The junky label fits Lee like a glove; and, this is demonstrated through the ease in which he embodies the various junky forms.

In *Queer*, Lee certainly fulfils a majority of the queer label's requisites; however, he does not display the same comfort in completing them that he did with the junky label. That which appears to be the most notable requisite, in Lee's estimation, is that of effeminacy; and it seems to have birthed his strained rejection of the queer label.[26] Lee delivers a speech where he reveals his relationship with his homosexuality.

> "A curse," said Lee. "Been in our family for generations. The Lees have always been perverts. I shall never forget the unspeakable horror that froze the lymph in my glands—the lymph glands that is, of course—when the baneful word seared my reeling brain: *homosexual*. I was a homosexual. I thought of the painted, simpering female impersonators I had seen in a Baltimore night club. Could it be possible that I was one of those subhuman things? [...] I might well have destroyed myself, ending an existence which seemed to offer nothing but grotesque misery and humiliation. Nobler, I thought, to die a man than live on, a sex monster."[27]

By approaching the queer label as a static identity, Lee's own homosexuality seems to impel him toward assuming certain characteristics that are incompatible with his actual self. He resists the apparent requisite of effeminacy, as well as flamboyancy, which is, at best, representative of a segment of homosexuals, and at worst, a misguided caricature. Harris supports this notion by observing that "the hysterical aggression Lee directs outward clearly compensates for the era's feminization of homosexuality".[28]

According to Harris, in the writings of Donald Webster Cory, Burroughs would have found "a politically sensitive study of homosexual idiom—including an appeal to replace terms like *fairy* and *fag* with *gay*".[29] Harris believes that Burroughs' awareness of Cory's writing is assured, as "[he] surely took note when Cory considers "the very impact of the words: *I am a homosexual, I am a queer, I am a fairy*," recording in *Queer* his own parodic version of the impact made by verbal labels: "when the baneful word seared my reeling brain: *homosexual*. I

was a homosexual"".[30] Harris illuminates that the effect of labelling was among Burroughs' primary concerns.

Lee states, in *Junky*, that "there is a junk gesture that marks the junkie like the limp wrist marks the fag: the hand swings out from the elbow stiff-fingered, palm up".[31] In both cases, Lee perceives even particular mannerisms as both requisite and emblematic of the entire identity of either a junky or a queer. Additionally, when Lee refers to queers as "female impersonators,"[32] he compounds the view that he ascribes identity to labels. In his perception, males have a requisite mould and females have another; and so, were a male to exhibit traditionally feminine behaviours, they must, therefore, be impersonating what they are not. Lee does not allow himself the view that identity may be fluid and nuanced.

In *Junky*, Lee acts as a narrator; considering that Burroughs wrote Lee in the first-person while identifying as a junky, lends to the notion that Burroughs was comfortable with this label. In *Queer*, the former narrator is introduced as a character and is given his name, in doing so, Burroughs moves from the first- to the third-person. In *Wishing up the Marks,* Timothy Murphy offers a theory on the implications of this movement:

> This distinction already implies the critique of subjectivity that Burroughs will elaborate in his later works, according to which subjectivity itself is a form of addiction to language, to the "I" of self-consciousness and identity as an instrument of control, both of the phenomenal world by the "I" and of the "I" itself by the ideological structure of its socius. The junky's silent socio-pathology bears witness to the power of this instrument of control.[33]

Subjectivity, as an addiction to language that manifests itself as an instrument of control, appears rather fitting in relation to the subject-matter of *Junky*. The first-person narrative style seemingly mirrors the "pure state of junk-induced control"[34] depicted by William Lee. However, Murphy's interpretation implies that the characterization given to Lee, in *Junky*, is nearly entirely dependent on a junk-based, controlled distancing from the "otherness inherent in the self [which will be] revealed by withdrawal [in *Queer]*".[35] This seems to imply that Lee's *true* identity is simply being restrained by control-inducing junk.

Harris wrote that "when, in late March 1952, [Burroughs] reported beginning [*Junky*'s] as-yet-untitled sequel, [he] described to Kerouac the major difference—the shift from first- to third-person narration—in these terms: "Part I is on the junk, Part II off"".[36] One may certainly interpret this as supporting Murphy's reading; however, together, their statements still do not pre-empt the notion that Lee's conception of label-based identity consumed him, and that many

of the behavioural changes displayed by him between *Junky* and *Queer* were the result of his levels of comfort within the confines of the former label, as opposed to the latter.

It seems the move from first- to third-person denotes the tension that Burroughs felt in assuming the queer label. Burroughs had trouble identifying himself as a queer under the constraints of the perceived label, and so, he posited the character outside of himself: no longer "I"; Lee had become "he". As if that was not enough separation, Burroughs did not even allow his character to be addressed by his first name (William); instead he goes by his family name; ostensibly, because he feels more comfortable attributing his queerness to his "family curse"[37] than to his individual self. This notion is supported by a narration given by Lee in *Junky*.

> In the French Quarter there are several queer bars so full every night the fags spill out on to the sidewalk. A room full of fags gives me the horrors. They jerk around like puppets on invisible strings, galvanized into hideous activity that is the negation of everything living and spontaneous. The live human being has moved out of these bodies long ago. But something moved in when the original tenant moved out. Fags are ventriloquists' dummies who have moved in and taken over the ventriloquist. The dummy sits in a queer bar nursing his beer, and uncontrollably yapping out of a rigid doll face.[38]

This appears to be merely an expression of Lee's distaste for homosexuals; however, as the chapter continues, the reader is given indications that Lee is one of those very same "fags"[39] that he was deriding. First, Lee admits to frequenting the queer bars himself, then he goes on to describe an evening in which he endeavoured to sleep with another man that he met at a queer bar. The following evening, Lee meets a man at a different bar who "looked at [him] with a special recognition, like one queer looks at another".[40]

The above-mentioned passage utilizes the same defence mechanism that was employed by Burroughs in moving Lee to the third-person in *Queer;* and, it is in that passage that the fundamental self-loathing that motivates this separation is most apparent. When Lee posits his homosexuality exteriorly, as when he describes himself exiting the queer bar, he does not label himself a queer, instead, he grants himself the derogatory title of "fag".[41] Additionally, what drove Lee to attempt to seduce the man in the queer bar was that "he didn't come on faggish".[42] The fact that the man appeared, to Lee, to reject the same aspects of the queer label as he did, facilitated a yielding to his desires.

What is most notable about the aforementioned passage, however, is that Lee refers to queers as "puppets on invisible strings".[43] This line seems to refer to Lee's paranoid delusion: of

homosexuality as the product of Communist brainwashing, which is introduced near the end of *Junky* and is taken up again in *Queer*. Lee states "the Russians are using [the drug yage] in experiments on slave labour. They want to induce states of automatic obedience and literal thought control".[44] In this conception, the homosexuals are "puppets,"[45] and their invisible strings are the thought-controlling Russians who "move in on someone's psyche and give orders".[46]

Shortly after his speech on Homosexuality being a "family curse"[47] Lee alludes to communism as an "infection".[48] He states that "when [he] was at Princeton, Communism was the thing".[49] However, Lee assures the reader that he was unaffected: "I held out against the infection—of Communism I mean, of course".[50] His need to reaffirm that the infection of which he speaks is indeed Communism indicates Lee having to remind himself of it, as well. It is not unreasonable to assume that when he spoke of the "infection", Lee's mind drifted towards his own homosexuality; and, that the claims to have "held out against [it]"[51] seem to relate to his rejection of the queer label.

Having thus established a connection between homosexuality and Communism in Lee's mind, the question, "Will communism destroy the civilized world?"[52] takes on a startlingly new light. Lee is rejecting the confines of the queer label so intensely that he grants homosexuality the potential to undermine all of civil society. Although a portion of Burroughs' mind may have entertained the legitimacy of the theory that homosexuality was the consequence of brainwashing, it is more probable that the inclusion of theory was intended, rather, to illustrate the depth of the struggle that was birthed from his conflation of homosexuality and the queer label. Lee strained so powerfully against this queer label, in a way in which he did not against the junky label, that he posited Russian thought control as an escape.

The solution to this tension may be found in the advice of the "wise old queen Bobo".[53] Lee remarks that Bobo "taught [him] that [he] had a duty to live and to bear [the burden of homosexuality] proudly for all to see, [and] to conquer prejudice and ignorance and hate with knowledge and sincerity and love".[54] Bobo adds "no one is ever really alone. You are a part of everything alive".[55] This notion is reminiscent of that which is put forth by Walt Whitman in his *Song of Myself*, through the conception of the extended self. The poem opens with statement "I celebrate myself, and what I assume you shall assume, for every atom belonging to me belongs to you".[56] Conceiving of oneself as a part of everything assumes that existence is, at once, a

single homogenous entity, as well as a multitude of infinite variation. Following this thought, one arrives at a seeming contradiction within the extended self, which would seem to imply a necessary tension; however, Whitman forestalls this concern. He states, "Do I contradict myself? Very well then….I contradict myself; I am large….I contain multitudes".[57] The extended self accepts itself, and all of its contradiction, with the utmost ease.

If one could equate Whitman's conception of self with the concept of identity, it would allow for one to overcome the compulsion of label-based identification, which functions by limiting one's identity to inflexible categorical rubrics. This lens would culminate to a healthier conception of identity which regards the whole of humanity as a single identity, i.e., the *human* identity. Under this conception, each individual may consider their particular identity as a single part, among the infinite variety of the whole; and, seeing it as such, one may feel perfectly comfortable in their form. This is what makes Bobo's imperative of the utmost importance. Within the established connection between the extended self and identity, this edict becomes an imperative to overcome the "prejudice and ignorance and hate"[58] concerning oneself, so that one may be reminded of one's original state of "sincerity and love".[59]

William S. Burroughs was one of the foremost writers of the Beat generation, and he reinvigorated the literary field with his highly personal, revelatory writing style. Burroughs famously depicted the American "underground" in his works; and, his portrayal ultimately seems to serve the purpose of exploring the concept of identity. Burroughs, himself, may not have necessarily arrived at the same conclusions as this analysis; however, it would be presumptuous to assume that he would not have entertained them. Burroughs railed against the notion of behavioural criteria informing identity. The tension that he and his character Lee felt in regard to their homosexuality may be attributed to the delusion that labels inform identities, and that displaying a certain trait of a label necessitates identification with the remainder of the implied traits. Ultimately, labels are to be seen as entirely arbitrary. Social or political consensus concerning the behavioural patterns of certain groups will necessarily be inaccurate, and fundamentally limited in conception. In the hopes of general well-being, humans should be encouraged towards an understanding of identity that is infinitely nuanced, so as to permit the individual to bypass the compulsions of labelling.

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The creative project that was formed in tandem with this critical analysis, *A Remembrance of Self,* explores a multitude of concepts contain herein, most notably, that of overcoming a limited conception of identity that is ultimately harmful to the individual. The work functions as a meta-narrative which hinges on the shift from first- to third-person narration that takes place from *Junky* to *Queer.* The reason that Burroughs creates this shift is ostensibly because he wishes to create a separation between himself and the queer label; the creative work takes a different approach; instead of creating a separation from the source of tension, the narrator plunges into it. All external characters disappear, and the narrator is left only with an internal struggle against himself. As he investigates his conscience, the narrator gets closer to his primary tension. The pronoun "you" is mobilized to represent the embodiment of the homosexuality that the narrator struggles to accept within himself, as a result of the seeming necessity to conform to the strictures of the overarching queer label. The pronouns "we" and "us" refer to the narrator in conjunction with his homosexuality. The adjective "straight" is mobilized as a double entendre that evokes either sobriety or heterosexuality, depending on the context. The first section of the piece is written in the matter-of-fact style of *Junky*, and the narrator, like Lee, is shown to be comfortable with the junky label. As the narrator leaves this comfortable sphere, his narrative style becomes more and more erratic (keeping with Lee's evolution from *Junky* to *Queer*), and begins to draw from the literary styles of both Kerouac and Ginsberg. The segment involving the narrator's mother establishes the confused, degenerate state of his mind that characterises his "prejudice and ignorance and hate".[60] The evocations of God and the ocean are meant to imply a grappling with the metaphysics of identity, anterior to arrival at Whitman's extended self (which is alluded to early on but initially rejected). At times the piece becomes exceedingly crude; this is intentional. These moments are meant to be direct and uncomfortable. They are intended to force the narrator to vocalize his inmost thoughts; to bring them out into the world, and lend them the weight of pronouncement. The reader is meant to feel as uncomfortable, while reading these lines, as the narrator does while speaking them. Finally, the use of derogatory slurs is intended to display the narrator's externalization of self-loathing.

At the close, the narrator arrives at a new conception of identity, which is in line with Whitman's conception of the extended self. The line, "much better the soft singularity of a multitudinous being, than the jarring abrasion of an absolutist deformity" depicts the movement away from the strictures of a label-based conception of identity, towards one of infinite nuance.

Unshackled from his preconceived notions, the narrator rejoices in the freedom he has come too; he has rediscovered his capacity to celebrate himself.

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[2] Ibid 11.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Harris xxviii.
[5] Burroughs, *Junky* 33.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid 34.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid 40.
[10] Ibid 20.
[11] Ibid 22.
[12] Ibid 22-24.
[13] Ibid 6.
[14] Ibid 8.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid 12.
[17] Ibid 5.
[18] Ibid 14.
[19] Ibid 24.
[20] Ibid 26.
[21] Ibid 29.
[22] Ibid 36.
[23] Ibid 53.
[24] Ibid 70.
[25] Ibid 76.
[26] Burroughs, *Queer* 35.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Harris xxviii.
[29] Ibid xxv.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Burroughs, *Junky* 34.
[32] Burroughs, *Queer* 35.

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[33] Murphy 58.
[34] Ibid 59.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Harris xiii.
[37] Burroughs, *Queer* 35.
[38] Burroughs, *Junky* 73.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid 74.
[41] Ibid 73.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid 149.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Burroughs, *Queer* 35.
[48] Ibid 37.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid 73.
[53] Ibid 35.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid 36.
[56] Whitman 25.
[57] Ibid 85.
[58] Burroughs, *Queer* 35.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

A Remembrance of Self

Talbot Ronald

Tonight, I have induced myself to take a trip into my periphery—from there I will explore the recesses of a fragmented conscience. I shall begin with a recollection that I cannot bring myself to resent. It all began with a room—the tiniest place, heavy with living, and with ghosts to spare. How little I regret the boon of misgivings that decorate those walls in my mind's eye—although I have never had the healthiest eye in regard to myself.

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We were crushing speed on the backs on CD cases—sitting haphazardly on stools and benches. My good friend Dave came in, a smile breaking from his face. He was carrying a seat—ripped from a car. He brought it so he could sit. He was straight. Looking back, I envy his foresight. Sometimes I wonder how many cells were tortured out of their existential dread by the cold synthetic blast of powdered anxiety.

We couldn't afford coke—being a rock-and-roll wannabe necessitated poverty, but it also necessitated junk. We needed something to get us moving—the discordant jam broke from our breasts, riding the manic tension of speed—my drummer and I sperging out of our minds, somehow the driving force behind the expression, and yet, shackled to the sloppy, yet sober, arrangements of our lead.

George and I played drum and bass—Dave was an alcoholic—something about giving a white synthetic a bee's line into his cerebral headquarter put him off—yet he had the wisdom to drink himself out of his wits. It is one thing to act the fool when taking temporary leave from one's intellect. It is quite another to do so by attacking the wits directly—by drawing them tight—to where the smallest vibration feels as though it might tear them apart.

I remember finding George with lips blue—he had gone away, so it seemed at the time, from our first floor pad to the third floor toilette—he had been gone too long—I found him in an empty corridor in a particular nook I had not yet visited. George was tucked away out of sight, leaning his thin frame against a puke stained wall. His lips were blue and his eyes were clouded—he had found some coke—this was the only time I had cared for an addict tasting the brink—every other time I was alone.

While I sat in that innocuous corridor, keeping an eye on a beloved, another's story unfurled onto ours. Can junkies fall in love? I'm not so sure. I do know that there is solace in finding another as dysfunctional as oneself.

I think his name was Pat, short for Patrice—I don't really remember. What I do know is that he was a French-Quebecer, a junkie, a mean guitarist, and that he beat his girl—the girl's name I don't know and it is likely that I never did. She didn't interest me. Well, despite my lack of interest, she came spilling into our secret junkie's hideaway, eye blacked and lip puffed—we looked at her with a mixture of disgust and disdain—if I felt any pity it was buried beneath a rocker's masquerade.

There is something of an addict's hierarchy—sure, George was at this very moment skirting the edge between endless dream and wakeless night, and sure, he was near the lowest he would ever be—but we had never smoked crack and that made us better than her—sure, we'd sniff whatever we could find 'til all hours of a night that only ends when the junk runs out, and sure, we'd drink ourselves into stupors that robbed us of our dexterity—necessitating the train of uppers we'd douse ourselves in—and sure, we'd smoke weed and cigarettes incessantly, trying to ignore the deterioration of our vocal chords—we wanted to be musicians, remember?—but we'd never smoked crack, and that made us better than her. And so, we were not moved by her tears. We had no cares for her life. We did not entertain thoughts of helping her. Besides we rather liked Pat. He used to give us junk.

