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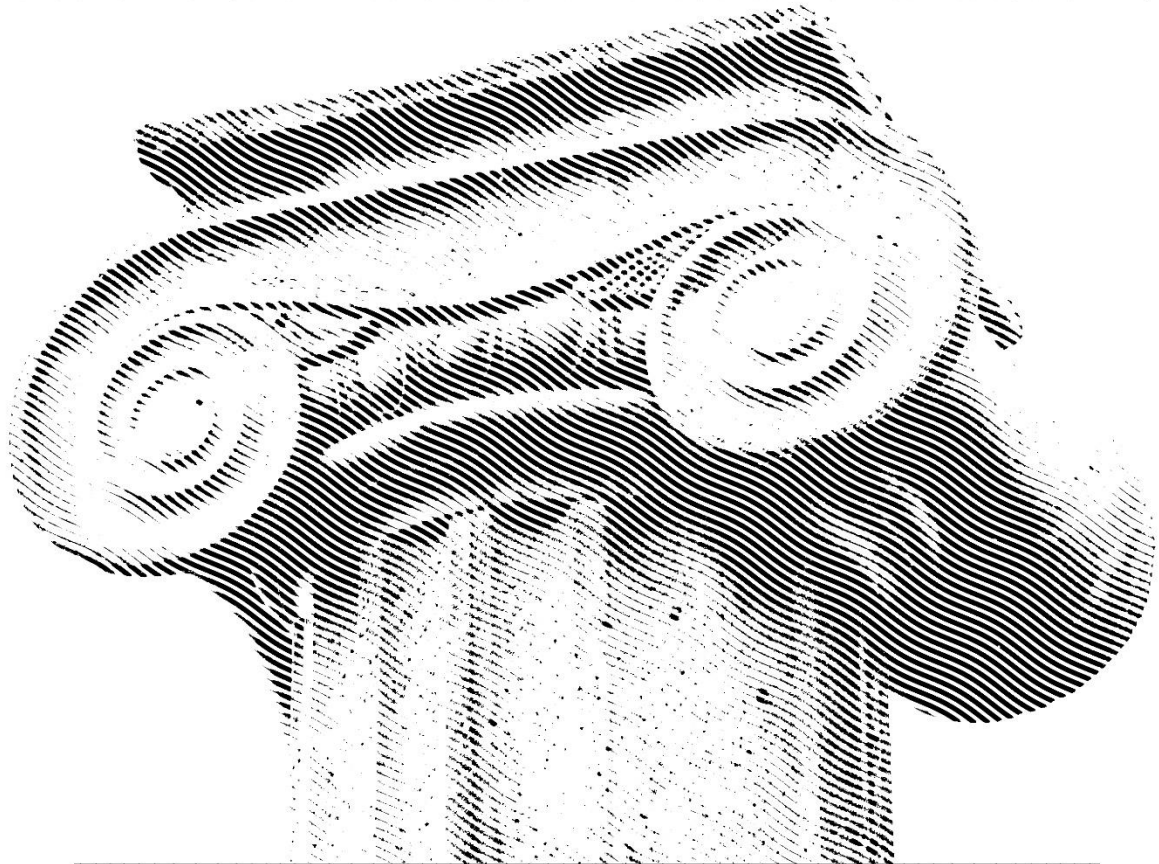
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The Common Good in Catholic Social Teaching and The Legalization of Physician Assisted Suicide

Ferdinand Tablan

Department of Philosophy

Seattle University

901 12th Ave Casey 430 Seattle, WA 98122, USA

E-mail: ftablan@seattleu.edu

Abstract:

The legalization of physician assisted suicide (PAS) in several states in the U.S. and the growing social approval of euthanasia have created confusion, pastoral challenges, and conflicts between Catholic and non-Catholic healthcare institutions. For many of its supporters, the legal and moral legitimacy of PAS is grounded on the right to autonomy. I concur with Callahan that the right to autonomy, while may be pertinent when it comes to moral debate on suicide, does not justify PAS. Unlike suicide, PAS is not a private matter. It involves the medical institution represented by the physician who is given authority to legitimize the termination of human life, and the society that will give it an imprimatur. If autonomy per se is the basis of this so-called dignity of PAS from the viewpoint of its proponents, they will not hesitate to declare suicide as more dignified than any other way of dying. But current laws in the U.S. on PAS are silent with regard to legal rights to suicide or assisted suicide in general. According to the U.S. Supreme Court, the legislature is the venue for the legalization of PAS, not the court, for PAS is about social approval of assisted suicide. Therefore, the debate concerning the legalization of PAS should shift from individual rights to common good, from autonomy to collective harms and benefits, and from justifying individual cases of PAS to legitimizing it as a social policy.

Keywords: Catholic Ethics, Healthcare Organizations, Death and Dying, Bioethics, Social Justice

The legalization of physician assisted suicide (PAS)¹ in several states in the U.S. and the growing social approval of euthanasia² have created confusion, pastoral challenges, and conflicts between Catholic and non-Catholic healthcare institutions. For many of its supporters, the legal and moral legitimacy of PAS is grounded on the right to autonomy. But “Autonomy alone can never be a substitute or a foundation for moral reasoning. To claim such would be to equivalently state that what we decide as acceptable for us becomes moral, merely by our deciding.” (Bloodworth et al. 2015, 52) Further, I concur with Callahan (1992) that the right to autonomy, while may be pertinent when it comes to moral debate on suicide, does not justify PAS. Unlike suicide, PAS is not a private matter. It involves the medical institution represented by the physician who is given authority to legitimize the termination of human life, and the society that will give it an imprimatur.³

The physician is not a mere individual provider or the patient, an individual consumer. Both are members of the human community bound by common goals, basic needs, universal transitoriness, and shared vulnerabilities, and it is from this human finitude that the need for medical care is born. By involving physicians as professionals, PAS legitimizes assisted suicide in the eyes of society.

Thus, the central issue in the legalization of PAS is social approval. Rather than autonomy, it appears that the reason why many are beginning to falsely think that PAS is an “act of dignity” is the social acceptance and potential normalization that come from its legalization. If autonomy per se is the basis of this so-called dignity of PAS from the viewpoint of its proponents, they will not hesitate to declare suicide as more dignified than any other way of dying. But current laws in the U.S. on PAS are silent with regard to legal rights to suicide or assisted suicide in general. According to the U.S. Supreme Court, the legislature is the venue for the legalization of PAS, not the court, for PAS is about social approval of assisted suicide. Therefore, the debate concerning the legalization of PAS should shift from individual rights to common good, from autonomy to collective harms and benefits, and from justifying individual cases of PAS to legitimizing it as a social policy.

The aim of my essay is to apply the concept of common good in Catholic Social Teaching (CST) to the issue of PAS legalization. My thesis is that the legalization of PAS is contrary to the common good as envisioned in CST and that healthcare professional organizations that express commitment to common good should continue to oppose it.⁴ Although CST was developed as the Church’s response to economic challenges in the modern world, its teaching on common good needs to be concretized in our present historical situation and applied to specific contemporary questions. “The Church’s social teaching proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action.” (John Paul II [JPII] 1992, 2423)

Since several articles have already been written about this topic from the perspective of Catholic morality, I do not anymore focus on explicitly religious arguments or norms concerning euthanasia that are straightforwardly expressed in Vatican documents.⁵ By centering on the common good, I present a religious-based argument against PAS rooted in Catholic ethics that may be acceptable to non-Catholics or non-religious because it is comprehensible from a non-religious point of view. While the common good is an important concept in CST, it is also a fundamental principle in political philosophy, whether classical or contemporary. It has the potential to be a common ground for discussion and debate among Catholics, other religious, atheists, and secular thinkers since CST’s view on common good is influenced by philosophical teachings from ancient Greeks. There is also an overlapping consensus between CST and contemporary political theory regarding this concept. In this essay, I limit my presentation of the common good in relation to the person’s temporal/natural ends. I acknowledge that in CST the person’s ultimate end is supernatural, but this is beyond the scope of this essay as a study in applied ethics. In our pluralistic society, the religious good of salvation envisioned in CST cannot be accepted by all citizens as the ultimate common good. As mentioned, my emphasis is the morality of legalizing PAS, not the morality of individual acts of PAS. This is because legal PAS has consequences that are not present in isolated cases of PAS.