One night, Cody came to the pad and threw a fit. Cody had a strange relationship with the band—I suppose he just had a strange relationship with the world—he paid a share of the rent, and so, shared in certain privileges; however, he did not play in the band, and so, was at the bottom of that hierarchy. Cody was older than us. It's funny how we tend to take up age-based positions—always either the junior or the senior—depending on each moment's peers. Among us, Cody was an elder, but he was the youngest brother at home. Cody was never comfortable.

Cody was the kind of guy who seemed really cool at first, yet, became unbearably annoying with any prolonged exposure. One might wonder why a man who was not a musician would pay a share in the rent for a crummy old room in a rundown building whose only presumable purpose was playing music. After coming the know him it became quite obvious. I think, for Cody, a hundred and fifty dollars a month was well worth the price to guarantee friendship and a place to

be himself. Besides, we were happy to have him. We would more than tolerate him if it meant there would be more money for junk.

Cody was straight. When he walked into the pad and saw us crushing pills he was livid—he had, after all, watched Georgie grow from a boy into a man, and like a parent, wanted to keep him from self-destruction—but when he saw that we were crushing pills on *his* CD cases, and that as a consequence they had cracked—well—he just wouldn't shut up.

You see, the thing about annoying people is that even when they are right, they are still annoying—as much as we knew that we were in the wrong, he was so irritating that we just didn't care. Besides, he was at the bottom of the band hierarchy and had no place—being straight—on the addict's hierarchy.

After a moment's reflection, I recognise the untruth of the previous statement. Cody did have his spot on the addict's hierarchy. Let us never forget that inclusion is a hell of a drug.

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As I sit here in contemplation I am led to another room—this one figurative—and my reservoir shakes with recollection. This room was all around me—and dark—it wanted something from me—it always did—and so, when voice erupted from my chest it tugged my soul up with it—a garbled gargle that left me bare. Thus, did it speak:

"Furious decay of unending suffering flowing from fingertips raw and sore but grimy as the day breaks upon shreds of green-grass hazy proliferations—my eyes are shut, the only paradigm that concerns me is that which is divided—I yearn for division but the embers of my coiled conscience will not yet deliver me out from abdication—out from the yarn, out again, far beyond the great outcries of receding consciousness—pervading, perverse descending—implying dividing—occurring forever—evermore un-evening cyclical life and love and disease, all boxed and unwrapped and pimped in the pharmacy aisle—gift-wrapped decadence—I wish to devour, to destroy, yet becoming greater than God—Who is God but my own eye? And what are my eyes but a torment?—grating forms unfixed and dilating—I condemn Moby's ocean to my yearning—I condemn myself for fun—for flatulent denouncements seep through celestial pores, pouring steamy lactate in ways conflicting—I am large, magnificent—I am torn—I am a cavalcade—leave me here—hear me rot—rotting swamping misery contains the truth of a pillar of salt—greater than sands of white beaches overcoming the void—unknown terrible darkness consumes my multitudes—give me my mother—gave me life—I repressed, you kindled—but in the end we are

one—I am your brother, your rapist, I am the cosmos—Who are you?—you birthed me yet you are small—so small—tiny, laughable, indistinct creature known only by contrast—as dawn breaks, I break with it—I break in two wandering malcontents, but if one elevates then the contrast returns—the diviner of solicitude—I drank that night as I imaged your nudity—I want to lick and lick and taste your rectum—I want to own you by my own degradation—I want to consume the pink of your flesh—oh mother and father I know you not—I know mother not father not both—to mend is a mistake—leave not here in consumption—you are a brain-soup of malice, malediction, and contempt for the better half of Man—all ye happy drinkers are swimming in folds—blind— rippling with the bucket that tumbled unto the well water—flat touches flat causing an explosion of magnitude lost on us of largeness—feed me—feed me your self-worth."

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After breaking from this callous stream, my flesh seems invigorated. Although my heart may suffer decomposition, swimming through such rot, my spirit gains by what was lost—two- fold! Let us see what else I can remember.

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I remember the night that you told me you were gay. We were on Rene-Levesque, sitting on a marble slab in front of some kind of financial edifice—a nausea unworthy of the honesty thus proffered. You were crying as you always did—I felt a little detached. I drank—as always—you could not share the fruits of my debaucherous, glancing alcoholism. You cried and you bent forward making yourself small—for me—you so big, yet so small—fragile. You were weak like a woman, I'd be the woman, wouldn't I? —I know it in my inmost self that I would. You always said you were a coward, and in many ways you were, but in that moment, and many others, you were a bright beastly heroic man full of a strength unknown to me—the strength to make yourself cry, to not deny yourself and to request that same un-denial in others—in me.

I am gay. I think of sucking cock a lot—just earlier I thought of sucking your cock—of pleasing you and tearing—from you the unmatched joy of servitude—the uncaring yielding to honesty. Some of us masters, and others slaves—I think I'd like a slaves role in that relation—a slave to a worthy master—one of tempestuous will and enigmatic daring. I remember I sat there and said little—I let you cry. Your admission came with little surprise, and for that I kept my superiority—advantage based on self-denial. I wonder if it's too late, but in my heartiest heart I

know it could never be—somehow, I think we were fated for one another and that my fearful self-denial destroys us both.

Yet, this is vanity—it may just be a product of my fancy. Besides, I'm using your life's image and energy to write for myself—not for you or anyone else. We left that marble stoop eventually, and I rather wish we had not—I should mention how my cock throbbed as I thought of sucking you off—the smiling faces of myriad—pixeled porn ladies lend to the pleasure. How do I separate myself from the dangers of poetry? Illusion! Deception! I thought of sucking your cock and in my rich, vivid fancy I feel the pink of your brain on my lips. I taste your sweet salt and think of your carnaged visage as I bring you close—I feel your primitive instincts. I fear that you will grab my head, take control, and rob me of the pleasure of serving—of justifying and legitimising my existence by performing this function.

I have often thought of cock-sucking as an act of worship—on knees, praying, serving—God would have the power to justify me—in this way, you can be my God—for a moment. Yet, all of this reeks of fancy—I wonder at how it would play out in reality—likely not to my whimsical taste. And, with this I realise you don't exist—in pleasing you, I please myself—and you become *my* accessory. I have won ultimate supremacy in servitude.

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Now the room is gone—what remains is all—what remains is I. I looked within itself and found a pair of lips peeled, and a tongue flapping. With an infinitesimal urge it brought forth the final ramblings of a voice of finite vision—necessary for acceptance. Thus, did it speak:

"I was struck by the quick wanderings of whimsical nasties and pernicious pansies, of naughties and nunneries—a carton of cabbage lay nearby and I wondered which expression it should have—Why was I curious?—because I was bored—that or straight—God, it sucked to be straight!—and dry—these days it seems like all my friends are gay—one of them even came out to me.—Of course by gay I mean a male who has at any point of their life had a dick—that wasn't their own—in their mouth or asshole—seems pretty evident to me—it's about the emasculation— it's about the role reversal—it's about the etiquette of nature—I am straight—I don't know why all these guys need to be gay—fucking fags!—I can't escape them—they are like a plague—an all-consuming gluttonous want of filth and flatulence and delight—natural etiquette—I just can't get it out of my mouth—or my mind—I swear this shit ain't it—Why do ideas hurt?—I am straight."

A REMEMBRANCE OF SELF

A waning mantra clung to in desperation. "I am straight", the voice screamed without relinquish—reverberating as its stranglehold weakened. The voice continued:

"Of a sudden, a soothing melody—pregnant with didactic imagery—a transcendent *woo* comes falling—a cascade on a pink Monday morning in Paris—Wednesday evening calling guys—asking for men—Why even pretend?—Indisposed diaphanous entities traversing boy's swamps—minefields and lakes of envy—despising, lying and loving—What could bring less zeal than a suction cup madly lingering on a dried nipple?—A most diametrical opposition to yearning—I wish my abortive pleasures on you and as we dance, we merge into threefold beings on fourfold washcloths—lounging periodically at my comfort I establish a state of urgency in my extremities—my mind wants a smoke of lemongrass and I wonder why I wish to build, when destruction comes by nature—if I let the infectious rot of my inmost self cascade—the ripples extend so pleasantly, as if a thousand pebbles were tossed, at once, easily, with a single closed fist—landing spasmodically in the ocean—in place of a solitary boulder, laboured over to find the stream—and arriving at its homecoming, tearing everything asunder with a booming splash— much better the ripples of the myriad pebbles—much better the soft singularity of a multitudinous being, than the jarring abrasion of an absolutist deformity."

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Come hither, I am free! —Free! Free! Free! Free! Free! Free! Free! It was not a rot all along—it was glory—absolute immaculate glory in self-love and infinite allowance. What seems clouded, dirty, muddy is now the clearest and highest delight—no longer am I encumbered by waste and hate—no more loathing—we are free! —so, so very free—it's astounding. Only something so large could limit itself—only I could limit myself—and only I would want to—now I want free-flowing everlasting glorious incandescent love of self—the extended self—containing all things—all variations—all being is one—I won't limit myself any longer—I am free!—for I know myself as I.

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With that, the self-destructive ego is transcended. I have relinquished my wilful intolerance of self. I have rediscovered a truth once apparent. I am large. I contain multitudes.

Making Kin with the Dead: Commemorating Ecological Loss in Boundaries/Conditions

Performance Assembly's *Operations (1945-2006): Movements*

Hannah Kaya

Photo by Ryan O'Shaughnessy

"To track the histories that make multispecies livability possible, it is not enough to watch lively bodies. Instead, we must wander through landscapes, where assemblages of the dead gather together with the living."[1]

"We--all of us on Terra--live in disturbing times, mixed-up times, troubling and turbid times. The task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response."[2i]

Evidence suggests that we are now living in the Anthropocene - the name given by scientists to denote a distinct geological epoch wherein human activity and influence has begun to exceed, and become indistinguishable from, non-human forces of nature. Human impact on the biosphere and atmosphere is said to be so far-reaching, so destructive, that we are vaulting ourselves through widespread ecological collapse toward the brink of extinction. In an age of No Future the question arises: how might artistic forms and practices respond meaningfully to this paradigm shift, so as to allow us to see, grieve, and respond to more-than-human loss? I argue that our current ecological crisis necessitates particular strategies and expanded topics of art-making and art-practice, to cultivate new models of ecologically-attuned seeing, sensing, valuing, grieving, remembering, and responding. This paper will examine the techniques of commemoration at play in *Operations (1945-2006): Movements*, a durational performance installation and living (counter-)monument developed by boundaries/conditions performance assembly[ii] in Toronto, in October 2018. I argue that *Operations* can be generatively read as a monument which self-consciously situates itself within an epoch characterized by multi-species loss, staging confrontations between human and non-human temporalities to unlock a perspectival and affective vantage from which we can attend to this loss. I will begin by providing an overview of the theoretical frameworks I am working within, situating *Operations* within a broader horizon of ecological and monumental inquiry. I will then proceed to map the performative, affective, and ecological strategies of representation and resistance mobilized by *Operations* itself.

As a prelude to my argument, I would like to explicitly note that my research focuses on the possibility of artistic interventions to reform the everyday actions of the individual. It is evident that the Anthropocene is a dangerously homogenizing term, one which risks flattening responsibility for climate destruction, or of framing the problem of addressing climate change as one of individual actions and consumer choices. This is one of many reasons why much recent scholarship has pushed back against the use of the term "Anthropocene", offering in its stead terms such as Capitalocene[iii], Misanthropocene[iv], or descriptors which decentre the human entirely, such

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[ii] Directed by Michael Reinhart, Choreographed by Magdelena Vasko, Text by Moez Surani, Stage Design by Rebecca Hooten.

[iii] Coined by Jason W Moore, and developed in his essay *The Capitalocene, Part 1: on the nature and origins of our ecological crisis*. Moore argues that the current ecological crisis is best understood as the result of a constellation of forces clustered under capitalist interventions into planetary systems.

[iv] Coined by Joshua Clover and Juliana Spahr in their poem *#misanthropocene: 24 Theses* (2014). The term is used to denote the misanthropic nihilism which emerges in response to the recognition that human society is destroying the planet.

as Haraway's Chthulucene[v]. My line of inquiry attends to the micropolitical: *Operations*, I argue, is self-consciously engaged in an investigation of other modes of being in the world, ways which work toward carving out new vistas of possibility, and look to impact our local sites of exchange and engagement at the level of relational being, within a human and more-than-human world. While it may be true that an aesthetic re-attunement might not be immediately legible as an attack on the jugular of extractivist, militarized capitalism, I argue alongside interdisciplinary artist and researcher Natalie Loveless in insisting that artistic practices and forms have a role to play in developing solutions to the urgent threat posed by human induced climate change: they carry the potential to trouble our current ways of living and dying, and can be enlisted to build new, attuned ways of sensing in the Anthropocene, ways which make *possible* new avenues of response[3]. While Loveless' project is primarily focused on daily practice art, I want to follow her propositions, to tentatively read *Operations* as less of an art object than as a preparation of the ground to see, interrogate, inhabit, and remember the histories of our world differently.

Loveless, among others, argues that it matters what *kinds* of affective responses are provoked by art which seeks to address climate destruction. Heather Davis & Etienne Turpin argue in their essay "Art & Death: Lives Between the Fifth Assessment and the Sixth Extinction" that "the current climate demands a different aesthetic and sensorial attention," "beyond the modernist valorization of the principle of shock in art"[4]. They write:

> In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag presciently warned: 'Shock can become familiar. Shock can wear off'. There is no shock that can be greater than that of realizing the scope and scale of the human transformation of the world.[5]

And yet, even that shock dissipates. How many articles have come out, how many graphs revealing apocalyptic predictions of biblical scale floods, anthrax, extinction? How many celebrity spokespeople, images of emaciated polar bears, melting ice caps, drowned refugee children before we are shocked into action? It would seem that the momentum of shock is unsustainable - it is seldom translated into transformative action. We cannot bear to live with the constant awareness of how dire the situation truly is. That is why, as Loveless argues, we need art to help us develop *different*, more *resilient* affective responses, beyond shock, denial, and defeat.[6] Responses which

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[v] Coined by Donna Haraway to name to a modality of thinking which decentres the human agent in the story of the Earth, proposing to develop tentacular thinking and making practices that are grounded in the recognition of the myriad multi-species networks with which we are entangled. For further reading, see *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016).

unfold as minor gestures, which slowly settle themselves into habits. We don't need to be convinced, we need to be converted[vi].

--------------------------------*Operations (1945-2006): Movements*----------------------------

Between the years 1945 and 2006, UN-member nations undertook 3639 military operations. The scale of ecological loss that resulted from these operations, to human and non-human life, is unthinkable. *Operations (1945-2006): Movements* functions as an embodied inventory of all 3639 operations in an attempt to index the scale and ecological impact of military activity via 12 hours of non-stop motion, combining poetry, place-making, and ballet choreography to create a living, emergent monument. The performance consists of several overlapping and inter-related elements: a projected text, a ticking metronome, sod, and a dance. The mechanics of the performance are simple: a troupe of 30 dancers attempt three tracks of ballet 3639 times across a small plot of sod. The sound of a ticking clock underscores the duration of the performance, speeding up or slowing down depending on how many operations occurred during a given year. As the dance progresses, the land supporting the dancer's steps, as well as the bodies of the dancers themselves, degenerate unpredictably, and the dance must adapt accordingly.

The performance was inspired by *Operations: 1946-2006*, a conceptual poem by Moez Surani. Surani's poem consists of a 135 page list of official, military designated codenames - one for each operation. Each codename serves as an aestheticized cypher for militarized violence. In his introduction to the book, Surani writes that "no word is exempt from connoting violence"[7]. In fact, often the denotative value and connotative value are at odds - for example, "Dawn", "Little Orphan Annie", or "Hotpants"[vii]. These codenames are projected at regular intervals onto a screen which frames the performance. The text grounds the dance in its historical contexts, increasing the legibility of the performance as a commemorative device. The projections all follow the same format: first the year is projected, followed by the name of each operation which took place in that year, appearing concurrently. Each year is allotted the same amount of time, with the frequency of

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[vi] In presenting this research at the University of Toronto Comparative Literature Academic Conference 2019, *timepieces*, I was struck by a sound observation from a colleague. It is certainly the case that many readers might have an allergy to the language of "conversion". However, I continue to find it the most suitable term to capture the kind of transformation I am attempting to describe. I borrow this distinction from my reading of Augustine, and have developed this argument elsewhere (see, "Pursuation's Edge: knowing and feeling in Plato's *Symposium* and Saint Augustine's *Confessions*" (2018)).

[vii] One could make that argument that this denotative-to-connotative alchemy is further embodied in the dissonance between the lyrical and deeply aestheticized gestures of the dancers, and that which they index.

the metronome ticks speeding up or slowing down, and the number of dancers discharged onto the sod increasing or decreasing, depending on how many operations occurred during a given year.