THE MEANING OF COMMON GOOD IN CST

The common good has deep roots in Western intellectual tradition going back to the time of ancient Greeks. “Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good.” (Aristotle 1885, Book 1.1) As social beings, humans are united by a common end. “For Aristotle, the principal question is not individual liberty but flourishing within community.” (Critchley 2013, 2) Human community is not merely a conglomeration of autonomous, self-interested individuals that live together, but rather involves interhuman actions and interpersonal relations in pursuit of a common end. The community is objectively formed in virtue of its relation to its good or telos. The good which is the end of politics and the perfection of the whole community is the common good. It is only attainable by the community, for it is “the good of all and each one, at the same time and for the same reason.” (Argandona 2009, 5)

The idea of a good, however, that extends beyond individual gain and is “necessarily linked to social living” (Benedict XVI 2009, 7) is somewhat inimical to the Western individualistic mindset. There is also the tendencies to interpret the common good in utilitarian terms or to identify it with the good that is popular, or that which serves the interest of the dominant group. “One attempt to provide a more determinate notion of the common good is the formulation that has been regularly employed by the Roman Catholic magisterium in authoritative statements on social, political, and economic questions over the last half-century.” (Lewis 2016, 121)

Human rights and dignity and our reciprocal duties arising from our natural sociality, i.e. our natural inclination to establish relations (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace [PCJP] 2005, 445) are the key constituents of common good in CST. Sociability is an essential element of humanum (Benedict XVI 2009). Society is not an artificial being that results from social contract. CST anchors this view of human nature on relationship anthropology expressed in the book of Genesis that tells the story of human creation in God’s image and likeness. In the same way as the Trinitarian God is relational, so too are humans (JPII 1995). Since *Rerum Novarum*, CST has sought to clarify and make relevant the concept of common good while remaining faithful to its classical meaning. The common good is the object of human law, following scholastic tradition that defines law as the ordinance of reason promulgated for the sake of common good (PCJP 2005, 398). Leo XIII (1891, 51) defines the common good as “the interests of all in general, albeit with individual interests also in their due place and degree.” *Quadragesimo Anno* relates the common good with social justice, especially in socioeconomic terms. “By this law of social justice, one class is forbidden to exclude the other from sharing in the benefits.” (Pius XI 1931, 57) It follows *Rerum Novarum* in identifying the common good as the primary obligation of states, for it is the reason why political authority exists.⁶ “The public institutions, of peoples, moreover ought to make human society conform to the needs of the common good; that is the norm of social justice” (Pius XI 1931, 110). Pius XI focuses on how the common good limits the exercise of individual rights such as the right to private ownership. Since humans are social beings, individual rights should be exercised and experienced within the context of common good.

Rather than giving a precise definition, *Mater et Magistra* relates the common good to those conditions necessary for the person to achieve integral perfection. According to John XXIII (1961, 65) the common good embraces the sum total of “those conditions of social living which favor the full development of human personality.” Some of these conditions include education, healthcare, peace, living wage, etc. On the other hand, conditions that make it difficult to share in social living in a manner that actualizes one’s potential as a person and as a contributing member of the community are morally wrong. The common good consists not of one, but of several goods essential for the person to flourish and develop her potentials. These aspects of human wellbeing cannot be achieved if people only act independently and self-centeredly. “The human person cannot find fulfillment in himself, that is, apart from the fact that he exists ‘with’ others and ‘for’ others.” (PCJP 2005, 165) Thus, the common good is about structuring society to promote authentic human development. Because these conditions are the outcome of social living and cooperation, institutions and social organizations are responsible for them. All members of society contribute to and benefit from the common good.

The common good is the precondition for individual goods, when individuals contribute to it, they also promote their own private goods. Thus, social wellbeing and the development of the public may be prioritized over individual interest. The common good “is very difficult to attain because it requires the constant ability and effort to seek the good of others as though it were one’s own good.” (PCJP 2005, 167) “We must add, therefore, that it is in the nature of the common good that every single citizen has the right to share in it—although in different ways, depending on his tasks, merits and circumstances.” (John XXIII 1963, 56) While the common good may require some form of personal sacrifice, it cannot be advanced at the expense of the poor. “Precisely because the poor are powerless, their needs must be prioritized otherwise, as is clear from the disparity between the rich and poor in our own country, their basic needs will not be met, their human dignity will be violated. The poor include, but are not limited to, those who are economically needy. It entails a much wider spectrum including those who are most vulnerable in society” (Salzman 2000, 70). Relating the common good with integral human perfection means it transcends mere economic conditions. The Catechism elaborates this by presenting the common good’s three essential components: “respect for and promotion of the fundamental rights of the person; prosperity, or the development of the spiritual and temporal goods of society; the peace and security of the group and of its members.” (JPII 1992, 1925)

Pacem in Terris contains an extensive treatment of personal rights and duties that are meant to guarantee everyone’s participation in the common good according to his or her abilities and needs. CST’s doctrine on common good is personalist, not collectivist or socialist. It is not in opposition to individual rights. Underlying this concept is respect for the person endowed with inalienable rights that are ordered toward her integral perfection. By relating the common good with human rights, the encyclical views it as consisting of those goods that are due to us as humans. That human rights serve to protect individuals from state abuses is indeed very important, but this is not their essence.⁷

They are positive rights that ensure full participation of every individual in communal living. They are also bound up with duties, both for oneself and for others, for rights and duties are reciprocal and correlative having their origin from natural law. Human rights are not just about how persons should be treated, but how we treat and relate to each other and this involves mutual duties. Promoting the common good implies more than having our rights and autonomy respected, it is also about fulfilling our duties to others. “The chief concern of civil authorities must therefore be to ensure that these rights are recognized, respected, coordinated, defended and promoted, and that each individual is enabled to perform his duties more easily.” (John XXIII 1963, 60)

Gaudium et Spes follows the tradition of *Mater et Magistra* when it identifies the common good “as the sum total of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment” (VCII 1965, 26). The common good is about communal flourishing. As individual members act together to develop their potentials, there is a mutual feedback loop between private and social wellbeing that redounds to the benefit of the least advantaged. “Unlike private goods, common good remains ‘common,’ because it is indivisible and because only together is it possible to attain it, increase it and safeguard its effectiveness, with regard also to the future.” (PCJP 2005, 164) It is universal and all-inclusive. The common good, therefore, is concerned with the welfare of all: rich or poor, strong or weak, young or old. Unlike utilitarianism’s principle of utility, it is not the good of the majority, but rather the good shared by all members of society. However, where social inequality is high, concern for the common good dictates that more attention must be given to those who have less power and privilege. Individual human rights cannot be understood apart from the common good, for the very purpose of a right is to give to an individual what is her due, and the latter is conditioned by the common good. It is not a question of limiting individual rights for the sake of the common good or balancing the two – both views already presuppose that there is a genuine conflict between the good of the individual and the good of the community. Since individual rights promote individual good and the latter is part of the common good, common good conditions the proper ends of individual rights (VCII 1965, 73).

While reaffirming the magisterium’s emphasis on the need for integral human development, the encyclicals of JPII highlight the notion of solidarity in understanding the common good. This becomes the emergent theme after Vatican Council II. Solidarity is the moral and social virtue that comes from recognizing our interdependence, “it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good” (JPII 1987, 38). Solidarity – universal love of thy neighbors, also known as social participation, interdependence, friendship, social charity, or socialization – is the ground of common good, for we are all responsible for all.⁸ Solidarity supports the central argument of this paper, that private good and common good are related so that common good should enter into our pursuit of private good. This means awareness of the deep bond in our humanity. “Solidarity highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity.” (PCJP 2005, 192)

The paradox of our increasing existential isolation and political polarization as we collectively face the global threats of climate change and COVID-19 pandemic occupies center stage in CST's treatment of the common good in the 21st century. "We are more alone than ever in an increasingly massified world that promotes individual interests and weakens the communitarian dimension of life." (Francis 2020, 12) Many people today are marginalized and denied inclusion and participation in our society because of their disability, race, class, and citizenship. They are deprived of their human rights and considered expendable. All these happen on a global scale. In response, CST proposes charity as a path in the practice of common good. To strive for a truly universal common good is not only a requirement of justice, but of charity as well. "When animated by charity, commitment to the common good has greater worth than a merely secular and political stand would have." (Benedict XVI 2009, 7)

THE LEGALIZATION OF PAS AND THE COMMON GOOD

1. The Law and the Common Good

The purpose of the law and the exercise of civil authority is the promotion of the common good. It follows that the common good is essential to establish the legitimacy of any law. A law that runs counter to the common good is not a law in essence, and citizens do not have any moral obligation to follow it but rather, have the obligation to repeal it. The common good in *Centesimus Annus* "demands a correct understanding of the dignity and rights of the person." (JPII 1991, 47) Dignity is inherent in every person, it is not conferred to a person by society or the worth that one believes one has as an individual. It has nothing to do with abilities, health, or longevity. A person who has 6 months to live has the same worth or value as a person who has 20 years more. The essence of human dignity is not autonomy in the Kantian sense or the ability to exercise reason or higher intellectual capacity, but rooted in the person being created in God's image and likeness. It is not autonomy per se that makes us complete persons, for "no aspect of human experiences is wholly personal and private. Like birth, our knowledge of death comes from others. The way we die- when, under what circumstance, and from what cause or reason – is shaped in profound ways by relationships with others and by large social and institutional forces." (Dougherty 1993, 151) CST also affirms that "the positive meaning of human life is something already knowable by right reason, and in the light of faith is confirmed and understood in its inalienable dignity." (SCDF 2020, 6)

At the outset, it is clear that the concept of human dignity in CST is different from the manner in which dignity is understood in *Dying with Dignity Movement*, which is behind the campaigns for PAS legalization. Dignity in the latter means "possession or lack of particular psychological or physical functions, or sometimes simply by the presence of psychological discomfort" (SCDF 2020, 6), it refers to "dying to avoid the so-called indignity of being disabled and dependent on others." (NASEM 2018, 32) The total control over one's life and death is the source of this dignity. Dependency resulting from loss of independence due to illness is considered a problem that needs to be eliminated like the disease itself. Emphasis is placed on the quality of human life rather than its sanctity, on its

instrumental or conditional value over its inherent one. To receive care is undignified, no matter how care is “willingly or lovingly administered.”