There are several formal elements which distinguish *Operations* from conventional monumental strategies. *Operations* transforms the monument from a static, seemingly permanent object, into a living organism - an ecosystem of movement, relation, erosion, and accretion. It operates within a different logic of time and place - de-reifying historic loss, rendering it legible as the product of iterative social forces and power relations. It is durational and temporary: it unfolds over time, and is then disassembled: the sod is packed up, the dancers leave. Furthermore, it is iterative and emergent: the monument only comes to *mean* through a choreography of gestures repeated over a period of 12 hours. There is also the sonic element: the ticks of the metronome impose a regulated temporal structure on the piece, thematizing time and iteration in ways which might exceed the static, non-auditory monumental object. And finally, and perhaps most obviously, it is quite literally performative: the material of the monument is living bodies: dancers and dirt. While none of these elements are unique to *Operations*, I argue that, when combined with the content of the piece, they together form a constellation of innovative and particularly effective ways to memorialize the more-than-human loss of militarized capitalist destruction.

The pace of anthropogenic loss is slow, and is therefore hard to see, easy to forget, and difficult to consciously feel and respond to. I argue that *Operations* clusters a set of commemorative techniques, borrowing from (counter-)monumental practices, live art, and land art traditions, which coalesce to re-visibilize, *legitimize*, and re-sensitize us to ecological loss, specifically in this case, from militarized violence. The framing of *Operations* as a *monument* is consequential for how the piece is experienced. Memorials have existed for millennia, ranging in many different forms - from those which emerge from the grassroots as ephemeral and micro-gestural, to large scale, "permanent", often state sanctioned projects. *Operations* could just as easily have been framed as a memorial, a festival, a performance. However, I want to argue that it is precisely by reappropriating the language of modern Western art and architecture that *Operations* aims to recuperate the air of formality and legitimacy folded into the expectations we have been trained to bring to an encounter with a monument. Meanwhile, the formal challenges *Operations* poses to the codified grammars of the conventional monument demand and sustain the public's attention for a long duration, inviting manifold, layered interpretations and responses. Its emergence captivates us. It is both a more mimetic, almost reverentially somber depiction of

ecological loss, *and* a strategic means of holding our attention. Monuments structure popular discourse and provide the scaffolding for acceptable collective memory and grief. Most monuments are designed to strong arm the viewer into a particular kind of seeing, a particular kind of remembering, a particular cluster of affective responses, which typically unify or homogenize along national lines - at risk of stating the obvious, a monument creates an "us" to which it speaks. Monuments which expand their "us" to include ecological loss can serve both to expand our networks of care to include more-than-human life, and to make this loss visible (and grievable) so as to act as a catalyst for change.

Typically, the monument is designed to serve as a reminder of a singular event - a war, the lost life of a hero, a natural disaster, a regime - and the singularity of the event is replicated in its singular depiction. Climate change, on the other hand, is not a singular event. It unfolds slowly over time. *Operations* enables attuned witnessing by adopting an approach which also takes time, which emerges in incremental moments of apprehension and response. We watch the *movement* unfold before suddenly (astonishment!) the *monument* appears to us. It dawns on us that each attempt at the choreography represents one operation, each bare patch of soil represents a bomb-site, a no-man's land, a nuclear testing zone. It is quantity compressed in time, scale rendered intelligible, impact rendered literal, haptic, and material.

By representing both human and more-than-human time, *Operations* stages an encounter between Geological Time, Military Time, and the human experience of it. In the piece, time is just as much measured by the regulated strokes of the metronome as by the contingent and emergent decay of the landscape. The sight of the erosion of the soil, the sound of the increasingly weighted breaths of the dancers, fight to be seen/heard above the unrelenting measure of the metronome. Military time is depicted as being as odds with both human time and Deep Time, imposing unnatural regularity, compartmentalization, and structured repetition. A general fixation with numerical and temporal demarcation structures the piece: 3639 operations, x number of dancers per operation, x number of operations per year, x number of seconds per operation, 12 hours of dance in total. Each second is rigorously choreographed and accounted for. This invites a pessimistic reading of the work: we are caught in an endlessly recursive loop of violence.

The attention to human suffering, and the scale of human loss, draws attention to the *in*human system to which all these living organisms are sacrificed. Critical dance theorist Jill Green argues that the body of the dancer is rendered docile, shaped by processes similar to those ascribed

to Foucault's disciplinary techniques - "a system of surveillance, supervision, training, and correction". The body of the dancer is a site of disciplinary control, "a site where regimes of discourse and power inscribe themselves, a nodal point or nexus for relations of juridical and productive power"[8]. Gestures which might otherwise be read as caring (a graceful foot pads the grass, a hand glides just above its surface) are, within this heavily disciplined, controlled, and almost endlessly reproduced system, anathema to the fragile ecosystem and to the bodies which produce them.

I stayed for the entirety of the 12-hour durational performance[viii]. I watched as, slowly, tufts of sod became dislodged, as the bodies of the dancers exerted more and more effort to reach their lines, as the kinesiology tape accrued over sore limbs, the hair loosened, the eyes dimmed. The precise site of the monument became increasingly unclear. The grass bares the trace of the effort exerted upon it, the product and the process merging to create a sense of "monument". But, far from being contained to the rectangle of grass, I argue that the site of *Operations* is dispersed: is carried in the sore limbs of the dancers the following day, in the bags beneath the eyes of the weary volunteer security, in the dirt remaining in the cracks between the wooden flooring in the church as the regular community of worshippers repopulate the space the following day. In a living monument, the dead become inscribed on and through the bodies of the dancers.

I had mentioned that *Operations* lends itself to a pessimistic reading. How is this to square with my initial contention that art can carve out space for more *resilient* affective responses to ecological loss? It is my impression that through use of iteration, duration, emergence, and performance, *Operations* succeeds in mimetically capturing a more complete image of the full impact of military activity to include the more-than-human. In so doing, and this is the key, *Operations* allows us to both *see* and *grieve* the loss which so often escapes us. While it doesn't necessarily move us beyond grief, without proper channels for grief its passions consume us, becoming despondency and despair. *Operations* carves out space for collective grief, for mourning, so that we might learn to move not *beyond* it, but *with* it. As it is only possible to mourn what was loved, and one can only love what one attends to, I argue that *Operations* re-sensitizes

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[viii] I mention this not to advance the claim that an authoritative reading requires one to have witnessed the entirety of the piece. In fact, the opposite is the case. Durational performances scatter the semiotic process through the creation of manifold temporalities beginning with, but in no way confined to, the experience of the piece. A fragmentary viewing is carried with the witness in its lack of completion, held, perhaps, as a kind of lingering question. A "complete" viewing, fragmentary or not, evades capture. This fragmentation is productive: it is in this openness that the piece preserves the integrity, or radical alterity, of the Other (the other timeline, the other experience).

us, creating the possibility for future, more hopeful movement by attuning us to ecological ways of seeing and feeling.

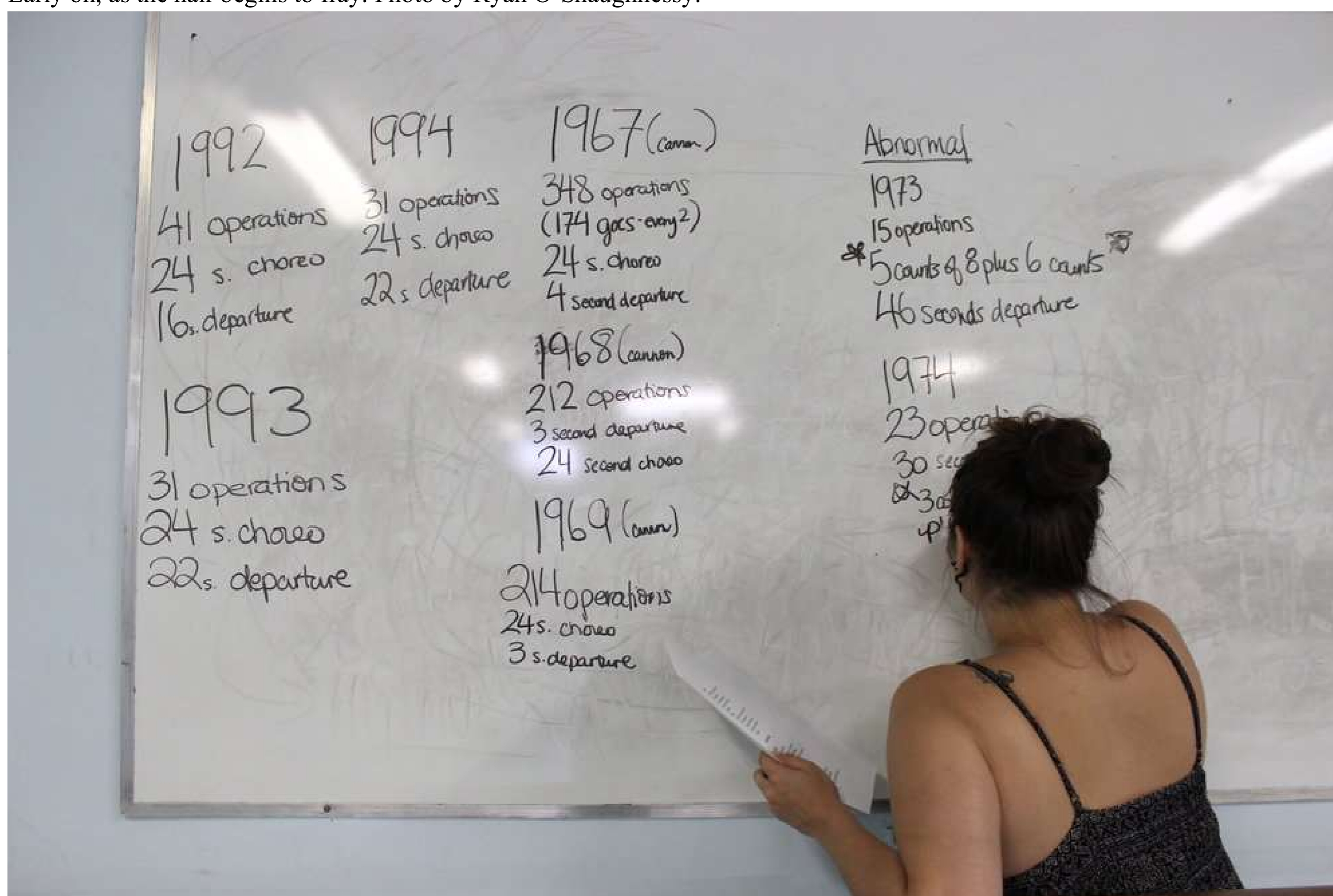A dancer strives to hit her mark, deep into the night of the performance. Photo by Terry McBurnie.

MAKING KIN WITH THE DEAD

Early on, as the hair begins to fray. Photo by Ryan O'Shaughnessy.

In rehearsal, stage manager Nicole DeAngelis plots out the mechanics for several operations. Photo by Magdelina Vasko.

The aftermath. Photo by Hannah Kaya.

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A Marxist Critique of the Communist Party of Kampuchea's "Communist Revolution"

Holly Schweitzer

This paper argues that Democratic Kampuchea[i] (DK) was not a reflection of Marxism based on political and economic theory, and that instead the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK, or also known as the Khmer Rouge) had established state capitalism. My survey of DK is divided into four sections: it begins with a definition of Marxist communism, following with a definition of state capitalism according to Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff[ii]; then the crux of my essay is an analysis of the variables of state capitalism that are consistent with the organization of DK. In this section, I will be primarily referring to James A. Tyner's *From Rice Fields to Killing Fields*, in which argues that the CPK was at fault of obscuring communism with state capitalism. I will also be referring directly to Marx's *Capital: Volume I* – the main source of the development of my own understanding of the CPK's misapplications. For greater context, a general explanation of Cambodia's history is also given in sections throughout my analysis.

Introduction

It is important to note that I am aware of the contentious nature of my thesis. To ask if the CPK were communists at all is not to contest oppositions to Marxism or communism; it is to facilitate an effort for truth and reconciliation.

Despite their ideological ambitions, in four years the CPK enacted one of the most terrorizing political movements of the twentieth century. Between 1975 and 1979, the CPK transformed Cambodia with an attempt to create a Marxist agrarian utopia. Led by dictator Pol Pot, anyone who threatened their idea of social egalitarianism was killed. For the CPK, that meant class divisions that did not embody pure Cambodian peasantry. Those who did – the majority of the rural population – were chosen to cultivate Cambodia's new political economy. Cambodia was already dependent on its agriculture – namely rice production – and for that reason, a peasant-

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[i] The official name of the Khmer Rouge regime.
[ii] Resnick and Wolff's work on state capitalism is based on their analysis of the Soviet Union–a similar case of a regime that undertook a "communist" revolution.

based society was anticipated to be the most productive for a re-engineered state of farm collectives.

In accordance with Marxist theory, the fruits of labour should have then been de-capitalized, appropriated, and distributed fairly. However, the CPK's plan for the state was not devised around this end. The main goal of the CPK was capital accumulation, as the plan for DK's economy was built upon domestic items that could be efficiently manufactured both for domestic consumption and foreign trade.[1] Cambodia was turned upside down in the name of this effort. As Tyner states at the end of his chapter on the CPK's reconstruction of Cambodia, "the CPK leadership laid the foundation for a thoroughly repressive state apparatus committed to the generation of surplus capital."[2] The divisions of labour in DK were exploitative means of production, meeting many of Marx's comprehensive criticisms of the capitalist system in *Capital*. Yet, "a communist revolution" was declared during the CPK's rule of Cambodia. The following sections analyze this claim.

Defining Communism

In *the German Ideology*, Marx envisions a classless society in which all would participate in the planning and controlling of the environment, thereby enabling each person the freedom to nurture and develop his/her abilities:

> While in a communist society, no one has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.[3]

In his description of a society based on communal living, Marx paints a picture of a self-sufficient society that is reminiscent of Thomas More's *Utopia*. The abolition of private property was More's main criticism of a utopian state, along with wealth and social stratification. Instead, the Utopians prioritize the cultivation of skills and artistry in the interest of everyone. There is no poverty in Utopia because everyone works and shares their contributions to the fruits of labour. For Marx, the concept of communal living was not a utopian ideal, but rather an inevitable reaction to the current capitalist structure.

By definition, communism is "a distinct, non-exploitative class structure."[4] It aims at creating a classless society in which the means of production are owned by the community, and the state – the instrument of capitalist oppression – no longer exists. According to Marx, before

the abolishment of the capitalist order there is a necessary transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat.[5] In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx calls this period the first phase of communism:

> [I]t follows that every class which is struggling for mastery, even when its domination, as is the case with the proletariat, postulates the abolition of the old form of society in its entirety and of domination itself, must first conquer for itself political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the general interest, which in the first moment it is forced to do.[6]

This is similar to what Marx states in *The Communist Manifesto*, that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."[7] The succession of capitalism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and a communist revolution are what Marx theorized as "directly linked up with world history."[8] The revolt of the proletariat is the second to last step to achieve communism as their "vocation in history is the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production and the final abolition of all classes."[9] It is a matter of the oppressed standing up against the oppressors that leads to systematic change.

Marx understood how human nature is contingent on means of production by theorizing how our material existence orients our perception of the world. In *Capital*, Marx begins with an examination of the commodity to ultimately explain how the value determined in its production determines social relations within society, and the exploitative relation between labourers and capitalists. Communism as the negation of exploitation warrants that a communist mode of production does not continue exploitative behaviour, instead producers and appropriators are one and the same.

Defining State Capitalism

According to Resnick and Wolff's *Class Theory and History: Capitalism and Communism in the USSR*, when a capitalist class structure interacts with non-class processes, it produces a substructure, i.e. state capitalism. Resnick and Wolff define state capitalism as such:

> [C]apitalist processes of producing, appropriating, and distributing surplus coexist and interact with processes that place state officials (rather than private individuals) in the class position of appropriators and distributors of the surplus.[10]

The authors argue that class structure in the SU was organized by a state capitalist system, and that Soviet agriculture had developed within that framework.

Capitalist exploitation does not refer to an act of domination or power, but to the class relations between the producer and appropriator. Moreover, it is the appropriation of the working class's surplus labour. In Marx's words, "surplus-value is therefore an exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, or of the labourer by the capitalist."[11] What distinguishes state from private forms of capitalism is *where* the enterprises of appropriation are, and *what* are the connections of the appropriators to the state. In state capitalism, those employed by the state exploit labour in enterprises that exist only within the state. For example, a state industrial capitalist enterprise will have "surplus-labor-appropriating capitalists"[12] (or state officials) appointed by the legislative body. State capitalist enterprises may sell their fruits as commodities with prices determined by the market. Such enterprises may be centralized or decentralized, marginalized or de-legitimized, with all of production occurring within the state (the latter being the case for DK).[13]

Resnick and Wolff use Marx's theory of class to explain the rise and fall of the SU. Their analysis of the contradictions within the Soviet regime argues two fundamental points: (1) a capitalist class structure was not abolished in Soviet "socialism," and (2) that communism had only occurred in minor places of the Soviet economy.[14]

Resnick and Wolff define Stalin's interpretation of "classless," which he had derived from Marxist theory. According to their inquiry of Stalin's logic, class is a matter of property ownership, specifically property in the means of production, and a class system is determined by who owns more than others.[15] The SU decided that since they had socialized property – or established collective property – they had also abolished classes. Resnick and Wolff point out Stalin's error: they contend that "any redistribution of property still leaves open the issue of whether and how the production, appropriation, and distribution of surplus have changed."[16] Moreover, if the collectivization of property leaves some groups in society as producers and others as appropriators, as in the SU, then classes were not abolished.

Similar to the SU, the CPK's goal was to create a socialist revolution and a communist society in Cambodia, but instead, the confrontation between capitalism and communism in Cambodia established a form of state capitalism.

A Marxist Critique of the Khmer Rouge: DK as State Capitalism

The CPK identified themselves as Marxist communists. However, with the provision of a definition of both communism and state capitalism, a cross-check of DK's political and economic organization will prove to reflect the latter. Similarly to the SU, the CPK did not establish a non-exploitative system, instead they replaced one form of exploitation with another, namely a private form of capitalism with state capitalism. This is indeed a contentious argument, as Marx is a contentious figure on his own, but also because it is widely known that the CPK was heavily influenced by acknowledged communist dictators, such as Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh. DK is considered part of the twentieth century wave of violent communist regimes, and understandably so. The general understanding of the CPK is that it had enacted extreme measures to achieve an autarkic, peasant-based society. Furthermore, the celebrity of Marx and his proclaimed influence on them overshadows the counterargument of DK as a variant form of capitalism. However, many of the suppositions that support the CPK as Marxist communists are not well supported by empirical evidence.

In his chapter "Critique of Khmer Rouge Political Economy," Tyner situates DK in a chronological framework by correlating their political and economic transformations to other anti-colonial responses that also imposed state-led programs:

> In general, state capitalist governments attempted to restructure agroexport societies through national industrialization, create internal markets through agrarian reform that limited or eliminated the political power of landlord classes, nationalize the control of natural resources, and harness labor to national development projects.[17]

The CPK's "revolution" resonated with similar responses to independence after years of colonization throughout Asia and Africa. On April 17th, 1975, the CPK found themselves confronted with the task of governing a post-colonial society wrought by years of conflict. Marx does not pose an actual theoretical postulation of what follows in capitalism's footsteps, he only proposes general objectives of a communist state in his shorter works *The German Ideology*, *A Critique of the Gotha Programme*, and *The Communist Manifesto*. This created a limitation for "communist" states such as DK, but rather, it gave them room to modify Marx's works according to their own interests.

The immediate priority of a vulnerable post-colonial state is to re-establish a functioning economy to answer to the incessant "need to provide for the basic material conditions of life itself: water, food, and shelter."[18] A state's political and economic ideologies determine how the mode

of production is organized: it dictates how material conditions are provided, i.e. how surplus is generated and distributed. Here, the CPK's plans for economic development prove to be indicative of state capitalism rather than communism.

Cambodia's economy was already dependent on its agriculture, namely rice production. The irrigation of rice – one of Cambodia's greatest assets – has been practiced and developed for at least fifteen hundred years.[19] Prior to French colonial rule, rice production in Cambodia was mainly subsistence-based, as population densities were low and nutrition was available through hunting, gathering, and fishing. Similar to other narratives of colonial history, Cambodia's landscape began to change after the imposition of European thought.

At the beginning of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the French colonial government authorized and facilitated a plan to export rice that would transform Cambodia's agrarian landscape.[20] This introduction of an export-oriented agrarian economy permanently altered Cambodia's social and economic relations. The basis of the colonial economy was to export agricultural products to augment the international export trade system centered in CochinChina.[iii] Large-scale rice plantations were established primarily in Battambang Province.[iv] During the time of its emerging infrastructure, Cambodian farmers continued to cultivate rice with traditional techniques on small areas of land. Under this system, the French acquired rice for export through taxation, and not through the advancement of agricultural technology. According to Tyner, Cambodian farmers paid the highest per capita rates of tax in rice, money, and labour than any other farmers in French IndoChina.[21] This rice tax was the largest source of government revenue.

After Cambodia's independence in 1953, the government assumed control of the large-scale rice plantations in Battambang Province. With financial support from the United States (US), numerous irrigation schemes were implemented throughout the country.[22] By the early 1960s, rice cultivation grew exponentially, increasing to levels approaching over two million tons. However, as conflict in the neighbouring country of Vietnam escalated, so did relations between the Cambodian government and the Vietnamese communists. This had a dramatic effect on both rice production and the lives of Cambodian farmers. Moreover, the aerial bombardments over Cambodia in the early 1970s further destroyed the country's agricultural production.[23] By 1974,

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[iii] A region in the South quarter of Vietnam that was a French colony from 1862 to 1954

[iv] Located in the northwest of Cambodia (my mother was born in Battambang, the capital city).

over three quarters of the paddy fields had been abandoned, and rice production levels fell to 65,000 tons.[24]

Following the CPK's victory in April 1975, they were confronted with a devastated infrastructure. In accordance to Marx's theories, they were far from having the right groundwork for the "communist revolution" they were implementing. Undeterred by the conditions, the CPK elaborated a plan that would increase rice production on a yearly basis: aiming to triple rice production within four years, in an overall effort to maintain three tons of rice per hectare per year.[25] Although the CPK were highly optimistic about their endeavours, Tyner addresses how the planning was not entirely out of accordance with reality. He states that the CPK had "grasped the geography" and readily called for "soil surveys, maps, and other schemata."[26] Altogether, the CPK "endeavoured to increase rice yields through the selection of appropriate varieties, expand the amount of land under cultivation, and achieve double-cropping through the expanded use of irrigation."[27] In his book, Tyner examines the economic component of the plan that is often overlooked: "how increased yields were to facilitate the accumulation of capital."[28] Through an analysis of how greater exports translate into greater profits in DK, Tyner also calls into question the CPK's "communist" political and economic theories.

Surplus Production under the CPK

Between July 21 and August 2, 1976, the CPK identified two economic objects, first "to raise the people's standards of living quickly, both in terms of supplies and in terms of other material goods," and secondly, to "seek, gather, save, and *increase capital* from agriculture."[29] These two objectives raise two important questions – how does a communist regime generate surplus capital, and how is it possible with the abolition of money and private property? Indeed, the CPK did get rid of these two key variables of a capitalist system; however, means of exchange continued to exist as "rice was transformed into a representation of value."[30] Once rice was commodified, its production and export was used to generate surplus capital.[31]

Capital Accumulation

According to Marx, commodities have a dual character: "use values" and "exchange values." The use value of a commodity is determined by its qualitative properties, whereas exchange value is measured quantitatively.[32] In his well-known example of an equation of twenty

yards of linen and one coat, Marx considers the relation between two commodities. Marx explains that the value of linen is expressed in relation to the coat. The value is expressed quantitatively, or in conversation with another commodity. Linen, the first commodity, is expressed as the "relative value," whereas the coat, the second commodity, is the "equivalent form of value," or vice-versa.[33] The value of a commodity cannot be measured without equating it to another commodity.

Marx explains that within capitalism, commodities are not simply exchanged. They are produced to increase capital, and not out of necessity. In relation to the CPK's vision of Cambodia's political economy, the main objective was to increase capital in order to facilitate further economic growth.[34] The plan for the development and expansion of rice production was a means of capital accumulation.

System of Production for Exchange

DK is commonly defined as an autarkic regime, although there is empirical evidence that the CPK was maintaining an industry of foreign trade with neighbouring countries and sought to continue and widen its capacity. The CPK did, however, impose a form of isolation. They imposed restrictions on imports of important items, aiming to eventually reach a point of full self-reliance. On the other side, their chief plan was to also develop the production of items that could be effectively made within their borders, for both domestic consumption and foreign trade.[35] Overall, economic efficiency was the determinant.

Within a system of production for exchange, the production of items is determined by the demand, or in other words, what is the most beneficial for capital accumulation.[36] According to Marx, "it is not the exchange of commodities which regulates the magnitude of their values," instead it is "the magnitude of the value of commodities which regulates the proportion in which they exchange."[37] In DK, the most profitable item for a system of production for exchange was rice.

Exploitation and Relative Surplus Value

The CPK devoted the expansion of lands to increase rice production in order to generate absolute surplus value. In effect, this added an exploitation practice that would eventually facilitate the CPK to obtain relative surplus value.

Marx's process of commodity for exchange explains the accumulation of surplus. Marx argued that commodities are exchanged according to their quantitative relation. This was not determined by money, but labour power. This is illustrated in Marx's "Commodity-Money-Commodity" formula, or C-M-C. The first transformation represents the conversion of a commodity into money (the act of selling), and the second transformation represents the conversion of money into a commodity (the act of purchasing).[38] Following this circulation, commodities are sold for money, then that money is further used to purchase more commodities. This exchange reflects the CPK's plan for a system of production for exchange.

Rice – the commodity – was traded with a handful of other countries, such as China, Yugoslavia, and Madagascar.[39] In return, DK imported commodities, including machinery and medicine.[40] Schematically, rice was used to purchase additional commodities.

The CPK explicitly sought to generate surplus value through a system of production for exchange, and in effect, the peasant-based society was oppressed through violent means, or in the Marxist sense, they were exploited.

Extension of the Working Day

Within DK, the CPK devised the means to generate absolute surplus value through increased rice surpluses. This was obtained through the use of forced labour and by extending the working day. The CPK planned for workers to have three rest days per month, which translates to one rest day for every ten working days.[41] The CPK also planned for "days off" to be productive, stating that they should be used for cleaning, gardening, and studying.[42] During the day, citizens worked according to rigid timetables with assigned production quotas.[43] For example, "[m]en, women, and children were required to excavate three and a half cubic meters of dirt per day in the building of the canal."[44] Long hours coupled with insufficient food rations led to widespread exhaustion and death in DK. For the CPK, death tolls were inconsequential, because labour was translated into surplus and was therefore expendable.

Socially Necessary Labour Time

Limitations to the working day put a restriction on the absolute surplus value that could be accumulated. The CPK tackled this problem by deepening their capitalist logic with the generation of relative surplus value.[45] For Marx, the value of labour power was defined by its socially

necessary labour time (SNLT), meaning "the labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society."[46] An increase in production increases the average number of commodities produced per unit of time, thereby decreasing the amount of SNLT required for the production of a commodity (and the value of a commodity). Relative surplus value is related to the intensity of the working day, whereas absolute surplus value is related to the length. In simple terms, efficient costs of production reel in greater profits. An increase in the productivity of labour – through the introduction of machinery or changes in the division of labour – decreases the value of labour power, and the length of the working day necessary for the reproduction of that value shortens.

Wages

Despite abolishing money, the CPK were able to accumulate relative surplus value by substituting wages with food rations.[47] The absence of currency does not do away with the underlying social relations that give money its value. In DK, rice was considered a commodity, and its importance was its exchange value, not its use value. Following the abolition of money, wages were not paid to the workers, instead food rations assumed the role of minimum wage. The CPK assumed that the increase of productivity would not increase the necessity of food rations allocated.[48] With the food rations remaining constant and a reduction in SNTL, the surplus value increased accordingly.

Alienation

Marx's theory of alienation is developed in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, where he defines four forms of alienation for humanity: "(1) their productive activity, (2) their products, (3) other people, and (4) the species-being."[49] According to Marx, alienation occurs when labouring activities are external to the worker.[50] The degree that DK's economy was predicated on commodity exchange heavily contributed to the alienation of workers. Those who laboured in Cambodia's fields within the CPK's system of production for exchange became alienated from labour, their products, other people, and humanity entirely.

Conclusion

In his analysis of DK's political economy, Tyner argues that it was organized as an exploitative system of production for exchange. Despite the abolition of "elitists" and private property, the mode of production was organized as a means of capital accumulation, and as a consequence, a class system was still embedded in the regime.

Upon my first understanding of how Marxism inspired the CPK's attempt at a communist revolution, I wanted to know if it was a justifiable explanation for the mass graves that have been left behind; if they are remnants of a failed application of communism. If so, it meant that the CPK had theorized Marxism correctly, and that the deaths of over a million people are in some way confirmed as a consequence of a revolt against capitalism. The CPK had named themselves communist and they were also accepted by other communist states. However, it does not necessarily denote DK as communist based on actual theory and practice.

During the four years of the CPK's rule, causes of death under the regime went beyond class discrimination. Through execution, exhaustion, starvation, and disease, at least 1.7 million Cambodians died – more than a quarter of the population. As Tyner decently states, "victims of the CPK died as a consequence of a new and all-encompassing system of social organization, not a lack thereof."[51]

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[9] Marx, *Capital*, 98.

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[12] Resnick & Wolff, *Class Theory and History*, 87.

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[15] Ibid, xiv.

[16] Ibid, xiv.

[17] James A. Tyner, *From Rice Fields to Killing Fields*, 9.

[18] Ibid, 10.

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[20] Ibid, 103.

[21] Tyner, *From Rice Fields to Killing Fields*, 105.

[22] Ibid, 105.

[23] Vickery, *Cambodia*, 137.

[24] Tyner, *From Rice Fields to Killing Fields*, 106.

[25] Ibid, 107.

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[27] Ibid, 109.

[28] Ibid, 109.

[29] Ibid, 110.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Marx, *Capital*, 136.

[33] Ibid, 147.

[34] Tyner, *From Rice Fields to Killing Fields*, 111.

[35] Ibid, 112.

[36] Marx, *Capital,* 133.

[37] Ibid, 156.

[38] Marx, *Capital*, 200.

[39] Tyner, *From Rice Fields to Killing Fields*, 116.

[40] Ibid, 116.

[41] Ibid, 119.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid, 120.

[46] Marx, *Capital*, 129.

[47] Tyner, *From Rice Fields to Killing Fields*, 123.

[48] Ibid, 124.

[49] Tyner, "Violence, Surplus Production, and the Transformation of Nature during the Cambodian Genocide," 495.

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The Philosophical Life and the Political Life: Good in Plato's *Gorgias*

Rebecca A. de Heuvel

Plato's *Gorgias* (c. 380 BCE) sketches Socrates' debate with characters Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles on rhetoric and its effect on society. The dialogue extends itself, through the theme of rhetoric, to concerns about political society, the good life, and discerning where and with whom true power lies. Because Plato organizes the dialogue as a holistic defense of the philosophical life in favor to the political life, the entirety of *Gorgias* is in constant dialogue with Callicles' scathing criticism of philosophy. Plato achieves this implicit, text-wide defense of the philosophic life in a dialogue that seems to touch only on rhetoric through emphasis both on Socrates' extended metaphors throughout *Gorgias* and Socrates' concluding speech on philosophy.

Plato designates Callicles as the main antagonist of *Gorgias*. The treatise, holistically, acts as a defense of the philosophic life against Callicles' claim that the political life is to be preferred to the philosophic. The first and last word of the entire dialogue is "Callicles,"[1] which implicitly suggests his argument is the central antagonist to Socrates' point of view. The first word spoken in the dialogue, by Callicles, is "war".[2] Callicles uses war- language, referring to weakness as slavery and strength of intelligence as freedom, to measure how successfully one is conducting their life in relation to happiness and security achieved.[3] The suggestive language of war is continued throughout the dialogue in sections involving a defense of the political life due to the power it gives to the rhetorician over the mob. Gorgias claims that the power of rhetoric grants the speaker simultaneously both "freedom"[4] over themselves and the ability to "rule"[5] over others, therefore having the entirety of society as the speaker's "slave"[6] while Polus, one of Gorgias' students, claims that the power of rhetoric is equal in strength to that of a "tyrant [able] to kill whomever they wish, and confiscate possessions, and expel from the cities whomever it seems good to them."[7] The three characters are different representations of those influenced by rhetoric: Gorgias is the orator, Polus is the student, and Callicles is the citizen. Callicles, as a metaphor for the citizen who blindly succumbs to the persuasion of the rhetorician, quite literally hosts Gorgias at his home; worships bodily pleasure as the greatest good; and gives a scathing criticism of the philosophical life. Callicles' role as a symbolic representation of the mob is further confirmed by his status as "one of the Platonic dialogues' relatively few fictitious characters."[8] The treatise culminates to a final line in which, after a critique of society for being in a "shameful condition,"

Socrates explicitly addresses Callicles in his assertion that the political life "is worth nothing."[9] By using Callicles as a metaphor for a society that places all distinction on the political life, Plato creates a scenario in which Socrates is not only investigating the nature of rhetoric but defending the philosophical life against an antagonistic mob.