It may be argued that suicide is the devaluing only of the life of the individual who willfully commits it. While this is not necessarily true as “Moral actions very much and very often have consequences for others, even when there appears to be no connection” (Sulmasy et al. 2016, 252), legal PAS as mentioned previously is not merely an individual action. By engaging our healthcare institutions PAS aims to declare in medical/scientific terms that some lives are not worth living or preserving. PAS is not simply about supplying the means, it is also about rendering judgment. Laws are not merely regulatory instruments, they also send strong public messages. Every law should be judged by the effect it has on human dignity and the common good (Pius XI 1931). By legalizing assisted suicide and requiring some form of government oversight and immunity, PAS laws give the medical institution the authority to decide who should live and who may die based on some manner of assessing the quality of human life,⁹ and make healthcare professionals complicit in suicide.

From *Rerum Novarum* to *Caritas in Veritate*, CST claims that respect for human rights is the underlying principle of the common good. These rights do not exist in a vacuum, they are positive rights—rights to something that the state must protect or provide. This does not mean that there is no such thing as negative rights or rights that can be transferred, for those rights exist in many circumstances as Lachs (1994) explains. However, the rights to goods that are essential for the person’s integral development such as the right to life or healthcare are positive. The notion of human rights presented in CST is personalist rather than individualist. It recognizes that persons are social beings who are linked together in a network of reciprocal rights and obligations. The personal rights that belong to every human in an immediate way create duties that bind us in society. The right to life implies the duty to protect life. Both rights and duties are inseparable constituents of the common good. The best way to uphold the common good is to recognize the right to life as fundamental, unconditional, and non-contingent. The very idea of a “right to die” as the freedom to kill oneself and be assisted in doing so is contrary to the notion of human rights in CST.¹⁰ An individual’s private interest, taken in isolation from the common good, is not sufficient to impose a duty on society to deliver it. If an individual benefits from the common good, it is because what benefits society as a whole is also for the individual’s benefit, but not the other way around. We flourish with the support of our community, acquire more options from which to choose, and become more capable of making personal choices than when we are isolated from each other.

Because of the confidential nature of doctor-patient relationship and provisions that make legal PAS opaque such as certification of the cause of death,¹¹ little study is done on the aftermath of PAS. “The patient’s health care provider is not required to be present when the patient takes the lethal drugs. There is no way to know who, if anyone, is present or what actually takes place leading up to the patient’s death.” (NCD 2019, 42) The only oversight measure that the law requires is for the state to publish statistical information from reports submitted by physicians and pharmacists, but there is no sanction or penalty for non-reporting.¹² In fact, PAS laws are at their core immunity

laws. Everyone involved in the procedure needs only to invoke good faith in order to receive immunity from criminal or civil liability. “However, a claim of a good faith effort to meet the requirements of the law is virtually impossible to disprove. As a result, this provision renders all other alleged safeguards effectively unenforceable.” (Golden and Zoanni 2010, 22)

While most PAS laws require that patients be given adequate information about alternative treatments, there is no evidence that patients who receive prescriptions for lethal medication have all the necessary information and access to these alternatives to give their informed consent. In spite of the preponderance of evidence in medical literature showing that many terminally ill suffer from anxiety and depression, psychiatric referral in the law is only optional, and only a small percentage of patients who qualified for PAS had been referred. “Yet the law’s supporters frequently suggest that, as a key safeguard, depressed people are ineligible for assisted suicide.” (NCD 2019, 23) Not all doctors in general practice who can certify PAS are competent to diagnose and treat depression, specifically depression among chronically ill patients.

2. Social Justice

The legalization of PAS is not possible without committing social injustice to some groups, either because they will not benefit from it, or they will be negatively impacted without reaping any of its benefits while at the same time, involving them against their wishes through the social institutions they support: namely the government and healthcare institutions.

CST “lays stress on reverence for humanity; everyone must consider his every neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concerns for the poor man Lazarus.” (VCII 1965, 27) Since it is about structuring society to promote authentic human development, the common good according to *Pacem in Terris* requires social policies that are not only humane and just, they must have positive impacts especially on vulnerable population, which includes the poor, people of color, the elderly, and other disadvantaged groups who are most likely not to have medical insurance or access to health services. But like other public programs in the U.S., healthcare services are implemented through the prism of classism, racism, ageism, ableism, and other forms of social inequities.¹³ There are reasons to be concerned that once legalized, the negative impacts of PAS would fall hardest on the least well-off members of society (Golden and Zoanni 2010).

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), there is a rise in suicidal ideation and actual suicides among people of color, those who are poor and underinsured, veterans, and residents in isolated rural areas. The sick, the aged, those who are cognitively impaired and physically disabled constantly face “socially constructed obstacles to one’s life goals, social devaluation of disability, social isolation, financial concerns, and lack of support to make life meaningful.” (NCD 2019, 27) Some studies point out that preference for PAS is positively associated with internalized oppression (Lapierre et al. 2018) felt by patients after “being conditioned by dominant cultural values... that needing help is undignified, less than fully human, and again, burdensome to others.”

(NCD 2019, 26) This feeling may also arise from societal discourse on the high cost of health and long-term care especially during times of economic downturn, and on how social security benefits drain the U.S. economy.¹⁴ Another study indicates that “negative attitude toward old age significantly contributed to the endorsement of PAS for oneself, even when sociodemographic variables, religiosity and death anxiety were controlled for.” (Lamers and Williams 2016, 1078) Many elderly have a strong fear of adverse social judgments regarding dependency, whether or not such fear is justified (Howarth and Jeffreys 1996). Based on the study of Suarez-Almazor et al. (2002), psychological distress is significantly associated with terminal patients’ favorable attitude toward euthanasia or PAS. Perceived loss of purpose or meaning is the main reason why cancer patients would opt to hastened death. On the other hand, patients who are given adequate palliative care and treatment of depression lose interest in hastening their own death (Arras 1997).

PAS may provide incentive to minimize costs at times when communities face budgetary challenges related to caring for the elderly, sick, and disabled. Nevertheless, there is no “logically necessary reason that legalizing PAS or euthanasia will improve the way we care for dying patients. Care for the dying is much more complex than ending a patient’s life.” (Emanuel 1998, 985) Some problems faced by terminally ill are lack of access to pain management, nursing care, and mental health resources, as well as lack of support from family members. Many of them suffer from isolation, neglect, societal indifference, and maltreatment. They also experience additional symptoms that need attention like existential and spiritual distress.

Based on the work of Kubler-Ross (1969) and subsequent academic research (Oates and Maani 2022; Berlin et al. 2021; Guy and Stern 2006), people have different reactions when they receive tragic information like those pertaining to death or dying, and how this information is processed varies from one individual to another. Generally this process takes time – longer than the 15-day waiting period that most PAS laws in the U.S. require. Wilson et al. (2000) add, on the basis of their empirical study that terminal patients’ desire for death is not stable over time. Overall, clinicians can never be certain about the point in time when terminally diagnosed patients are in “ready to die mode” both physically and mentally. “Evidence indicates that pinning down a patient’s mental status and declaring it ‘autonomous’ at the end of life is much more complicated than simply asking what her preferences are.” (Fernandes 2008, 28) In addition, they are vulnerable to manipulation, influence, pressures from their own families, caregivers, insurers, and even from doctors themselves. Physicians and family members can influence vulnerable patients to opt for PAS, even in a non-malicious manner. The mere mention of PAS by some doctors as one possible option to consider may be interpreted by very sick patients as a suggestion.

3. Solidarity

Suicide is morally unacceptable because it is a rejection of human solidarity. It is not just a rejection of one’s life, but a rejection of the possibility of a life made meaningful and fulfilling when lived or shared with others. We all live not just for ourselves, but also for and with others. If

embracing life is to open oneself to the love of God and others, suicide is the closing of oneself to such loves and opportunities for being cared for. As individuals we are all endowed with unique gifts, to commit suicide is to deny these gifts to others. Even the sick and the aged have something that they can share with others such as laughter, memories, wisdom, and experience. But even in the state when one is already incapable of giving anything because of old-age and sickness, this does not diminish the value of human life. We become more, not less of a person when we receive support and compassion from our fellow humans. The suffering experienced by one individual has an interhuman and social dimension. “The world of suffering possesses as it were its own solidarity. People who suffer become similar to one another through the analogy of their situation, the trial of their destiny, or through their need for understanding and care” (JPII 1984, 8). Even if a terminal patient may judge that the quality of her life is unacceptable or not worth living from her own standpoint, given love and care coupled with adequate pain management and empathetic counselling, the quality of her life can still improve significantly.¹⁵