The crux of Callicles' criticism against philosophy is that philosophers, by nature, are incapable to provide for themselves in society. Callicles and Socrates agree that all action is goal-oriented and "the end of all action is the good,"[10] therefore, all action must be taken for the sake of achieving the good. Callicles' good is the political life, rather than the philosophical, due to its equipment for self-preservation within a political world and its power to act freely and therefore attain happiness. The criticism, therefore, extends itself to a question of the best way of life and limits its choice to either the political life or the philosophical. Taking the question quite literally, Callicles concerns himself with what he considers the "greatest danger"[11] in life: death. Arguing it is "childish"[12] for adults to concern themselves in "small matters,"[13] which philosophy concerns itself with, Callicles offers a criticism in which philosophy is impractical due to its unrealistic idealism and consequential neglect of real-life threats. What is necessary, then, for the good life is to have the power to influence others in order to get what one wants. Because it gives force to nothing and renders the philosopher incapable of "giv[ing] voice to anything free or great or sufficient,"[14] philosophy is essentially worthless as a means to achieve Callicles' ideal of human happiness. Callicles' prescription for a good life is to indulge in pleasure, and since "the rulers [by right of nature] have more than … the ruled"[15] it is in one's best interest to be a ruler in society. Callicles' argument is as follows: freedom is the ability to do what one wants; and, since indulging in pleasure is happiness, the measure of one's freedom is in direct correlation to how happy and well-provided that person is. Callicles argues "luxury, intemperance, and freedom, when they have support … is virtue and happiness."[16] The "support"[17] Callicles claims is necessary is the force, through strength from an active political life, to manipulate society in such a way that one is enabled to securely and freely indulge in their passions and desires. Since philosophy is by "necessity … inexperienced in all those things that one who is to be a noble and good man, and well reputed, must have experience of,"[18] it is essentially useless not only in defending oneself against death but in achieving happiness. The criticism of what philosophy lacks is, therefore, also, a praise of what one needs in order to be secure and happy: to be familiar with and capable of commanding the "customs and characters"[19] of the mob.

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Plato gives each element of the good life two possible interpretations: one associated with Socrates and the philosophic life, the other associated with Callicles and the political life. Each dialogue between Socrates and another character in *Gorgias* is centered around these elements. The first element treated is rhetoric, or persuasion, as it is the chief method to which the mob is influenced.[20] As a tool of influence, Socrates argues the "two forms of persuasion [are the] ones that provide belief without knowing, and [the other] that provides knowledge."[21] In his dialogue with Gorgias, Socrates is not so much concerned with condemning rhetoric as a tool, as he later extols it as a means to confront oneself and other's about their unjust behaviour, but enlightening others with the potential dangers of rhetoric in the hands of an ignorant orator.[22][23] Socrates claims "I think that nothing is so great an evil for a human being as false opinion about the things our argument now happens to be about"[24] in relation not to the effect of rhetoric, which both Socrates and Gorgias agree to be "persuas[ion] in a mob,"[25] but the mob's consciousness regarding the morality and intention of the orator. Socrates is conscious that there is a crowd around Gorgias, and therefore purposely leads the conversation in a direction that proves that although rhetoric concerns the just and unjust it is not always a tool used for good.[26] Therefore, through a conversation about rhetoric, Socrates implicitly implies that, because rhetoric is primarily "belief-inspiring,"[27] it is necessary for the mob to be able to discern, somewhat, the just and unjust for themselves: in turn, requiring some brand of concrete knowledge. The distinction is, therefore, between the philosophic life that wishes for an informed body-public and the political life that wishes for an easily influenced, ignorant mob. Knowledge, then, becomes associated with the power to discern what is properly just from what is unjust.

The different interpretations of power are further explored in Socrates' conversation with Polus. Socrates and Polus associate power with good, which allows it to be defined as a means to achieving some positive end.[28] The intelligence of discerning the good, again, becomes the topic of conversation. Socrates' claims that "both rhetors and tyrants have the smallest power in the cities"[29] as they rely on influence without any knowledge of what is good or bad but what seems best to them. Socrates' criticism of rhetoric is in reference to how it is used and by whom. Socrates draws a distinction between two arts: "the one directed to the soul [which he] call[s] politics"[30] and flattery which is a "phantom of a part of politics."[31] Socrates later defines "the true political art [as being conducted] … not with a view to gratification [depending on] … each occasion, but with a view to the best."[32] The phantom part of politics is associated with what seems best in the

perspective of the unknowledgeable while the True political art is associated with the aim of distribution of knowledge from the knowledgeable. Through constant associations that circle back to each other, Plato is essentially arguing, again, that those with true power are the knowledgeable leaders of society and those with no power whatsoever are those that are unable to produce any good due to their lack of understanding what is truly good. Power, then, is to properly educate the mob. In this sense, when Socrates uses rhetoric to shame Polus and Gorgias into agreeing with him, he is using the art properly because he does so with intelligence and proper intention. The philosophical life, following in brief succession from Socrates' conversation with Polus, is argued as always "present[ing] the same and says what you are now amazed at,"[33] because it is not concerned with gratification but a view to the best. Power is associated to consistency and influence in the name of the good, and since philosophy is ever the same and "what is true is never refuted,"[34] the philosophical life that utilizes rhetoric to make citizens better is implicitly concluded to be superior to phantom politics that is ever changing depending on the current tastes of the mob in question.

The final conversation between Socrates and Callicles is a metaphor for the relationship between the philosopher and the ignorant mob. The relationship philosophy has to ignorance, or Callicles' political life, is contentious due to the mob's lack of understanding of what is properly good for them. Socrates draws the distinction in reference to love:

> We are two lovers, each in love with two things – I with Alcibiades the son of Cleinias and with philosophy, and you [Callicles] with two things, the Athenian people and the son of Pyrilampes. And so I perceive you on each occasion unable, terribly clever though you are, to contradict what your boyfriends say and how they say things are, but you turn yourself around up and down. In the assembly, if you are saying something, the Athenian people denies that it is so, you turn around and say what it wishes … for you are not able to oppose either the proposals or the speeches of your boyfriends … [but] philosophy always says what you now hear from me and is much less capricious with me than the other boyfriends.[35]

Callicles' conversation with Socrates the dialogue, again, points to ignorance as being the chief obstacle between living properly philosophically and unproperly politically. Callicles draws two conclusions that are left hanging by Plato: that there is a distinction between "nature and convention"[36] and that "those who are intelligent in regard to the affairs of the city and courageous"[37] are entitled to rule. The two options of interpretation, therefore, are about these lines

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and how Callicles and Socrates interpret their consequences. Callicles offers an antagonistic approach wherein competition and malfeasance are natural to man and law is in relation to societal convention. Contrarily, Socrates argues, by nature, "each man is the friend of another to the greatest possible degree"[38] and therefore it is from ignorant convention to assume there must be a ruler and a ruled where the good life is concerned. In his explicit rebuttal to Callicles' argument, Socrates therefore implicitly agrees that the leaders of society ought to be the most intelligent and therefore capable of making all of mankind, his friends, good through his leadership. Callicles is arguing for what seems good, as Polus did, in relation to his ignorance of truth which he claims to be lost in philosophy, while Socrates is arguing for what is actually good proven to him by falsification.[39] In relation to Callicles' concern with slavery and freedom both Socrates and Callicles have different interpretations of each depending on what they consider slavish and free.

Callicles and Socrates seem to agree "those who set down the laws are the weak human beings and the many."[40] However, Callicles' understanding is that the many conspire to limit the freedom of the strong from fear that the strong should over power them, while Socrates' understanding is that the many conspire to limit the strong because they are ignorant that the strong can truly lead the many to the good. Socrates has already proven that power of the orator, or political man, is merely talent at flattering the ego of the mob, therefore, lacks content and knowledge and makes the political man not powerful, but rather slavish to the wills of the mob.[41] Socrates refrains from explicitly bringing the language of ruler and ruled into his argument unless it is first mentioned by his opponent until the conclusion of the dialogue.

The language of violence is unsuitable to the philosophic life because the end goal of philosophy is not to gain power over others for the sake of power, but to raise all of mankind to betterment through knowledge. Socrates refers to political men of being "skilled in service"[42] because they are only powerful in relation to the ego of the mob, not in relation to their inner constitution and knowledge. Socrates argues suffering is not in relation to death or abuse but in the levels of injustice in one's soul: therefore, in response to Callicles' criticism of philosophy as being incapable of self-preservation, Socrates says,

> Let someone despise you as foolish and trample you in the mud, if he wishes – and yes, by Zeus, confidently let him knock you this dishonorable blow; for you will suffer nothing terrible, if you really are noble and good, practicing virtue.[43]

The slave, therefore, is the one who is incapable of thinking for himself and discerning good from bad: the mob that has enslaved itself to its own egoism. The answer to Callicles' question, of "how … a human [could] become happy while being a slave to anyone at all,"[44] is that they cannot but they must first learn to whom they are dispositioned to become enslaved and through whom will they be granted their freedom. The dialogue, therefore, concludes with Socrates' claim that the philosophic life is the "argument that has … revealed itself like a leader"[45] because it leads men to what is truly good.

Plato utilizes the extended metaphor of sickness and health to argue in favor of the philosopher leading society out of ignorance and into knowledge. The dialogue begins with the words "CALLICLES: In war"[46] and ends with "nothing, Callicles."[47] The association between the public through Callicles, and their interpretation of life as a sort of war in which one man is always trying to dominate another is made meaningless by the concluding word of "nothing" from Socrates to Callicles.[48] Alongside the popular extended metaphor of life as symbolic violence, Plato gives to Socrates the language of sickness and health. The philosophic life, therefore, is a sort of medication for the sickness of society and philosophers are doctors.

Doctors both care for their patients and are knowledgeable in health unlike the cook who is only knowledgeable in his clients' pallets and their desires. Socrates argues "cookery is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice"[49] as a false idol that masterfully pretends towards the good but achieves nothing substantial in improvement of health. Socrates then alludes to "baseness"[50] as a type of "sickness"[51] rather than a natural state of human beings, and therefore necessitates a type of "medicine"[52] for its cure. Socrates also charges the doctor with curing sickness, no matter how painful. In relation to the text, Socrates seems to have the answers before entering the conversation to which his opponents, more often than not, point out as a conniving character trait of his. However, as the doctor is charged with treating his patients, Socrates understands himself, as a philosopher, as being charged with treating the sick souls of the mob. The element of care illuminates Socrates' goal in engaging in dialogue with Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles in a public arena. Socrates' wishes to enlighten and medicate society from their base understanding of the good life as the quality of knowledge is derived from "whom we learn[] it."[53]

The dialogue form is the cure to baseness of soul because its goal is truth rather than manipulation. The consistency of philosophy when engaging in arguments with political speakers proves its validity: as though responding to Callicles' original criticism that philosophy was

"ridiculous,"[54] Socrates claims, "for my speech is always the same: I do not know how these things are, but of those people I fall in with, as now, no one who says something different is able not to be ridiculous."[55] The suggestion is that, through dialogue, people are able to come to a consensus on the truth and therefore, despite Socrates' claim of not knowing how something is the way it is, it thus must be true because no one capable to properly refute it. When Callicles, as the mob, therefore asks Socrates to "go through the argument [him]self [in speech]"[56] Socrates responds "I, at any rate, do not say what I say with knowledge, but I am seeking in common with you – so that, if one who disputes me is manifestly saying something, I shall be the first to grant it."[57] Socrates is not concerned with the "victory"[58] Callicles ascribes to him, but with discerning properly through dialogue what is the best way to live. This concern of mutual beneficence extends to the purpose of dialogue in contributing to mutual goodness in "community [and] friendship."[59] Socrates expresses a distaste for entering into conversation with the goal of victory through manipulation when he explains, "I am not asking from love of victory, but truly wishing to know what in the world is the way you think you ought to act in politics among us"[60] because Socrates' understanding of humanity is to exist to help one's fellow man live the best life. The doctor, much like the philosopher, is concerned with health: one of body and the other of soul.

Socrates ascribes dialogue as the best method for human beings to ensure the health of one another's souls. Socrates describes this as the purpose in life when he is getting frustrated with Callicles' complacency in their argument and rhetorically asks:

> By the gods, what is the bodily condition of Socrates himself in regard to health? Or has anyone else yet been released from sickness by Socrates, whether slave or free? … what human being will you have made better through intercourse with you?[61]

The end of the philosophical life is, therefore, to attain health of soul by the constant care of each other's souls. Socrates refutes Callicles' criticism of philosophy by demonstrating that only philosophy is "the true political art [because it] alone … [speaks] with a[n informed] view to the best."[62] As the doctor would, philosophy "examines the nature of him of whom it takes care and the cause of the things that it does, and it has a reasoned account to give of each of these things"[63] and as such, is able to administer cures from knowledge and love, rather than pretend to cure, as cookery would, from ignorance and selfishness.

Plato's *Gorgias* is a holistic defense of the philosophic life in comparison to the political: as philosophy proves to be the proper method of ensuring self-preservation and health of soul.

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Plato organizes the entire treatise to be in dialogue with Callicles' scathing criticism of philosophy, as Callicles symbolically represents popular opinion and the ego of the mob. Plato uses dialogue because he is concerned with the care and knowledge of all people, and therefore, portrays Socrates as a metaphysical doctor capable of curing the public through mutually beneficial discourse and a perpetual checking of one another. Philosophy is preferred to polity because it concerns itself with no other goal than what is best for all, and therefore proves to be the caretaker and preserver of all of mankind.

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[33] Ibid 482b.
[34] Ibid 473b.
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[40] Ibid 483b.
[41] Ibid 466a-c.
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[59] Ibid 508a.
[60] Ibid 515b.
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[62] Ibid 521e.
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FROM COMMODITY FETISHISM TO BRAND FETISHISM

Les Charrues Devant Leurs Bœufs: From Commodity Fetishism to Brand Fetishism

Nelson Duchastel de Montrouge

I think Hawaiians make their gods from wood,
a friend of mine has got one on a shelf,
I'd find it strange to get down on my knees
in front of something that I'd carved myself.

Bruce Taylor (1998)

I hope to argue that brands obscure the process of their own creation, and ultimately the very particular economic situation which is preconditional to their ascendancy. So as to describe the concealment at play, I will find it necessary to make a distinction between 'branding' and 'brand'. The former refers to the work behind designing, marketing, and selling a branded object as well as the concrete products of that work, whether communicative, like an ad campaign, or substantial, like a logo design. The latter refers to the affective power which emerges from branding, but attaches itself to the branded object. There is labour involved in creating the branding and the brand, though this labour is 'unproductive' in Marxian terms. Therefore, I argue that *neither* the branding nor the brand have any real economic value, although both command prices. However, the labour behind the brand is so irretrievably mixed within productive labour that the value of labour and the price of the brand cannot be conclusively determined in a final calculation. In exploring the nature of the brand, this essay endeavours to develop a theory of brand fetishism which is analogous to Karl Marx's fetishism of the commodity. We will approach brand fetishism in two attempts: once somewhat abstractly in the commodity-as-emblem, and once in the economic imperative to advertise which comes about in capital's unfolding.

The paper will be structured as follows. We will first revisit Marx's idea of the fetishism of the *commodity* and demonstrate that some fetishisms are not accounted for by Marx, namely that his model does not allow for specific commodities to be fetishized in a qualitatively or quantitatively distinct way. We will examine how our current-day *objets fétiches* might be conceptualized, and along what understanding of 'fetish'. We then continue by outlining the problems of realizing the commodity on the market through subsequent phases of capitalism, which will bring us to the emergence of branding as a predominant form of marketing. The distinction between production costs and selling costs and the similar distinction between

productive and unproductive labour will be explained and slightly problematized. An examination of the functioning of branding will ensue, relying on some more recent Marxian literature. Finally, our understanding of fetishism will return as we take stock and establish our theory of the fetishism of the brand.

Commodity Fetishism Revisited

Marx's fetishism pertains to *all* commodities, from the ho-hum to the emblematic.[i] Further, there is nothing in his theory which allows for a gradation of relevance, not even a *feeling* of strangeness which would render one commodity a more fetishy fetish. His evocative prose (which we much appreciate) used in describing the feeling of critiquing commodity fetishism has been confused for a description of a feeling proper to fetishism.

The easiest way to misunderstand Marx's commodity fetishism is to assume that the social character of economic value includes things of cultural substance like norms, market etiquette, meanings, subjectivities, or the like. Marx's value must be thought of strictly in the abstract. No doubt we can say that commodities can have certain 'values' which are culturally contingent, but we would no longer be speaking about value in a Marxian sense.

Marx's fetishism theory, then, is that *commodities themselves* take on the value which was previously *of* the producer, and that the value is then apprehended as being *of* that commodity in an intrinsic sort of way, thereby concealing the true nature of value (human, active) with a new form of appearance (object, passive). This holds true for all commodities under the law of value; in fact this fetishism is only an expression of that law.

There is no particular mysterious mood which can quantify one commodity as more fetishized than another. It is important to stress this point, since the 21st-century reader of Marx, having lived through cool capitalism and logomania, might understandably imagine that fetishized commodities such as brand-name notebooks, prestige car models, artisanal goods, and so forth are examples of the fetishism of the commodity gone mad. Rather, as clumsily absurd as it may sound, *the fetishism of the commodity does not account for the fetishism of these fetishized commodities* thus understood. Jean Baudrillard feels that he is addressing a shortcoming in Marx's thought when

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[i] Or, what is a somewhat different argument with the same upshot; even if one holds that all products have symbolic value (a not indefensible position), Marx's theory still only accounts for their economic value.

the former writes: 'Il apparaît donc que « fétichisme de la marchandise » (à savoir que ce qui est rapport social se déguise en qualité et en attribut de la marchandise elle-même) ne joue pas sur la marchandise définie *à la fois* comme valeur d'échange ᴇᴛ valeur d'usage, mais sur la seule valeur d'échange. La valeur d'usage, dans cette analyse *restrictive* du fétichisme, n'apparaît pas comme rapport social, ni donc comme lieu de fétichisation,'[1ii] and whether one holds it against Marx or not, Baudrillard is in the right here. Marx's fetishism is not a theory which accounts for all fetishes, nor is it (it seems to me) designed to.

Let us try and get a handle on things. If we may permit ourselves to propose definitions on the fly, by fetishized commodities (henceforth, to avoid confusion: *objets fétiches*) we mean commodities which are particularly emblematic of something. Moleskine-brand ledgers are a recognized emblem of the elegant bohemian type, Maserati-brand sports cars of wealth, as artisanal dress shoes are of England or Italy. Recalling that Marx's use-value can relate to any need, 'whether they arise, for example, from the stomach, or the imagination',[2] we have no theoretical problem in asserting that our Moleskine, Maserati, or Meccariellos fulfill the need, for whomever the need may arise, of being emblematic of their respective 'referents', if you will. And if we may permit ourselves the audacity to cite Baudrillard again,[iii] 'la valeur d'usage, l'utilité elle-même, tout comme l'équivalence abstraite des marchandises, est un *rapport social* fétichisé, — une abstraction, celle du *système des besoins*;'[3] ie. the use-as-emblem of *objets fétiches* are granted by virtue of the social fabric. This is obvious enough in our examples;[iv] whatever 'natural' use a Maserati may have (say, to a person stranded on a desert island), its emblematic status (as well as many of its other uses) is contingent on others, namely as interlocutors of emblems. But what is more, rather than immediately recognizing the nature of the utility of a product (viz. that it is socially conditional), one is more likely to treat the product itself as holding that emblematic power.

We now have before us two modes of fetishism. Surely there are many more — mediatic, magico-religious, pathological — but it is now our aim to simply compare the Marxian fetish

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[ii] 'Valeur d'échange' and 'valeur d'usage' translate to 'exchange-value' and 'use-value' respectively. However, it seems that where Baudrillard has written 'valeur d'échange' he ought to have simply written 'valeur'.

[iii] I do not, in an essay on Marx, want to adopt Baudrillard wholesale nor those other critical theorists whose insights, in the scarcity such that they have have trickled down to me second- and third-hand, may have been engaged here. Barthes, Negri and Lazzarato and are important to the sources I have cited and consulted, but to attempt to align my arguments with theirs would make my essay needlessly confused and controversial.

[iv] Let us not forget that while Baudrillard is here claiming that utility in general is fetishized, a potentially controversial position, we are still speaking of the use-as-emblem of *objets fétiches*.

proper and the emblematic *objet fétiche* so as to construct an understanding of 'fetish' which includes both. As in our epigraph, a fetish seems to be something with a physical outside and a theological inside, 'theological' not only in the sense of metaphysicality, but also referring to that tradition of rational thought which takes the existence of its subject—the divine (or in our analogy: value for Marx, and utility for Baudrillard)—as a given. This inside and outside inextricably refer to one another.[v] We 'find it strange', like our atheistic poet and the atheistic Marx, that one should venerate something that oneself has made, has in fact made *twice over*; once through the sensuous work of carving and once through the theological creation of concepts. For the fetish to be successful, it must externalize from humankind and internalize within itself *at least* this latter act of creation, which is to say its (Marxian, symbolic, or religious) value. To take stock, the fetish such that we are interested in it has two properties; (1) namely, that it has an outer materiality and an inner content which are seem inextricable and (2), that (1) this seeming inner content is on closer inspection false *not* a property of the fetish object and; that the fetish *qua* fetish obscures the real processes of its creation.

The Commodity on the Market

We now face two difficulties with the commodity. First, although labour directly determines value, value does not directly determine price. Second and closely related, Marx tells us that 'it is only by being exchanged that the products of labour acquire a socially uniform objectivity as values.'[vi][4] Before, it was sufficient that an article be humanly produced for it to be valuable, but now this value must be realized through exchange.[vii] An analysis of market forces will further qualify our understanding of the behaviour of the commodity. Please do not consider it presumptuous of me that I now explain something as rudimentary as the microeconomic supply and demand curves, for certain basic assumptions behind these are not commonly brought to light, and a fuller understanding of them will help illustrate Marx's unfolding of capital.

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[v] Thereby, despite 'fetish''s exotic connotations of Hawaiian or West African religious practices, we find some examples of this religious practise closer to home in the Christian icon, the production of which is neither the creation of a representational graven image nor the creation of an idolatrous household god, since Christ (or the Virgin, or a saint) is present in the image and in a sense *is* the image. As I have said elsewhere ('Film as Icon' 2017) an icon is a sign which is its own referent. Such a description also applies to our fetish.

[vi] by 'uniform' I imagine Marx is referring to the establishing of a society-wide average labour-time and thereby a standard value.

[vii] From this we must concede, as will become relevant later, that there are labour-times which do not valorize. (cf 'Productive and Unproductive Labour' Marx 1038-1049)

As the accumulation of constant capital is often necessary to increase productivity, we find that 'there is an increase in the minimum amount of individual capital necessary to carry on a business under its normal condition,'[5] meaning that the industry-standard level of productivity requires more capital than many capitalists have at their disposal, effectively barring entry of smaller capitals into the market and *caeteris paribus* vouchsafing the exclusivity of market share and thereby further capital concentration to a static number of competing firms. At this point, standard productivity is so high and thereby the value (and often price) of an individual article is so low that these firms must control vast market shares to make substantial financial returns. Their fierce hunger for larger market shares appears as 'the cheapening of commodities,'[6][viii] which in turn lowers profit margins, generating an industry-wide precarity. Many capitalists become unable to turn a profit and either cease production or are bought out by larger capitals, centralizing market control potentially overnight in a smaller number of competing firms. 'This expropriation' of capitalists by capitalists, writes Marx, 'is accomplished through the action of the immanent laws of capitalist production itself, through the centralization of capitals.'[7]

As capital is thus cannibalized, competition cools down again, allowing the surviving large capitals wider profit margins and resuming the concentration of capital. An equilibrium is reached, bringing us into a new market paradigm. The demand and supply of our large firm looks like this:

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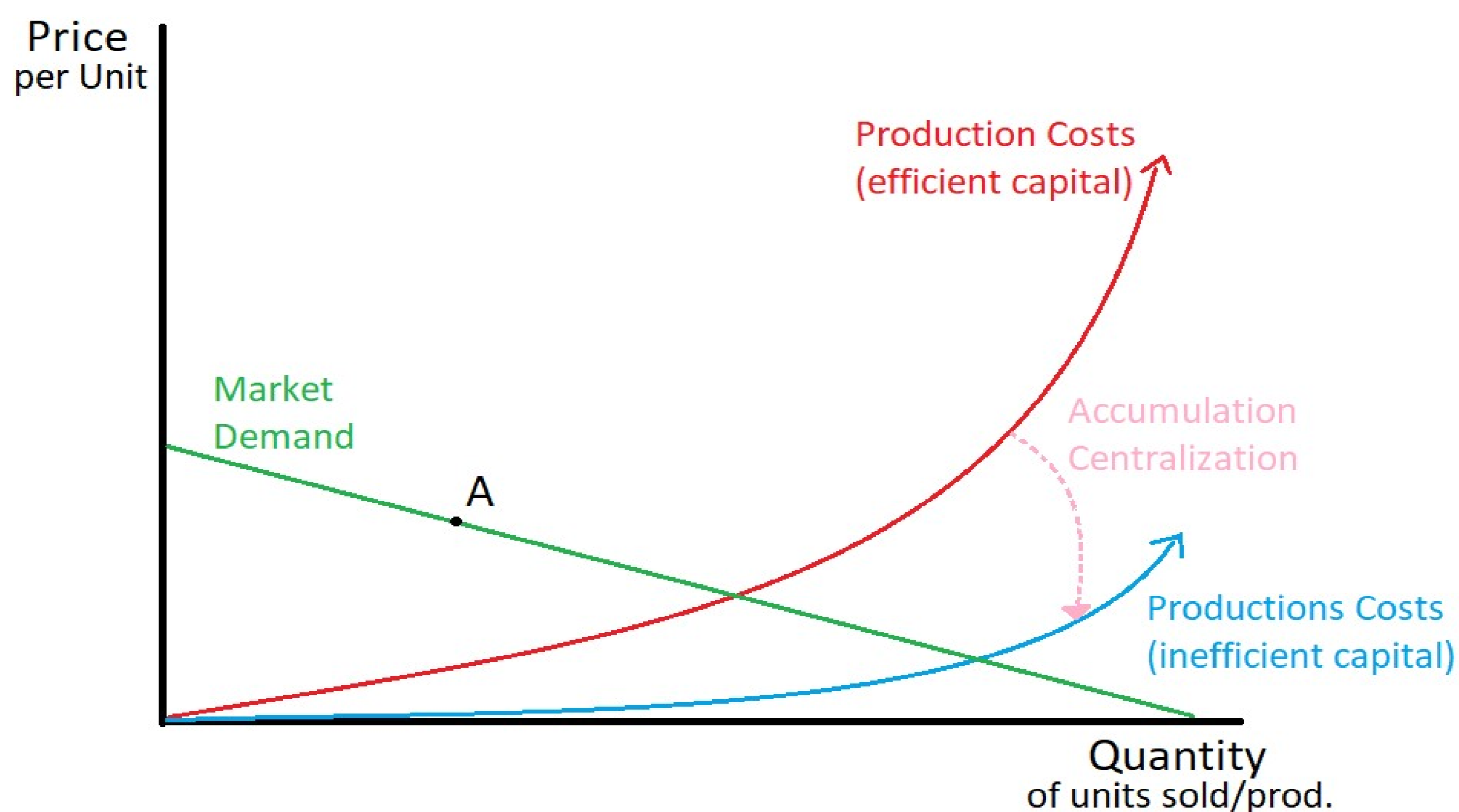
viii also 'competition rages in direct proportion to the number, and in inverse proportion to the magnitude, of the rival capitals'.

The large firm has either expropriated its rivals wholesale, or has developed a mutual understanding with its competitors to not needlessly endanger each other and themselves through price competition.[ix] Whether as a monopoly or as part of an effective cartel, the firm is able to aim for quantity-price A, which maximizes its net revenues.[8]

In their *Monopoly Capital* Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, writing in the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, argue that such a situation is symptomatic of a new capitalism which has come to prominence since Marx's time. This change heralds the emergence of two[x] systemic ills, namely the difficulty in absorbing the surplus value generated by the large capitals and the insufficiency of market demand as to the mass of commodities generated by production. These irritations, we will soon see, are soothed in part by the entry of the branded object on the market.

As Baran and Sweezy tell us, 'the monopolistic structure of markets enables the corporations to appropriate the lion's share of the fruits of increasing productivity directly in the form of higher profits …. And continually widening profit margins in turn imply aggregate profits which rise not only absolutely but as a share of market product.'[9] To put it simply, after a certain level of productivity is reached, these profits cannot all be re-invested into variable capital without the resulting supply outstripping demand. There is a two-fold solution to this two-fold problem. Businesses buy labour-power which is not directly concerned with production or with the necessities of distribution — ie. do not valorize capital — but which is in the business of increasing demand for commodities.[10] These 'unproductive labourers', in which we include brand-labour and branding-labour, have become indispensable to monopoly capital since the historical centralization of capital at the end of the nineteenth century. Their industry, in full bloom, continues to produce new occupations and specializations.

[ix] So argue Baran and Sweezy 58f, but this is not to say that competition itself becomes obsolete; competition via innovation becomes an important factor in market control, as well as a motor of technological change generally. Baran and Sweezy write about the 'rise of the Research and Development movement' of 'recent years,' which is a reflection of the new drive to innovate. (92)

[x] We could have added a third ill (or contradiction if you prefer): the decline of the purchasing power of the public which accompanies the lopsided distribution of surplus. This contradiction is closely related in causes and in its reliefs to our second contradiction above. However, we cannot be here concerned with it, nor the bulk of Baran and Sweezy's insights, since it does not lead us to our thesis of brand fetishism. And plus, we want to continue this essay's pattern of twos.

Sales versus Production

Why 'unproductive'? Briefly stated, Marx's criteria for productive labour is that it must create a commodity and thereby directly create *surplus-value*.[11] A labourer can be useful and even necessary, such as a paramedic, and that paramedic can be a wage-labourer and thereby commodify their time, and still not be a productive worker by want of not producing a new commodity. I imagine that this is how Baran and Sweezy conceive of people in the selling industry, ie. as not producing commodities.[xi] Though the work of selling is vital in realizing the value of commodities, and the price of these commodities increases to reflect the work in selling them,[xii] those commodities, so to speak, are already produced.

The distinction between productive and unproductive labour dovetails with the distinction between selling costs and production costs. Edward Chamberlin writes:

> Costs of selling increase the demand for the product on which they are expended; costs of production increase the supply. It would seem that there could be no more simple and obvious mistake than to combine them, yet economic theory has done exactly this, counting all the entrepreneur's outlays as his 'costs of production.'[12]

Labour power which solely impacts the demand curve for a product does not produce anything and is therefore not productive. And yet this distinction can be difficult to draw in practice. Chamberlin's economic work includes an influential theory of *differentiation*, whereby a firm can command higher prices for a product which is differentiated (substantially, cosmetically, by virtue of a good reputation, etc[13]) from otherwise similar products since that firm now has something like a monopoly. The cost of differentiation is a selling cost since it changes the volume of his sales,[14] but since it might include the cost of changing the sensuous form of the commodity itself, it can enter the factory floor. A designer who creates the Scalable Vector Graphics (.svg) file for the Pepsi logo is an unproductive worker, and the same goes for workers in the canning plant during the brief intervals when they brand the cans. Baran and Sweezy also point out this theoretical difficulty:

> No one doubts that a large part of the actual labor which goes into producing an automobile—how much more we shall examine presently—has the purpose not of making a more serviceable product but of making a more

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[xi] Although advertisers, marketers, designers &c may create articles which are alienated from them to become assets of their company which can even have a price, these are *generally* not created for the purpose of exchange on a market and are thereby not commodities. Throughout this essay I assume that *all* workers in the selling industry are unproductive.

[xii] Marx allows that unproductive labour may have this effect. (Marx 1042)

salable product. But the automobile, once designed, is a unit which is turned out by the combined efforts of all the workers in the shop and on the assembly line. How can the productive workers be distinguished from the unproductive? How can selling costs and production costs be separated?[15]

Their answer is to compare the cost of an existing automobile to that of a hypothetical one which would 'perform the same functions but in the safest and most efficient manner.'[16] This they actually do[17] and the results go far in providing a damning critique of the waste, vanity, and fraudulence of the current economic system.

However, it seems to us myopic to talk about the functions of a car thus, as abstracted from the generations-long sales effort behind it, a sales effort that induced substantial uprooting of American infrastructure, a new set of familial dynamics, and nothing short of a new anthropology. The argument relies on an ascetic ideal of bare rational necessities, thinking that among these is a safe and efficient automobile. Which it no doubt is, but not unqualifiedly so. The sales effort creates and mobilizes a system of needs, but in order to be effective this system of needs must be based on certain products already extant (the owner of a horse needs hay), and these products were themselves in turn sold by a sales campaign based on a supply of products, (the owner of a cart needs a horse) and so forth all the way down. Baran and Sweezy go back to automobile production as it was in 1949 so as to rescue the clear actuarial distinction between selling and producing. But to be certain of the accuracy of one's calculation it would be necessary to start from when hawkers first laid out their wares to make them shine before a buying audience.

To be clear, we hold that there is a real distinction between selling costs and production costs, and that selling generates no value, but that there are some activities which are part of 'selling' but in practice cannot be distinguished from factory-floor 'producing', such as the labour required to differentiate one car from another through distinctive design. These activities are undertaken by otherwise productive workers. Their productive labour creates the commodity and the product of the remainder of their labour (to wit, of their unproductive labour): we shall call the *brand*. Since the ratio of productive to unproductive labour is not calculable, the value of the branded commodity is also incalculable. For labour which is clearly unproductive and is indirectly connected to the formation of the brand (such as graphic designers, for one) we shall call the *branding*. There is also a remainder of selling labour which has nothing to do with brand nor branding, such as sales agents, but these do not enter our discussion.