“Granted, the human condition necessarily entails an eventual deterioration of one’s health, in which case, ultimately the community has a duty to care for individuals to whom it is responsible.” (Salzman 2000, 69) As mentioned, caring for terminally ill is very challenging. Because of their physical condition, providing them with needed healthcare is not cost-effective compared to those who are more able and healthy. But giving and receiving care is essential in every community, no human community is sustainable without them. In caring for dependent persons, communities express solidarity, social justice, charity, and responsibility. “When interdependence becomes recognized in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a “virtue”, is solidarity. This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far.” (JPII 1987, 38) While this caring can also be shown to those who are healthy, most terminally-ill persons are in the lowest point of their lives. Death and dying are not only universal phenomena, they are the final stages of human existence. The human community is founded on our common recognition that our lives begin and end in the same way: birth and death. Illness, anguish, old-age, physical deterioration, and dying are human realities that we all share and cannot fully control or eliminate. We “ought to view vulnerability as an inseparable part of living in communion with others—not a condition to escape from or fear. It is in the vulnerable sick person that we realize our own vulnerabilities, and in doing so, learn something of the value of humanity.” (Fernandes 2008, 221)

We do not live alone and we should not die alone. PAS separates the person from the community and promotes an individual-focused and self-directed solution to death and suffering. The philosophy behind PAS is that dying is a private matter subject to self-determination and individual choice, so that each person should die on her/his own terms and time. “This is compatible with the notion that, in the U.S., life-and-death decisions are thought mainly to involve individuals, rather than their communities or groups.” (Peng et al. 1999, 2624) According to *Laudato Si*, the “lack of physical contact and encounter, encouraged at times by the disintegration

of our cities, can lead to a numbing of conscience and to tendentious analyses which neglect parts of reality.” (Francis 2015, 40) The notion of “*every man for himself* will rapidly degenerate into a free-for-all that would prove worse” (Francis 2020, 36). Legal PAS alters our social values and priorities – how we see disability, death, and illness, the value we give to caring unconditionally for our loved ones – and may exacerbate our already deteriorating social relationships and existential isolation. Legislative and electoral efforts and resources are being used to legalize and expand PAS rather than toward passing laws that promote the common good like healthcare reform, improvement in long-term, palliative, and end-of-life care, suicide prevention as well as increased social assistance to the aged and the disabled. Experience has taught us, according to *Pacem in Terris* that unless suitable action is taken “with regard to economic, political, and cultural matters, inequalities between citizens tend to become more widespread” (John XXIII 1963, 63).

4. The Common Good and Professional Organizations

For CST, healthcare professional organizations are vehicles and effective instruments of solidarity and social justice (JPII 1991, 16). They are part of what CST calls civil community which, together with the state and the economy, constitutes the third sector of society. “Apart from the family, other intermediate communities exercise primary functions and give life to specific networks of solidarity. These develop as real communities of persons and strengthen the social fabric, preventing society from becoming an anonymous and impersonal mass, as unfortunately often happens today.” (JPII 1991, 50) Working with various groups, these organizations can “make a specific contribution to an even broader implementation of the common good.” (VCII 1965, 74) For example, nursing exists “because of societal support and the perception that nursing is important to the preservation of health-related aspects of the common good.” (Jairath et al. 2006, 61) The American Medical Association (AMA) “Principles of Medical Ethics” states that a physician “must recognize responsibility to patients first and foremost, as well as to society.” Similarly, we find in the 2021 code of ethics of National Association of Social Workers (NASW): “A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession’s dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society.”

Professional services in general have social impacts, thus they are bound by ethical obligations. Healthcare services in particular are essential for the common good, the state has the duty to provide these services if they are lacking, and in countries with universal healthcare, these services are guaranteed by the state. But healthcare professionals cannot be mere agents of the state. Even if PAS laws give them permission to assist in suicide, they still need to reflect on the essence and purpose of their profession to find justification why assisting suicide is a positive obligation. The medical worker and the patient are two different self-determining subjects. “Assisting someone’s death would require that the assistant believe it is the right thing to do – not just a response to autonomy claim, but as a conviction that the decision is objectively right.” (Johannesen 2016, 41) The supposed legal right to choose of the patient is not a right to demand. The presence

of terminal illness, regardless of how it is loosely defined, does not justify arbitrary and intentional termination of human life. Aside from compromising the moral integrity of medical care, legal PAS lowers the bar of professional responsibility by providing immunity to all healthcare participants. “In an ironic twist, assisted suicide physicians are safer from liability if they cause a patient’s death than if they provide his or her medical treatment.” (Golden and Zoanni 2010, 22)

It is the official position of AMA that “Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician’s role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks.”¹⁶ While there are groups of health workers who are supportive of PAS, other major healthcare organizations (American College of Physicians, American Nurses Association, World Medical Association, and British Medical Association) are against it while some expressed neutrality (e.g. American Psychological Association and American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine).¹⁷ PAS is not a form of medical-assistance in dying like palliative or hospice care. According to NASW *Standards for Palliative and End-of-life Care*, “death should neither be hastened nor postponed.” (2004, 10) The focus of palliative care is compassion and attentiveness to the person’s biophysical and spiritual needs “to help the patients live as actively as possible until death.” (Ibid) “Palliative care is an authentic expression of the human and Christian activity of providing care, the tangible symbol of the compassionate ‘remaining’ at the side of the suffering person.” (SCDF 2020, 10) Because of the incompatibility between the philosophy of PAS and the ethics of palliative care, and the fact that caring for terminally ill is not cost-effective (it is in general less expensive that they die sooner than later), integrating the two is conceptually impossible, and in practice, might lead to undermining of palliative and end-of-life services.¹⁸ PAS is not a therapeutic alternative. It violates the bioethical principle of non-maleficence. It is not the role of doctors or other clinicians to judge the value of life of their patients. On the contrary, their job is to alleviate pain and care for their patients, whatever is their health status (SCDF 2020).

PAS AND SOCIAL SLIPPERY SLOPE

CST is not consequentialist in its moral outlook. But if we are to examine the ethics of legal PAS in relation to the common good, we need to focus on its social impacts and how they harm or promote the good of the community. CST does not regard human autonomy as doing what one wants regardless of consequences.¹⁹ *Quadragesimo Anno* (Pius XI 1931, 74) warns of negative social consequences of unlimited freedom, especially when freedom is exercised without regard for the common good. Because the latter is about how we relate to each other in pursuing our common end, it is also about our social values and collective sensibilities.

When concerns about adverse long-term social consequences of legal PAS are raised, its advocates tend to dismiss them as a kind of slippery slope fallacy. Generally a slippery slope argument is a claim that a small step in one direction will lead to a series of events that will eventually result in a catastrophic end. Supporters of PAS claim that slippery slope arguments against it are unfounded for being hypothetical, speculative, and pessimistic. They are mere products of alarmist thinking and fear

mongering. The solution often given is that human ingenuity, effectiveness of our legal system in dealing with many other controversial issues, and the practical wisdom of our policy makers will allow us to draft legislations that will address most, if not all of the concerns of critics, including potential misuse and abuse. Practical and administrative difficulties that might be encountered in implementation would be overcome with more time and experience.

First, it is helpful to distinguish counterarguments against legal PAS that resemble slippery slope. (1) Legal slippery slope – the legalization of PAS will set a precedent for legalizing euthanasia, including involuntary adult and infant euthanasia. (2) Logical slippery slope– Callahan is the main proponent of this counterargument. His claim is that there is no reasonable or logical stopping point to limit euthanasia/PAS “once the principle of taking life for that purpose has been legitimated” (1992, 55). If self-determination justifies PAS, then there is no logical moral reason to limit it to those who are terminally ill as the law requires. On the other hand, if compassion for the suffering of the patient justifies PAS, there is no logical moral reason why it should only be given to those who are competent, for it would seem “cruel and capricious to deny it to the incompetent” (e.g. mentally ill and children). (3) Empirical slippery slope – it will result in overuse as a consequence of social acceptance and normalization. Rather than being the last resort when pain/discomfort becomes unbearable, PAS “over time, become less of a last resort and be sought more quickly, even becoming a first choice in some cases.” (Pereira 2011, 40) It may also lead to suicide contagion. These claims require empirical evidence for support. (4) Arguments that focus on administration or implementation – the law has the potential for misuse and abuse, including the use of coercion and intentionally ending the lives of those the use of PAS is not allowed such as patients who are very sick but not terminal. It is also impossible to devise procedures to make sure those who are legally qualified are not being persuaded, brainwashed or manipulated, if not coerced, to give their consent. This claim requires empirical evidence too. But there is no way to assess the effectiveness of monitoring and safeguard mechanisms in PAS laws to prevent abuse and misuse because of the difficulty in gathering relevant data. “Such data are critical... because there is no natural feedback loop to assess how the current laws are working, given that the procedure is final and the dead cannot provide feedback the way a person who has had a wrong limb amputated can.” (NASEM 2018, 21) Thus, I will only focus on the first three types of argument.

With the successful passing of PAS laws in several states in the U.S. and Canada, the strong similarities of these laws, and the evolution of PAS/euthanasia laws in Western countries that legalized it early on like Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxemburg (BENELUX) we can formulate some ideas about how PAS laws evolve and their social impacts. In his 2006 analysis of PAS/euthanasia laws, legal scholar Allen (538) wrote, “arguments raised in the Netherlands parallel the arguments currently being raised in other European nations and the United States.” Hence, we are now in a better position to make a moral evaluation of PAS laws from the perspective of the common good, and critical assessments based on projected long-term social consequences and negative prognostications cannot just be dismissed as fallacies. A slippery slope argument is fallacious when

it deduces highly improbable scenarios from a single hypothetical event. But when it is based on empirical analysis and logic, i.e. when the consequences being considered logically follow, whether deductively or inductively from a valid evidence, the use of slippery slope is justified.

To begin with, slippery slope arguments have a place in debates about law and social policy. They should not be easily dismissed because they do have a role in legal reasoning (Lode 1999). Those that make use of hypothetical predictions can be valid arguments in legislation. Most people behind voters' initiative for PAS in the U.S. campaign on the ground that PAS and euthanasia are different, so the legalization of the former will not lead to the legalization of the latter. Being an ordinance of reason, logic guides law and logical consistency is essential in legal reasoning and application.

Like most critics, I submit that legal extension to voluntary euthanasia or even down to involuntary euthanasia once PAS is legalized is logically inevitable.²⁰ The reason for this is that the logical justifications for the acceptability of PAS and euthanasia are the same. The Netherlands, the first country that legally allowed PAS “is an example of the slippery slope on which legalizing physician-assisted suicide puts us. In the 1980s the Dutch government stopped prosecuting physicians who committed voluntary euthanasia” (Sulmasy et al. 2016, 251). Reports of euthanasia without patients' explicit request were documented since 1984 (NASEM 2018; Allen 2006). Voluntary euthanasia became legal in 2001, and its use was later extended to children older than 12 (Pereira 2011, 42). In 2016, euthanasia was extended to people with severe dementia. The Dutch government allowed euthanizing children aged one to 12 in 2020. Canada, which legalized PAS in 2014 for terminal patients, made voluntary euthanasia legal, first for adults whose death is “reasonably foreseeable” (2016), and then in 2021 to patients whose sickness is “grievous and irremediable” but not terminal – to be provided by either physicians or nurses.²¹ Since 2018 (Davies), there has been a debate in Canada to expand assisted dying to children. Euthanasia became legal in Belgium in 2002. A study in 2010 (Inghelbrecht) indicates that Belgian nurses performed euthanasia to their patients without explicit request. Child euthanasia without age limit was allowed in 2014 (Reingold 2020). Euthanasia and PAS became legal in Luxembourg in 2008. Patients with psychiatric conditions and dementia who are not terminally ill can request euthanasia in BENELUX (Dierickx et al. 2017).

We see similar pattern on how assisted dying laws have evolved. Changes to the legislation were made to allow a broader group of people to qualify. Once PAS is legalized and socially accepted, the only way to maintain logical consistency is to expand the categories of people who are eligible (Callahan 1992). Sooner or later, the criteria meant to limit PAS (serious illness, unbearable suffering, or autonomy) will lead to the expansion of PAS, making “red flags become green flags” (NASEM 2018, 23). Safeguards in the original law that are necessary because of the irreversibility of the procedure are eventually eliminated or relaxed after being considered arbitrary and impractical barriers to a more efficient access.

Theoretical and empirical arguments have been presented to support the claim that legal PAS may lead to overuse and suicide contagion (Jones 2022; Jones 2018). Suicide contagion is

defined by CDC as “a process by which exposure to the suicide or suicidal behavior of one or more persons influences others to commit or attempt suicide.”²² Prohibiting PAS “serve valuable societal goals, they protect the vulnerable individuals who might otherwise seek suicide” (New York Task Force).²³ Publicity about the practice may trigger increase in suicide, and preliminary studies suggest increased rates of suicides in the general population of states where PAS is legal (Jones 2022; Jones and Paton 2015; Dugdale and Callahan 2017). For Callahan (in NASEM 2018, 37) this is “not coincidental—his hypothesis is that the Oregon assisted-death law brought considerable media attention to suicide as an acceptable way to deal with the travails of one’s life.” Evidence that the increasing rates of suicide in the U.S. can be linked to the legalization of PAS is presented by Valko (2017), while the Doherty et al. (2022) and Jones and Paton (2015) papers show that legal PAS seemingly induces more self-inflicted deaths than it inhibits.

Since 1990, “a large majority of Dutch physicians consider euthanasia an exceptional but accepted part of medical practice.” (Van Der Maas et al. 1996, 1705) Over the years the number of people dying of PAS and euthanasia has increased in BENELUX (Jones 2022; Mrozl et al. 2021; Vermees 2021; NASEM 2018; Sulmasy et al. 2018; Dierickx et al. 2017; Allen 2006). With only a few states having legal PAS in the U.S., there is no empirical data that shows consistent increase in the practice. The U.S. Supreme Court rulings on *Washington v. Glucksberg* (1997) and *Vacco v. Quill* (1997) that permit states to have laws criminalizing assisted suicide mean that the legalization of PAS will not occur on the federal level, but rather on state-by-state basis. Because the philosophy of PAS is based on individualistic themes²⁴ such as privacy, independence, suffering in isolation, solitude, autonomy, ableism, and self-care, and because individualism is a value championed by our dominant culture, and because of deficiencies in the quality of hospice care in the U.S.,²⁵ and the shifting of U.S. population demographics toward greater number in elderly, it is highly predictive that PAS, once legalized in most states will be normalized and widely used in the long run (Peng 1999, 262).²⁶

Many Americans believe that it is good to provide those who are terminally ill with this option. However, the mere availability of an option is not good in itself. On the contrary, by declaring that this is how some people die “with dignity,” the law sends a message that there is a “dignified” and “undignified” manner of dying, and that it is good for people to exercise their “human right” to die on their own terms. This puts individuals who are in their most vulnerable condition because of their deteriorating health, old-age, or disability in a defensive position. They may be challenged to justify to others and to themselves why should they not take this option. “The idea that hastened death is a pathway to dignity for people facing physical decline reveals the public’s extreme disparagement of functional limitations and a perception that ‘dignity’ is not possible for people who rely on supports, technology, or caregivers to be independent or alive.” (NCD 2019, 15) Many are opposed to the legalization of PAS on the ground that it devalues the lives of people with disability, thereby reinforcing their marginality, while some express concern that widespread social acceptance of PAS will trigger a very subtle but broad community-based

abuse of elderly (NASEM 2018). Others suggest there are serious risks of abuse for disabled if PAS laws evolve to even greater permissiveness (Stainton 2019).

CONCLUSION

The coronavirus pandemic reveals our fractured healthcare system. Despite its wealth and technology, more people died from COVID-19 in the U.S. than in any other country. Nursing homes were devastated. Hundreds of dead bodies were kept in refrigerated trucks parked in vacant lots for more than a year. Legalizing PAS is not a solution but rather a symptom of our larger social problem. Even if it benefits some people, it creates more harms, puts more people especially the vulnerable at risk because of the lack of effective safeguards, affects our collective values and sensibilities, and alters the delicate role of healthcare professionals in our community. It is not only contrary to the common good, it tends to perpetuate the deficiencies in our social institutions meant to foster the common good. Aside from palliative care, there are legal options available to terminally ill that can alleviate their conditions without unnecessarily prolonging their suffering or postponing the natural death process.²⁷ Under certain guidelines, they are morally acceptable to health professional organizations, to the Catholic Church and to other religious denominations. Being a natural part of life, CST never considers death as an absolute evil that we have to fight at all costs. State-released PAS data suggest that those who applied for PAS are worried about the prospects of being abandoned as they lose autonomy and control of bodily functions.²⁸ “This result supports qualitative studies that found that healthy older adults who supported euthanasia or PAS considered end-of-life practice as a way to avoid anticipated dependency and becoming a burden to their family or society.” (Lapierre et al. 2018) If this is accurate, what they need is not assistance to suicide but assurance that these fears will not happen by promoting the common good through strengthening of our social institutions, advocating healthcare and social security reforms, and fostering genuine human relationships. “The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them.” (Benedict XVI 2009, 7) Support should also be given to healthcare organizations that campaign for regulations to ensure just and humane care for their patients.

With many states still to decide on PAS legalization and ballot measures are being proposed across the U.S. almost every election, this is about to be a very important public health subject. At the center of discussions and debates should be the concept of common good. All of us are involved because all of us are affected directly or indirectly. When human right is viewed in relation to the common good, we have a clearer and comprehensive picture of what is at stake. “No expression of social life — from the family to intermediate social groups, associations, enterprises of an economic nature, cities, regions, States, up to the community of peoples and nations — can escape the issue of its own common good, in that this is a constitutive element of its significance and the authentic reason for its very existence.” (PCJP 2005, 165)

Foot (1977, 112) warns that “As things are, people do, by and large, expect to be looked after if they are old or sick. This is one of the good things that we have, but we might lose it, and be

much worse off without it.” Our treatment of terminally ill affects the way we treat each other and our society as a whole. When one’s conscience is coarsened toward those who are in need and suffering, when he fails to “recognize in himself and in others the value and grandeur of the human person, he effectively deprives himself of the possibility of benefitting from his humanity and of entering into that relationship of solidarity and communion with others for which God created him.” (JPII 1991, 41) In the final analysis, what is at issue is the kind of community we want to create for ourselves and for the future generation.