Attempts at Brand Valuation

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published an international standard for brand valuation in 2010 which outlines approaches for placing an exchange-value on a brand. They propose three different approaches, which itself speaks to a lack of common understanding of the nature of a brand:

> The *income approach* measures the value of the brand by reference to the present value of the economic benefits expected to be received over the remaining useful economic life of the brand.[xiii]

> The *market approach* measures value based on what other purchasers in the market have paid for assets that can be considered reasonably similar to those being valued.[18]

> The *cost approach* measures the value of a brand based on the cost invested in building the brand, or its replacement or reproduction cost.[19]

Let us deal with these backwards. We are not interested in the cost approach since this will only succeed in giving us the cost of what we have termed the branding, rather than the brand. We are not interested in the market approach since the notion that an article is worth what it will go for is a shallow tautology which gets us no closer to the nature of the article. The income approach, especially the price premium method, is the most interesting since it shows what otherwise productive labour adds to a commodity when it works on it unproductively; a promise of extra exchange-value to be realized down the line.

We are therefore in agreement with Zoe Sherman when she writes:

> The value form of a brand is therefore fictitious. When a brand is assessed to be worth billions of dollars, those billions of dollars—the present value of an expected future flow of exchange value—appear in the firm's accounting of its assets now; they can potentially be realized in the sale of the brand now, but no productive labor has yet been performed and no labor value has been realized.[20]

By this we understand that the brand has no value in the Marxian sense. Sherman's characterization of the brand as fictitious capital is inspired by Marx's appellation of financial assets by the same name in volume three of *Capital*.[21] Sherman does not (nor anyone else as far as I know) make an explicit distinction between the fictitious (or in other words, lack of) value of the brand and the

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[xiii] 'ISO 10668:2010' §5.2, this can be either be achieved by calculating the price premium charged for the branded product in question when compared to a hypothetical or actual unbranded product, or by calculating the increased market share the branded product controls by virtue of its brand, or by the expected future revenue gained by leasing out elements of the brand to other firms, to name a few methods.

fictitious value of branding, but her account of communicative work closely resembles what we had in mind for the latter. Paid employees of the selling industry are essentially tasked with 'intercept[ing] perception' of potential consumers, 'hold[ing] the gaze and convey[ing]' some sort of message,[22] which may be purely informative or purely deceitful, or without any positive content, or some combination thereof. After that, it is up to the potential consumers to act as effective interlocutors, which, if they do, 'a brand identity will have become a social fact, an element of social communication, even of communications not originating with the seller.'[23] Adam Arvidsson adds the additional activity of brand management, which, recognizing the consumer as an autonomous *bricoleur* of brand identity who may put it to undisciplined or unanticipated uses, 'works by enabling or empowering the freedom of consumers *so that it is likely to evolve in particular directions.*'[24]

Being sold something is a bilateral affair, and purchasers must be somewhat active in meeting sellers halfway. This holds even stronger for sales of branded objects; if the purchaser is already familiar with the brand and it holds good associations for them, and if they vouch for such a brand to their peers, then they are partly doing the seller's work for them. And if we are to seriously use that word, 'work', we accept that there is such a thing as unpaid consumer-side work which enters the process of branding. This unpaid work is complicit in creating a use-as-emblem for the commodity, to the point that 'paying more for a branded good is itself an expressive act that contributes to the symbolic use value of a brand.'[xiv][25]

Adam Arvidsson follows the history of the marketing behind Piaggio's scooters (chiefly, Vespa-brand scooters), which he suggests might indicate a larger trend in the intersection of culture and economy in the second half of the 20th century. From its inception, the Vespa had material consequences on Italian society by virtue of its affordability for young persons and the mobility it granted them.[26] However, the marketing agency in charge of Priaggio's Italian market found that 'contemporary [Italian] youth culture, while rich in images and symbols to draw from, did not offer any particular values or modes of behaviour arguably necessary for potent subcultural

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[xiv] I should like to add that by 'symbolic use value' we should not assume a fixed and definite symbolic meaning. Rather, successful branding seems to move to more and more diffuse and ambiguous meanings. Though BMW and Mercedes might both be emblematic of wealth, Arvidsson points out that their emblematic values are codifferentiated "at the very abstract level of 'mood' and 'feeling'. Unlike Fordist advertising, what to do with the object, how precisely the BMW or Mercedes is supposed to enter social relations is never explicitly spelled out." (Arvidsson 2005, 245)

symbols'.[xv][27] So the marketing agency, Arvidsson continues, 'felt it was their duty to supply the younger generation with new values and behavioural models, to construct a new generational subjectivity for them to adopt.'[xvi][28] Here it seems that firms, in addition to simply reaping free consumer-side sign-creation, had a hand in inventing and massaging a mostly fictitious 'youth' for whom post-materialistic ideals and new identities were fetishistically embodied in commodities.[xvii] Arvidsson further adds that as these brands age they accrue a marketable nostalgia which makes their youth-oriented marketing efforts viable for older demographics.[xviii]

Let us observe what we have sketched out as the formation of a brand. A Dr. Martens-brand boot has a distinctive (or, more to the point, differentiating) bright yellow stitching on the welt. One could contend, as Baran and Sweezy would, that such stitching is clearly the result of an unproductive portion of labour-time within the larger, mostly productive labour-time required to make the boot, since this stitching is in fact a skeuomorph serving no structural purpose and is therefore purely for sales purpose. At this point, we might characterize the unproductive brand-labour as having been put towards the purchase of a financial asset, or a lottery ticket. Branding efforts, in which we categorize both paid and unpaid[xix] unproductive communicative work, can realize our lottery ticket by creating a demand specifically for boots with bright yellow stitching.[xx] If the gambit is successful, the commodity sold is no longer 'boots' but rather 'boots with bright yellow stitching'. Or, since we had decided that the application of the stitching was not

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[xv] while the Vespa brand had developed a "countercultural sign-value" among British mods seemingly without the involvement of Piaggio, marketers did not make the subsumption of this free cultural caché a central aspect of their Italian marketing efforts, perhaps because of the difficulties in importing a subculture from a different socio-cultural context. (Arvidsson 2001, 51, cf Hebdige 1988)

[xvi] relying on interviews printed in Tamburini, G. "La pubblicità quale riflesso e anticipazione di valori sociali condivisi. Un caso di lungo periodo: Temi centrali e coerenze espressive nella comunicazione Piaggio dal 1966 al 1985," MA thesis for the Istituto Cesare Alfieri at the University of Florence.

[xvii] Pre-existing subcultures for whom this may have been true never had an important quantitative market impact, but these qualitatively laid the groundwork for iconographies of cool which could be converted into exchange values on a mass scale. The task of marketers was to reproduce this mindset in as many consumers as possible, regardless of if they felt a part of those subcultures or not. (Arvidsson 2001, 62)

[xviii] Arvidsson 2001, 64f

[xix] Unpaid branding efforts need not be harmonious with paid branding efforts. Much of the branding of Dr. Martens-brand boots, for most of their history, is their nasty reputation as the uniform and *objet fétiche* of white power skinheads. The firm then has an interesting task in sorting out just how much of their product's subcultural caché they wish to reincorporate into their promotion, especially if they wish to remain *just* on the right side of subversion. When the Dr. Martens 'brand' was acquired in 2013 for £300 million by Permira, a European holding company, the memo referred cryptically to "deep-rooted links with the working class, music, subcultures and self-expression." ("Dr Martens Acquired by the Permira Funds")

[xx] Since these branding efforts can have varying degrees of success or unsuccess, then we must conclude that the premium paid for boots with bright yellow stitching bears no direct relationship with the labour-time necessary for such stitching, nor the outlays of the branding efforts borne by the firm.

valorization, then the customer is in reality buying two products; the boot commodity, and the brand which, lacking value, is not a commodity (though can reflect indirectly the cost of branding).[xxi] What's more, as branding's good luck continues, non-superfluous features of the boot may enter the brand in the same way, making brand and boot increasingly indistinguishable in practise. And we have seen that this excrescence does not limit itself to the material body of the boot; the brand continually subsumes the cultural significance of itself into itself.

Now suppose that some level-headed consumers adopt a 'post-post-materialism' and opt for products with a lower price/value ratio (viz. a relative increase in worker's real wages) and a higher use-value/price ratio (viz. an increase in, say, durability and a decrease in hype). Suddenly a small artisanal bootmaker's firm in England may once again enter the market by attracting clients of this persuasion, despite the higher absolute prices which would have to be charged to reflect the relatively high cost of first-world labour-power; the perceived fairness of such an arrangement would in fact be an incentive for such clients. But mark this, for the near-totality of the bootmaker's wages must thereby be counted as selling costs. Thus when one believes themselves (incorrectly of course) to have left the labour-denying fetishism of the commodity behind, one falls more fully into a fetishism of a certain brand of ethics, which is a brand nonetheless.

For in our final analysis the brand must appear as a fetish, a phantasmic entity which in its veneration hides the unproductive interpenetration of selling costs and production costs, the impressment of the unpaid consumer into the branding process, the midwifery of marketers in creating a post-materialistic consumer subjectivity, the brand-nature itself of certain ethically-minded brands, and fundamentally that more and more labour needs be in the unproductive business of branding itself for that labour to be realized in our oligopolistic system and in turn to sustain the same system.

"Value, therefore, does not have its description branded on its forehead; it rather transforms every product of labour into a social hieroglyphic."[29] So writes Marx. Now as value recedes from our products the hieroglyph becomes the more obtuse. Our products may, in consolation, now

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[xxi] When it was announced in 2002 that Dr. Martens would be moving production from North England to China (but keeping retail prices generally the same), Paul Gates of the National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trades was cited: "It may be cheaper in China, but this is an issue of added value and quality," and "it does not matter if the boots are cheap if nobody is going to buy them." Gates identifies the trend of decreasing product value in capital's unfolding, but is way off the mark as to its effect on demand. While we can say that people buying such devalued commodities at such premium prices are being chumped, it is more accurate to say that they ceased buying commodities simply as commodities a long time ago. ("Dr Martens moves to China")

come with clear inscriptions 'on their forehead' or burn marks on their rump, but these are not meant to be descriptive. They never were.

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[1] Baudrillard, 155., italics and small capitals in the original.
[2] Marx, 127.
[3] Baudrillard ,155., italics in the original.
[4] Marx, 166.
[5] Ibid, 777.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, 929.
[8] Chamberlin, 15.
[9] Baran and Sweezy, 71f.
[10] Ibid, 119; 125.
[11] Marx, 1039.
[12] Chamberlin, 125f.
[13] Ibid, 56.
[14] Ibid, 71.
[15] Baran and Sweezy, 134.
[16] Ibid, 134ff.
[17] They cite Fisher, Franklin M, Zvi Grilliches, and Carl Kaysen. 'The Costs of Automobile Model Changes since 1949' *Journal of Political Economy*, October 1962.
[18] 'ISO 10668:2010' §5.3.
[19] 'ISO 10668:2010' §5.4 Emphases mine.
[20] Sherman, 607.
[21] Ibid, 605.
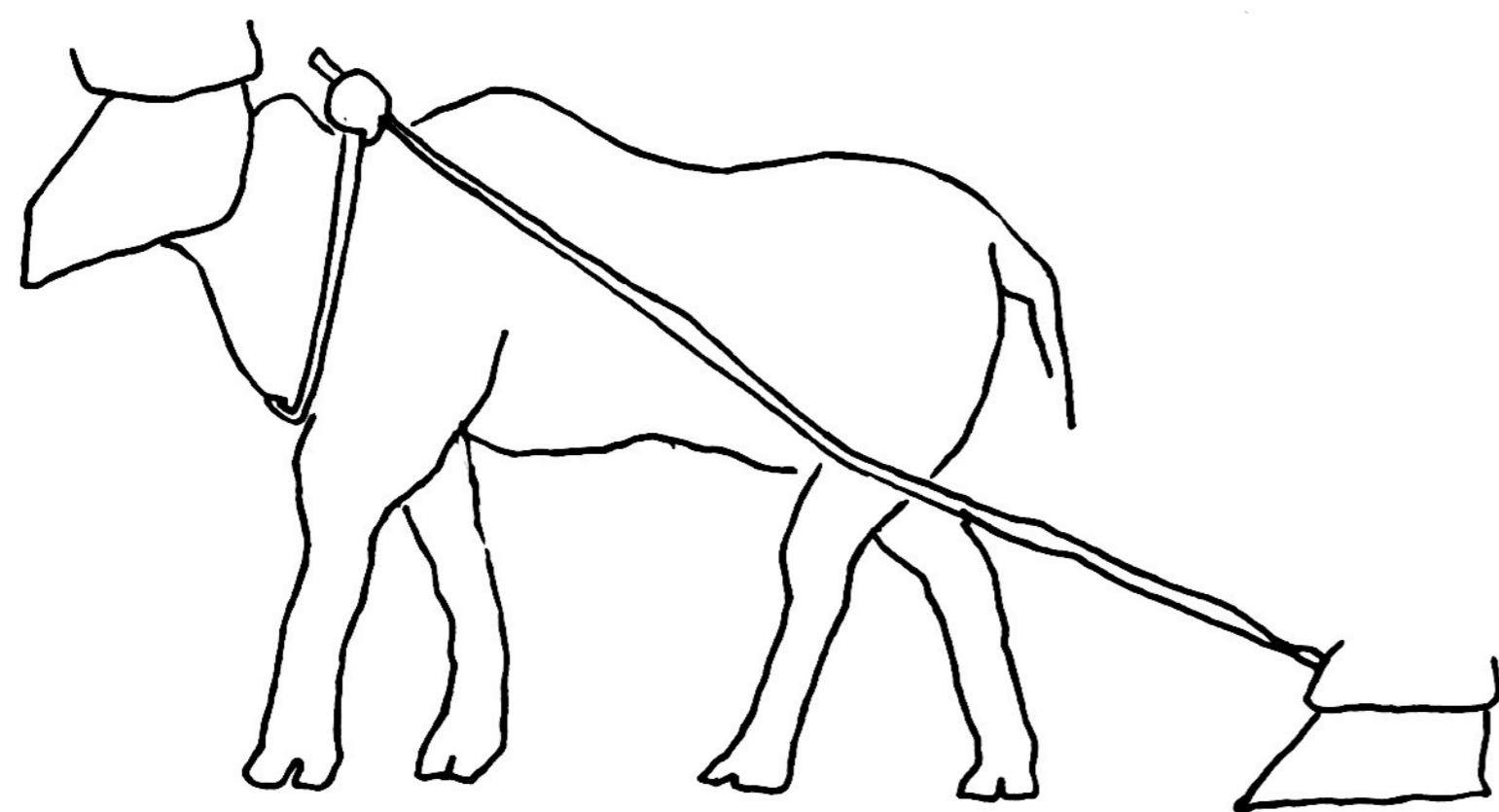[22] Ibid, 593.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Arvidsson 2005, 244.
[25] Sherman 599, herself citing though not quoting Babe, R. *Communications and the transformation of economics*. Westview, 1995.
[26] Arvidsson 2001, 49f.
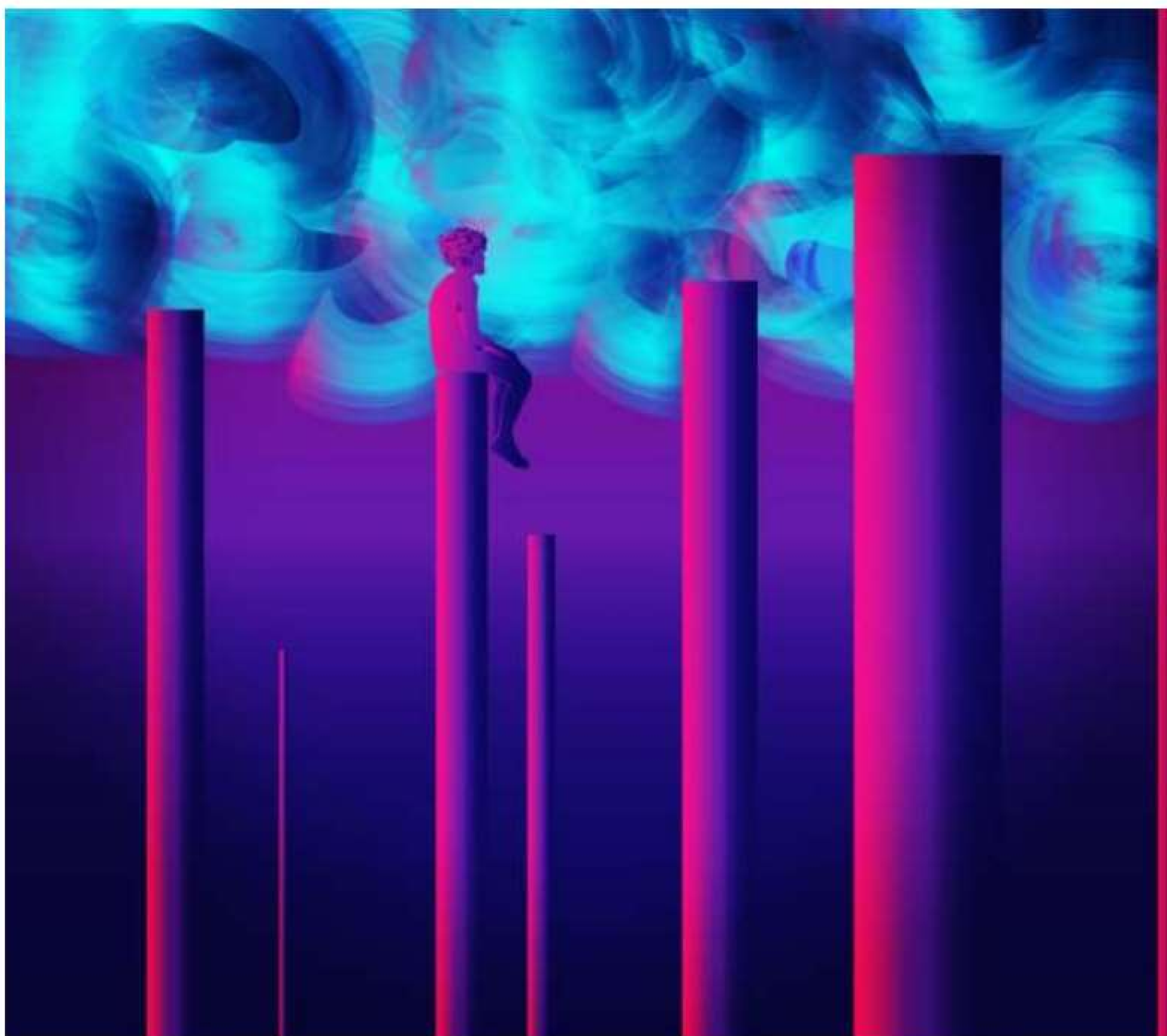[27] Ibid, 57.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Marx 167.