A truly human and fraternal society will be capable of ensuring in an efficient and stable way that each of its members is accompanied at every stage of life. Not only by providing for their basic needs, but by enabling them to give the best of themselves, even though their performance may be less than optimum, their pace slow or their efficiency limited. (Francis 2020, 110)

Endnotes:

1. PAS refers to “a practice by which physicians provide, but do not directly administer, the means for a patient voluntarily to hasten his or her own death. This typically is done by prescribing lethal doses of medication that the patient then ingests.” (Institute of Medicine 1997, 203) The terms “physician-assisted death” and “medical-aid in dying” are euphemistic and ambiguous. They are used sometimes to mean euthanasia and PAS; others used them to mean PAS only; still others use them to include withholding life-prolonging treatment (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM] 2018).
2. According to the *Death with Dignity* website, seven in ten Americans support the right to die “under their own terms.” See <https://deathwithdignity.org>. Legislation for various forms of assisted dying has expanded in Europe, U.S., Canada, and Australia over the past 25 years.
3. Legal PAS may also affect to some extent the services of pharmacists, psychologists, caregivers, death certifiers, and other healthcare professionals.
4. While the subject of this essay is PAS, the logic of the moral motives for euthanasia and PAS are the same, and they contain within them the same ingredients of abuse (Callahan 1992).
5. See *Declaration on Euthanasia* (Sacred Congregation on the Doctrine of Faith [SCDF] 1980).
6. “The political community exists, consequently, for the sake of the common good, in which it finds its full justification and significance, and the source of its inherent legitimacy.” (Vatican Council II [VCII] 1965, 74)
7. From the perspective of CST, the state is not a morally neutral institution. “The stress on civil liberties, and the tendency to limit basic material rights to the right to life, expressed as a negative right of which we are not deprived, are features of a position on rights derivable more directly and obviously from the U.S. political doctrines than from the standard traditional or modern examples of Catholic social teaching.” (Cahill 1987, 86)
8. “This principle is frequently stated by Pope Leo XIII, who uses the term ‘friendship’, a concept already found in Greek philosophy. Pope Pius XI refers to it with the equally meaningful term ‘social charity.’ Pope Paul VI, expanding the concept to cover the many modern aspects of the social question, speaks of ‘civilization of love.’” (JPII 1997, 10)
9. Most PAS laws use the 6 months-or-less life expectancy as one of the criteria in determining who may qualify. But terminal uncertainty and misdiagnoses of terminal illness, though the latter is rare, are well documented in medical literature (National Council for Disability [NCD] 2019). “Prognostic uncertainty is the inability to determine and provide an accurate prognosis and it occurs with many

- illnesses that are chronic in nature, such as heart failure. This is due to the chronic exacerbating illness trajectory, in which a patient will have an exacerbation and then get better. This makes it more difficult for physicians to determine when the patient is nearing the end of life.” (Lowey 2015, 47). One study indicates that the accuracy of terminal prognosis is as low as 20% (Christakis and Lamont 2000, see also White et al. 2016).
10. CST defines the right to die as “the right to die peacefully with human and Christian dignity.” (SCDF 1980, 2)
 11. Current laws in the U.S. state that the underlying terminal disease will appear as the cause of death on death certificates of PAS patients.
 12. See Initiative Measure No. 1000 The Washington Death with Dignity Act Filed 2008. Despite differences in how PAS was legalized, there are strong similarities on PAS laws across the U.S. in terms of patient qualifications, consent guidelines, prescription and ingestion of life-ending *medications*, reporting procedures, and safeguards.
 13. See “Implicit Bias in Healthcare Professionals: A Systematic Review” (2017). Authors found some kind of bias was evident either in diagnosis, treatment recommendations, number of questions asked of the patient, number of tests ordered, or other responses indicating bias against the characteristic of the patient under examination. See also Wachterman and Sommers (2021).
 14. The Social Security Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund in the U.S. is projected to be depleted in 2033. The U.S. of course is one of the richest countries in the world. The problem is not the lack of wealth, but the concentration of wealth on the hands of a few. This is also a social justice issue that is outside the scope of this essay.
 15. See National Association of Social Workers (NASW) 2004.
 16. See AMA code of ethics <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/ethics-opinions/physician-assisted-suicide>.
 17. “However, as a matter of social policy, the Academy has concerns about a shift to include physician-assisted dying in routine medical practice, including palliative care. Such a change risks unintended long-range consequences that may not yet be discernable, including effects on the relationship between medicine and society, the patient and physician, and the perceived or actual integrity of the medical profession.” American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine <http://aahpm.org/positions/pad>.
 18. The World Health Organization defines palliative care as “an approach that improves the quality of life of patients (adults and children) and their families who are facing problems associated with life-threatening illness. It prevents and relieves suffering through the early identification, correct assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, whether physical, psychosocial or spiritual.” This definition, anchored on a holistic view of the person is incompatible with PAS or Euthanasia. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/palliative-care>. Despite the confusion it creates, many proponents of PAS prefer the term *medical-assistance in dying*.
 19. Prostitution, indentured servitude, online gambling are outlawed because of undesirable social consequences of their legalization, regardless of whether participants in these activities have consented or not. Consent alone does not justify the legalization of *morally questionable* actions. *Populorum Progressio* (Paul VI 1967, 59) states, “When two parties are in very unequal positions, their mutual consent does not alone guarantee a fair contract; the rule of free consent remains subservient to the demands of the natural law.”
 20. “Voluntary euthanasia refers to euthanasia performed upon the explicit and affirmative request of a patient. In contrast, ‘involuntary euthanasia’ signifies an act of euthanasia performed without the request or consent of the patient. The term involuntary euthanasia itself is subject to confusion. For some, involuntary euthanasia implies situations where the patient did not provide consent but possessed the capacity to do so. As such, involuntary euthanasia is different from “nonvoluntary”

- euthanasia, which involves patients who lack the legal or physical capacity to provide consent. Under this approach, nonvoluntary euthanasia is the correct term to describe euthanasia performed on adult patients who are mentally incapacitated or infants who therefore lack the legal capacity to either provide or withhold consent. Other commentators reject this approach and characterize any euthanasia performed without an explicit and affirmative request as involuntary euthanasia.” (Allen 2006, 541)
21. Government of Canada Department of Health
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.html>.
 22. USCDC <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00031539.htm>.
 23. New York State Department of Health “Task Force on Life and the Law”
https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/task_force.
 24. “Individualism, in particular, is at the root of what is regarded as the most hidden malady of our time: solitude or privacy.” (SCDF 2020, 7)
 25. “Hospice Deficiencies Pose Risks to Medicare Beneficiaries.” US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General 2019.
 26. Dougherty, Gula, Callahan, and Foot present theoretical arguments to support the claim that once legalized, PAS or euthanasia will be socially accepted and expand overtime to become a regular/standard practice of dying. Although empirical data are relevant especially when it comes to calculating social consequences and effects on the common good, morality is not only a matter of empirical assessment. The common good is greater and more perfect than the individual good, not empirically, but in terms of the whole being greater than its parts.
 27. Some of these options are passive euthanasia, medical refusal of aggressive end-of-life treatments, withholding of extraordinary medical means, DNR orders, in-home health aide, and hospice care. The application of the moral doctrine of double-effect may be relevant in ethical analysis of some cases. However, “It is not right to deprive the dying person of consciousness without serious reason.” (SCDF 1980, 3)
 28. “Instead, cumulative Oregon data suggest that the vast majority of patients elect AID because they are concerned about “losing autonomy” (90.6%) or are “less able to engage in activities making life enjoyable” (89.1%). Some fear a “loss of dignity” (74.4%); being a “burden on family, friends/ caregivers” (44.8%); or “losing control of bodily functions” (44.3%). Concern about inadequate pain control was the reason for pursuing a lethal ingestion in only 25.7% of cases.” (Dugdale, et al., 2017, 749) See also Lamers and Williams (2016).

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Why Maritain and Wojtyla hold that Catholic Philosophy is Personalistic

Barry David

Department of Philosophy,
Ave Maria University
5050 Ave Maria Blvd., Ave Maria, Florida 34142, USA
E-mail: Barry.David@avemaria.edu

Abstract:

Taking its cue from the *Vatican II* (1961-5 A.D.) document *Nostra Aetate* (1965 A.D.), this essay argues that contemporary Catholic anthropology can be classified as ‘personalistic’ since it is properly governed by the complementary doctrines of Universal Divine Goodness, *viz.*, that God the Creator leads each person to beatitude and, following from that, a teaching of objective teleology, *viz.*, that each person has permanent union with God the Creator as his/her ultimate purpose. The latter teaching follows from the first since if it is held that God creates each person for beatitude, it is thereby implied that each person is structured for that end. All this stands against an inherited doctrine of Catholic anthropology that also contained teachings of Limited Divine Goodness, *viz.*, that God the Creator only leads some to beatitude and, following from that, a doctrine of subjective teleology, *viz.*, that some persons do not have permanent union with God the Creator as his/her ultimate purpose. This essay argues for the personalistic teaching, *i.e.*, for the universal application of Divine Goodness and objective teleology, by analyzing three essays certain Catholic philosophers published in advance of *Vatican II*. While two of these are by Jacques Maritain (1882-1973 A.D.), the other is by Karol Wojtyla (1920-2005 A.D.). Despite the material differences in their essays, these authors argue for the personalistic doctrine mentioned above, and their principal thesis is further supported by considering certain writings of Wojtyla promulgated before and while he held the office of Roman Catholic Pope (1978-2005 A.D.).

Keywords: Divine Goodness, person, *telos*/teleology, universal, limited, ethics, beatitude

Introduction

Taking my cue from the *Vatican II* (1961-5 A.D.) documents *Nostra Aetate*¹ and portions of *Gaudium et Spes*,² this essay is grounded in the view that *Vatican II*, especially exemplified in the ministries of St. John Paul the Great (2014 A.D. [*aka* Karol Wojtyla (1920-2005 A.D.) and Pope John Paul II [1978-2005 A.D.]])³ and St. Teresa of Calcutta (*aka* Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu and Mother Teresa [1910-97 A.D.]⁴), instructs that what properly centers Catholic teaching in the *saeculum* is Divine *Wisdom*’s, *i.e.*, God’s, doctrine of Universal Divine Goodness. As *Nostra Aetate* (1965 A.D.) states:

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal, God. His providence, his manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men, until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.⁵

In other words, Catholic speculative and practical instruction should promulgate the teaching, in the spirit of *1 Timothy (Tim) 2.4*,⁶ that God leads each person toward beatitude. Many influential Catholic thinkers like St. Paul (~5-64/5 A.D.),⁷ Origen of Alexandria (185-253 A.D.),⁸ St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.),⁹ and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74 A.D.),¹⁰ had embraced and/or implied Universal Divine Goodness in speculative matters. But certain Catholic intellectuals, including some of the above, often upheld, in practical or pastoral matters, a teaching of Limited Divine Goodness, *i.e.*, that God does not lead each person toward eternal beatitude.¹¹

Hence, the previously mentioned *Vatican II* documents endeavor to develop contemporary Catholic doctrine by upholding the teaching of Universal Divine Goodness as normative and, therefore, as the proper guide for Catholic practical doctrine. What does this mean? Notably, it signifies that a traditional Catholic understanding that a Self-Sufficient *and* Incarnate Creator God leads each person to beatitude (which undergirds *Gaudium et Spes*'s account of human dignity¹²) implies a doctrine of *objective teleology*.¹³ If God leads each to beatitude, it follows that each *telos* consists in eternal beatitude. As the latter is concomitant with God in Himself, *i.e.*, with *Inexhaustible Wisdom*,¹⁴ and in classical Aristotelian ethical doctrine prudence properly instantiates wisdom, Catholic intellectuals should promulgate a teaching on prudence that upholds Universal Divine Goodness. In other words, Catholic practical teaching properly takes its cue from *Wisdom* by placing more emphasis on a person's objective teleology than otherwise. As such, the Christian intellectual properly assesses the moral status of himself and of others in terms of the implications of Universal Divine Goodness rather than by anything less.

Of course, *Vatican II* maintains that subjective teleology properly conforms to objective teleology so that embracing Christian norms is standard.¹⁵ *Vatican II* does not 'throw away the baby with the bathwater.' It continues to maintain that each should seek unity with God. Therefore, the Christian intellectual's fundamental distinction, especially while considering those outside of Christianity, pertains to that person's direction. Is he/she implicitly or explicitly embracing or moving toward seeking unity with God? Is he/she implicitly or explicitly rejecting and, therefore, moving away from that good? While *good will* pertains to embracing God, *bad will* pertains to rejecting Him.¹⁶

That said, this essay argues that the updated *Vatican II* approach to Catholic anthropology—*i.e.*, with a proper focus on Universal Divine Goodness and, therefore, on objective teleology—is instantiated in three essays briefly pre-dating *Vatican II*. Two are by Jacques Maritain (1882-1973 A.D.), *viz.* "The Positions of St. Thomas on the Ordination of the Person to Its Ultimate End," from his *The Person And The Common Good*,¹⁷ and "The Name of Person" from his *Degrees of Knowledge*.¹⁸ These argue that viewing God as Person or, better said, as Personal, is Catholic metaphysics' proper object and goal, *i.e.*, its *alpha and omega*. The other essay is by Karol Wojtyla (better known as John

Paul II and/or St. John Paul the Great), *viz.*, “Analysis of the verb ‘To Use,’” from his 1960 A.D. book *Love and Responsibility*,¹⁹ and it argues much the same thing as Maritain’s essays.

First, I offer a small qualification. In one respect, Wojtyła is more intellectually alert than Maritain. This is because Wojtyła, likely through employing as medium the teachings of Max Scheler ([1874-1928 A.D.], *e.g.*, *Ressentiment*, c. 3)²⁰ and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 A.D., *e.g.*, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 428-9), seems to use St. Thomas’s teaching on persons as ends-in-themselves from *Summa Contra Gentiles* [SCG], [1259-64 A.D.] 3.112-3 apart from claiming that is St. Thomas’s normative teaching on human personhood. By contrast, Maritain uses SCG 3.112-3 as if it is St. Thomas’s normative doctrine and, therefore, that Universal Divine Goodness has always been Catholic philosophy’s approach in speculative *and* in practical matters. But *S.T. Ia*, 23.7, reply to objection 3, wherein some persons are portrayed merely as means—and against which outlook Wojtyła vehemently argues—shows SCG 3.112-3 is not St. Thomas’s normative teaching. Therefore, although Wojtyła does not identify SCG 3.112-3 as St. Thomas’s authoritative doctrine on persons, his (i) judgement that St. Thomas’s teaching on personhood is truncated and (ii) related push for the prevalence of Universal Divine Goodness are more accurate.²¹

Nevertheless, despite that difference, Maritain and Wojtyła, within writings pre-dating *Vatican II*, commonly claim that the Catholic speculative tradition’s doctrine of Universal Divine Goodness should prevail ‘across the board.’ In this way, their essays both urge and give evidence for the development *Vatican II* advocates and advances.

Analyzing Maritain’s and Wojtyła’s Essays

(i) *Jacques Maritain*. According to Maritain, following and piously developing the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, philosophy’s proper object consists in ‘understanding’ that God is Person.²² Consequently, ‘being,’ *i.e.*, the created order, is made by God, ‘The Plenitude of Person,’ for the sake of created persons’ development toward God²³ since each person “is ordained directly to God as to its absolute ultimate end.”²⁴ Because God wills and governs persons “for their own sakes,”²⁵ everything else in the universe, including human social institutions, “must ultimately minister to this purpose.”²⁶ As such, man’s practical good, *i.e.*, how to act *in this world*, is properly governed by the *telos* with God to which man is ordained²⁷ and, of course, is understood so by speculative philosophy. Maritain writes: “The good and the end of the speculative intellect are of themselves superior to the good and end of the practical intellect.”²⁸ However, as Maritain, continuing to cite St. Thomas, sees it, the contemplative life’s superiority to the practical life also means “a doctrine of the primacy of the common good.”²⁹ Since man is a social being, life here (in this finite-riddled *saeculum*) can “require that an urgent necessity of a less elevated good, in the circumstances, be given priority.”³⁰

What does Maritain mean by that? To begin with, we might say (taking an Aristotelian approach to ethics) that the *saeculum* as such—or, put differently, that man is developmental—necessarily entails a gap between speculative and practical truth. (Of course, Adam and Eve did not sin because God made them developmental.) Moreover, that distance in man between speculative

and practical truth is exacerbated by this *saeculum*'s circumstances. Due to original sin, humanity has an inordinate affinity toward finite goods. Therefore, as St. Paul remarks in chapter 5 of his *Letter to the Romans*, this can 'weigh down' man's 'natural' affinity toward God. In other words, the circumstances of the *saeculum* exaggerates the gap between the speculative and the practical. But that too does not cause human sin and, more important, God's Plan for humanity has not been altered by original sin, except that the latter has made it more difficult for humanity to see and embrace His Plan. Although Maritain does not say this, it is obvious that 'exaggeration is not contradiction.' Viewed in a certain way (especially in terms of cultivating human piety), exaggeration emphasizes the depth of God's Love for humanity and, therefore, how man's proper response to God consists in gratitude. In any event, Maritain, unlike some earlier Catholic thinkers, maintains that the Catholic intellectual should make practical doctrine agree with speculative doctrine. Stated in terms of the discipline of ethics, the virtue of prudence should instantiate the virtue of wisdom.

To Maritain's mind, it can happen that one acts for an end *contrary* to speculative truth, as purchasing groceries has nourishment as its end. (One should never act for an end *contradictory* to *Wisdom*, like warring against Christianity.) Or, put differently, one can focus on a subordinate love/orientation/inclination and/or good belonging to Natural Law (e.g., *S.T. Ia IIae*, 94.2). For example, one can pursue the education of one's family instead of the entire community's education. But that focus is okay if the agent, whether implicitly or explicitly, views that end as subaltern to the ultimate end, *i.e.*, to Truth. In other words, so long (like Aristotle [384-22 B.C.] implies in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1) as purchasing groceries or educating one's family is acknowledged as a proximate, instead of as the ultimate, end, everything is fine. Stated in terms of Christian philosophy, the proper approach is incarnational.