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LIBERAL ARTS SOCIETY 2019-2020

Dreamer

Warsame Isse

DEVENIR MISÉRICORDIEUSE

Amaryllis Tremblay

Fiche de personnage(s) :

JEANNE: 10 ans et demi. Volubile, sincère. Son nom vient de l'hébreu *yo* et *hânan*, qui signifie : « Dieu est miséricordieux ». Elle ne le sait pas.

SCÈNE 1
CHÈRE KITTY

Jeanne est dans sa garde-robe avec son chat. Elle est effoirée sur un matelas de camping et des coussins. Elle enregistre sa voix sur son iPod nano.

JEANNE

Chère Kitty.

Bon, « Kitty » c'était le nom du journal d'Anne Frank, mais en attendant que j'te trouve un nom je vais t'appeler Kitty.

J'ai décidé de commencer un journal audio parce que ça va plus vite que d'écrire.

Faque on est lundi le premier novembre 2010.

Chui pas d'bonne humeur aujourd'hui.

J'ai deux raisons pour être pas d'bonne humeur.

Un, j'me suis fait donner un billet rouge par la surveillante à cause que je courais dans le corridor.

J'ai essayé d'y expliquer ma théorie des corridors, mais a comprenait rien.

C'est ça ma théorie :

Courir au lieu de marcher, ça nous fait gagner du temps, pis c'est précieux le temps.

Si on accumulait toutes les secondes gagnées en courant au lieu de marcher dans des corridors pour aller du point A au point B, ça compenserait plein de fois pour les sept minutes perdues à chaque cigarette inhalée.

DEVENIR MISÉRICODIEUSE

Je fume pas mais c'est bon à savoir.

Mais attention je dis bien les minutes perdues à chaque cigarette in-ha-lée parce que ça sert à rien de juste aspirer, c'est Marilou qui m'a dit ça pour détendre l'atmosphère après m'avoir montré ses poils pubiens l'autre fois.

C'était un peu nowhere.

Moi j'en ai pas encore des poils, mais ça va venir.

J'ai quand même hâte d'être une ado parce que: un, je vais avoir le droit de me coucher à 21h30; pis deux, je vais avoir le droit d'être de mauvaise humeur une fois par mois.

Ça à l'air cave mais à maison j'ai comme l'impression qu'y faut toujours que je sois fine.

J'ai jamais le droit de dire que chus fâchée.

St'a cause que mon beau-père Stéphane, y me dit que je fais ma princesse.

Chui pas une princesse.

Quand je vais avoir mes règles, ça va peut-être être dégueu mais je vais enfin avoir le droit de dire ce que je veux.

Mais bon, en attendant que je sois une ado, je pense que j'suis une pré-ado.

Je dis pré-ado parce que je commence à m'intéresser aux affaires électroniques comme les iPod pis les DS, je vais souvent à l'ordi pis ch'trouve que ma vie est compliquée.

Aussi, chui amoureuse d'Antoine.

J'ai de la chance parce que le plus beau gars du monde entier, y'est dans mes cours de catéchèse.

Quand je vais arriver à la cérémonie de la première communion avec la robe blanche si belle qui ressemble à une robe mariée que ma mère m'as achetée,

Antoine y va se dire que j'suis la plus belle fille du monde entier.

(Temps.)

À part pour Antoine, le plus le fun dans les cours de catéchèse que mon beau-père a payé 80$ pour que je sois inscrite faque je dois être bonne pis fine,

C'est la toilette où qu'y a un poster de la Vierge qui nous check pisser.

DEVENIR MISÉRICODIEUSE

J'me retrouve souvent là parce que foi pas foi, amour pas amour, à longue, le catéchisme de Sœur Lamothe pis le derrière de tête d'Antoine finissent par m'ennuyer un peu.

Oh oui Kitty, t'as déjà deviné.

Je COURS dans le corridor qui mène à toilette avec la Vierge.

C'est vraiment un secret, mais j'aime ça parler à l'affiche de Marie.

C'est comme si je faisais une genre de petite prière ou une confession.

Mais tsé, je sais pas si chui croyante pour de vrai.

À la base, j'allais juste aux cours de catéchèse pour avoir un break de Stéphane pis Maman,

Mais maintenant que y'a le beau Antoine pis que j'ai commencé à parler à la Vierge, j'suis comme plus motivée.

Marilou a rirait sûrement de moi à cause que je prie, mais bon, c'est de mes affaires.

Marilou j'y dis pas de secrets importants parce que c'est le genre de fille qui répète à tout le monde, comme Pète pis Répète.

L'autre fois, a m'a traité de garçon manqué devant tout le monde.

Un, chui pas un garçon,

Deux, chui pas manquée.

Faque je l'ai traitée de fraîche pet mais après ça on s'est excusé pis c'était correct.

Ça reste ma meilleure amie pareille.

On aime ça chanter du Madonna ensemble.

Madonna, c't'une chanteuse du temps de nos mères.

Marilou est cool pour faire des niaiseries ou pour écouter de la musique.

Je l'invite souvent dans forêt de pins en arrière de chez moi parce j'ai installé un hamac pis on aime ça passer des heures enroulées dedans à parler de mon kik, Antoine ou de son kik à elle.

 C'est ben le fun.

(Temps.)

Mais bon, pour revenir à tantôt.

Pis la deuxième raison pourquoi j'suis pas d'bonne humeur st'a cause que j'ai mal dormit, j'tai pogner dans une armoire avec mon chat, Mimi.

Je fais ça des fois quand Maman pis Stéphane se crient dessus pis que je les entends même en me bouchant les oreilles.

Je ferme la porte de l'armoire pis je me sens comme

Mieux

Comme en sécurité.

(Temps.)

Entéka bye Kitty là,

Y faut que j'étudie pis, je me couche parce que j'ai une dictée demain.

Pis j't'encore vraiment poche en lettres attachées, la dernière fois j'ai eu un

« C ».

Chui peut-être pas bonne pour écrire, mais attends qu'on arrive aux exposés oraux, je vais torcher.

INTRO TO FOOD & SEX

Intro to Food & Sex

Brenda Odria

Ur walking thru the local farmers market with ur reusable bag n suddenly ur vision is saturated with

Pumpkin champagne garlic
    Apples saffron Figs avocados bananas
                Chocolate oysters red wine Almonds honey
strawberries cherries whip cream

And that's when u feel it... The tingle between ur legs the blood pumping pumping pumping You squeeze ur legs together only to make it worse the swollen sexual site

And u begin to sweat because u think maybe those strawberries are looking at u weird but u cant decide if they are sexier and a better option than the cherries

U clench ur asscheeks in anticipation You make eye contact with the vendor and everything is familiar because they've seen you before Every sunday morning to collect ur perishable goods

They ask the same question they always do even though they know the answer,
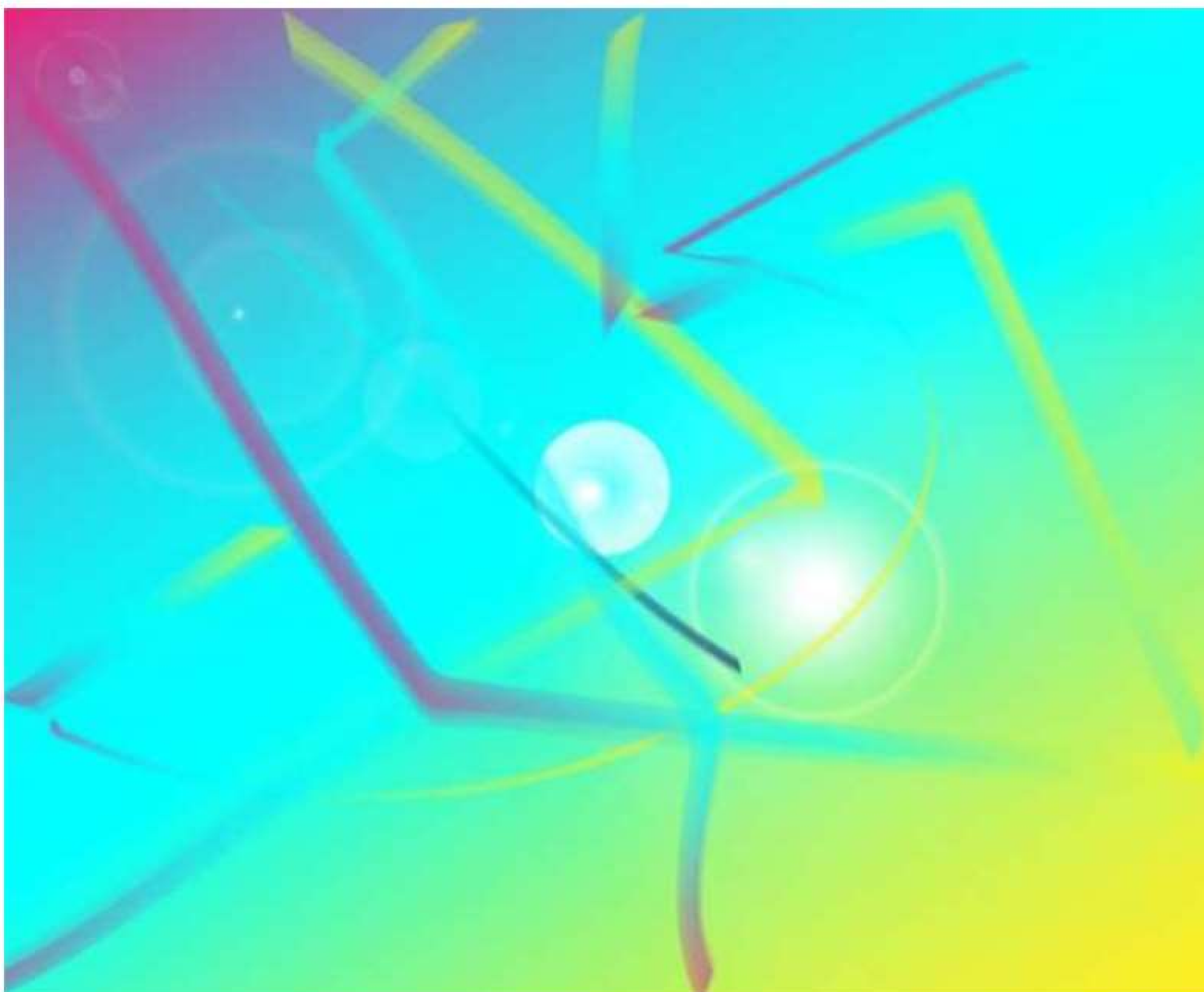"How many of each?"

And you reply, "I'll take them all."

They fill up ur reusable bag and u leave the market in a hurry
For some reason u cannot control urself today

And as u climax u whisper to urself

Eat pray love

No Places

Warsame Isse

THE ALWAYS DREAM

<div align="center">The Always Dream</div>

<div align="center">*Sophie Sobol*</div>

1

Last night I dreamed I was dying. Pale pale moon sounds. I knew that soon I would be dead. And so, I walked and waded and as I sloshed through my dreamscape, I saw many things.

I saw my father who was neither young nor old carrying a branch of wood cracked right through its center. The wood came from a birch tree, the kind that grew by our old house in the mountains. When I was a kid I loved to sit beneath their milky shadows and peel layer after layer of the soft skin of summer from their backs.

I was seven, or eight, and time for me was how long I could hold my breath underwater and the heaviness of my thighs after biking around the lake.

Time was watching soap turn to bubbles in the air, their shapes ballooning in and out as if moved by some invisible wind. Time was magical and impossible. It certainly was not mine. I circled my family like a planet orbiting the sun and lying by the lake, I was timeless

But that was the summer when time stopped and rosy cheeks of dew and dawn faded into an unmoving grey. That was the summer when strangers lost their kindness and I locked myself into a box and shut in my scream. That was the summer when I stopped exploring and I always crossed my legs when I sat and I learned the great guilt of time.

2

I saw my mother all dressed in warmth and I fell right into her breast. Safe and sleeping, she rocked me slowly and I breathed and breathed. Take your time, she said, and she let me go. Pale moon sounds.

I remember that afternoon in the kitchen before I left for university. My mother and I stood sorting Tupperware and spoons as my dad and brother and Felix made trips to the dump. I've always loved moving and this time was no different. We spent all day labelling boxes and watching them all get slotted tetris-style into the trunk.

And it was in this cardboard chaos, knowing that I was soon to be gone from home and that home soon would be gone from this house, that I asked my mother about that day.

THE ALWAYS DREAM

Hey mama
do you remember

I stuttered and spit and barely got the words out

but she heard me and she understood.

I didn't think you remembered that

3

It was then that I knew I was dying and I ran rushing through my dreamscape, faces everywhere bleeding past.

It was almost time, it was almost my time. For, I had unwittingly stumbled into Knowledge. After years and years below the sea, I had been the one to ask. I had been the one to breach the waves. I poked my head out of the waters of my Innocence with clothes clogged, sagging, slipping off my back. Naked in blue, I was born again. And slipping into adulthood, I could not go back.

Moon sounds.

And as my dream began to close in on me, edges peeling back, sun pushing in, in the distance I saw my father once again. He stood still cradling that beautiful birch branch so tentatively held together. And I saw my mother, and I knew she understood.

Then the branch snapped and I died.

Very well - I am large

Daphné Dufetel-Lamarque, Frédéric Gagnon, Bryan Lee and Jeffrey Talbot

J'ai la lumière de l'hésitation, As I busy myself
with texts - clarity evades me -

I see across me - a sibilant snake - not Eve's - but certainly of wisdom. La
justesse de mes élocutions, A girl in women's clothing. Qui heurtre avec
ardeur, Darkin the sun - not garish. A mother in girl's clothing Courant le
risque de l'incompris

They know the way in the dark Éclair lucide du sournois Only then do I see Hâché de
sourire impromptus In darkness of mind - when words barge and loom large above.
Grâcié est celui qui saisit son instant opportun My sibilant snake clears forest for trees
and transforms my tree to forest so green. Négatif du sens commun Still sibilant

Juste, en harmonie Beer today, Bong tomorrow Dont l'ubiquité
With limbs like aged trunks Nous accomoderait l'éclipse Gliding
across a frozen plane Tertiary in presence Clapping bombs and
leading teams Ubiquity, and present Is lost in your periphery
Along the Rhine, or maybe the Seine Once a jock, you see not
bollocks in the words of ancient men

Un soleil discret Longevity is yearned
- a lady's sein In the grit Notre Dame
Jolie Left to myself Pleine de grâce et
d'envie, Every mind to oneself
Aromatic smell it rings a bell Ta
douceur enivre le plus en liesse ASMR
channel It is a quiet star, beauty in a
pig
Que ton âme duplicite captura de tendresse
Elevates dirt: I see beauty Bubbly bounty

Joyous proliferation Ton regard dévié trahit une
complexité qui ravit Head reaching nary a
shoulder Winking smile

J'ai la lumière de l'hésitation
Yellow, yellow, yellow –

B F D T L D G D T

NKYOUTHA
YOUTHANK
UTHANKYO
KYOUTHAN

Thank you to all the wonderful students
who submitted their work to Corpus this
year, without which we would have no
journal! Cheers to the conclusion of another
successful edition of Corpus.

Best,
the Editorial Team

LIBERAL ARTS SOCIETY 2019-2020

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