How does this apply to Maritain's doctrine of 'the primacy of the common good'? As Maritain makes clear in his book's subsequent chapters, the logic is essentially the same. Man, as a social being, is destined for the heavenly *City of God*. However, that his social being is now subject to the *saeculum*'s state means that (the *saeculum* being what it is) he can be required to pursue a social good—like a 'just war'—that entails the possibility of personal death. Since this good is contrary (rather than contradictory) to Divine *Wisdom*, it is the ultimate end neither for the community nor for the individual. However, it is okay for the individual and community to pursue this end so long as the latter is agreeable to Divine *Wisdom* and is viewed, at least, subjectively (*i.e.*, in the minds of the individual and/or community), as a means to or as a 'proximate' end rather than as the ultimate end. (It would be wrongly pursued as the ultimate end, and it would be wrong to war against Christianity since those objects contradict Divine *Wisdom*.) As before, Divine *Wisdom* is 'stretched' but not contradicted and, therefore, the act is incarnational. Maritain writes:

Then it is clear ... that the good of the community (the authentic and true common good) is superior to the good of the individual person *in the order of terrestrial values* according to which the person is a part of the community. But these values are not equal to the dignity and destiny of the person. By reason of the law of transcendence ... the person is raised to a higher level than the level at which it is

but a part; at this level, the good of the person is the more elevated. However, at this level, it is still a part, but of a higher community ...³¹

All told, Maritain maintains that man's *telos* is identical with God's *telos* in creating man, *viz.*, it consists in beatitude, and he thereby upholds the doctrine of Universal Divine Goodness. Maritain acknowledges, however, that there is severe tension in this *saeculum* concerning the relationship between the speculative and the practical. Due to original sin, it can more easily happen that objects being pursued and enjoyed are viewed as the ultimate end instead of means to that end. But Maritain understands that, despite human weakness, the norm remains God's Purpose. In other words, even though original sin has weakened humans, the standard of action and of analysis remains man's objective teleology. Christians, therefore, should always behave with charity—especially when, as often occurs, the common good in this *saeculum* mandates the pursuit of some good which, in the ultimate scheme of things, is subordinate to and not contradictory to Divine *Wisdom*. According to Maritain, the Christian (as possible) should take an incarnational approach toward finite goods. So, Universal Divine Goodness reigns, even though that is sometimes stretched by the circumstances. *The primary component* of prudence takes its lead from wisdom, and that component should not be shared with or replaced by human responsibility (including by the disposition of waywardness). Responsibility is, in fact, a properly secondary component.

(ii) *Karol Wojtyła*. Like Maritain, Wojtyła's "Analysis of the verb 'To Use'" from *Love and Responsibility*,³² upholds Universal Divine Goodness while noticing tension concerning pursuing finite goods in the *saeculum*. Wojtyła also urges that practical activity instantiate Divine *Wisdom* and, therefore, Universal Divine Goodness. To Wojtyła's mind, practical activity never contradicts Divine *Wisdom* and, therefore, the intellectual virtue of wisdom so far as the agent governs action toward other persons by 'love' instead of by 'use.' Wojtyła shows this by concentrating on sexual ethics as medium. For although sexual ethics well manifests there can be tension in some specific action between loving people as ends-in-themselves while actively engaging them as means-to-end,³³ that tension can be overcome if the agent subordinates his/her immediate activity to pursuing the ultimate end.³⁴

As Wojtyła (developing the Thomistic tradition)³⁵ sees it, since each person is structured by Divine Presence (because each is loved by God), each owes love to God and to each person. Since God loves each person as end-in-themselves (for which reason persons are 'irreducible' or 'incommunicable'),³⁶ rather than—as occurs with the human treatment of, or can prevail between plants, and animals—considering others as means-to-ends. For Wojtyła, persons owe love to persons and love-governed use to non-persons.³⁷

On this basis, Wojtyła tackles Utilitarian ethics and analyzes sexual activity.³⁸ In general, the Christian properly engages in sexual activity by truly loving their spouse³⁹ and, therefore, in the context of marriage for the purposes of reproduction, right education of offspring, and friendship—encouraging virtue toward the end of beatitude.⁴⁰ By contrast, the Utilitarian engages in sexual

activity with the mindset of ‘use.’⁴¹ Hence, as Confessor Augustine depicts young Augustine in *conf.* 2, the egotistical or narcissistic agent views the other strictly as an instrument of self-seeking pleasure—whether of selfish sensual pleasure, of selfish social pleasure, or of some combination of both.

Viewed in one way, the Christian’s potential difficulty in sexual activity is centered around the fact that the spouse is both means and end. The immediate end, in a certain way, is sexual activity, and that brings sensual pleasure to each spouse. However, the Christian properly subordinates (rather than negates or annihilates) sexual activity, and its concomitant pleasure, to the person’s objective end and, thereby, pursues sexual activity as ordained to its proper end, including (as implied by Plato [~423-7–348 B.C.] in *Republic* 9 and Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* 10), to the pleasure proper thereto. Similar ordering should occur in any social activity. In commercial relations, for instance, one’s relationship with the check-out clerk is centered proximately around ‘use.’ But, since the proper relationship with persons is governed by love, that occasion of ‘use,’ if the agent’s mindset is rightly ordered, is governed by love (and, consequently, the pleasure properly accruing thereto). Again, it is in that way that the character Eric Liddell, in the 1981 A.D. film *Chariots of Fire*, ultimately used his talent for running.

Most important, Wojtyla’s incarnational teaching is essentially the same as Maritain’s. This is because Wojtyla, like Maritain, upholds the primacy of objective teleology. One especially sees this in Wojtyla’s conclusion where the *Personalistic Norm* to love persons is identified with the Biblical injunction to love God and neighbor.⁴² In other words, the ethic Wojtyla advances views people in terms of their objective nature, *viz.*, as loved by God and, therefore, for the sake of eternal beatitude, rather than in terms of what they might think is their nature and *telos*. The problem, then, is obviously not the person’s objective teleology but that, as Utilitarian, he/she *explicitly* embraces a teleology (*i.e.*, a subjective teleology) which spurns objective teleology by advocating treating persons as things. For this reason, the ‘card-carrying’ Utilitarian embraces vice instead of virtue. It is possible that someone ‘practicing’ Utilitarianism might be *moving toward* the Personalistic Norm if they are discovering (and embracing) that persons deserve ‘love.’ But it is impossible for a ‘card-carrying’ Utilitarian, *i.e.*, for someone who judges that persons should be treated as means rather than as ends. So, subjective teleology matters, but it is not the framework whereby or within which moral action is judged. Rather, its value is ascertained within the framework of objective teleology.

Conclusion

It is evident that Maritain and Wojtyla’s respective accounts of the human person, though temporally prior to the *Vatican II* council, explain and embrace *Vatican II*’s implied outlook on Catholic doctrine. This is not only because they uphold a traditional Christian, including Catholic, view that *Wisdom*’s nature is centered in the doctrine of Universal Divine Goodness, but also since they urge that practical activity in this *saeculum* be analyzed and carried out on that basis. Stated in terms of a classical approach to ethics, each maintains that prudence, and therefore practical teaching, should instantiate Divine *Wisdom* in the way that prudence’s *primary component*, following the

intellectual virtue wisdom, ought to embody Universal Divine Goodness. That primary component, whether in whole or in part, should not instantiate human responsibility in general or, particularly, human waywardness. For those latter realities belong to Divine *Wisdom*'s, and therefore, to prudence's secondary and subordinate component.

Thus, Maritain and Wojtyla claim, albeit by employing divergent mediums, that practical activity should be viewed primarily in terms of objective instead of subjective teleology. Maritain and Wojtyla commonly hold that the Christian should consider his spiritual status and that of others from the perspective of Universal Divine Goodness. As Maritain claims in his essays and as Wojtyla argues through analyzing sexual ethics, the Christian intellectual properly considers another's character (especially if the latter is non-Christian) in terms of man's ultimate end. The agent's subjective teleology is significant (for it is a component of Divine *Wisdom* and, therefore, of prudence), but it is only determining if that agrees with (in the case of Christians) or *explicitly* opposes (as we saw in the case of the 'card-carrying' Utilitarian) objective teleology. On this basis, man's ultimate end, including its inclusive character, is better understood, and acknowledged; and human dignity is strongly upheld.

Leaving aside our current essays by Maritain and Wojtyla, we support this thesis by focusing on Wojtyla's implied response, found elsewhere, to the Catholic Church's sometimes dominant, but problematic, Augustinian-Thomistic view of predestination. That is because this shows, especially well, how Wojtyla thinks prudence should instantiate Divine *Wisdom* or, put differently, that Catholic doctrine should be governed by Universal, instead of Limited, Divine Goodness.

Friar St. Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of the eschatological aspect of predestination sets human waywardness *together with* Divine Goodness as the *primary* component of prudence. In this respect, and perhaps for similar pastoral reasons, St. Thomas espouses much the same teaching as had Bishop St. Augustine in *City of God* 21.12.⁴³ Moreover, although many of St. Thomas's treatises imply Universal Divine Goodness (*e.g.*, his treatise on God in *S.T. 1a*, 1-13 and, we now add, on creatures in the earlier [1252-6 A.D.] *De ente et essentia*),⁴⁴ here he supports his argument for an outcome of minority beatitude⁴⁵ by using a wrong-ended analogy. In this context, St. Thomas's analogue is not God but 'nature,' including human nature vitiated by original sin. He writes:

The good that is proportionate to the common state of nature is to be found in the majority; and is wanting in the minority. The good that exceeds the common state of nature is to be found in the minority, and is wanting in the majority. Thus it is clear that the majority of men have a sufficient knowledge for the guidance of life; and those who have not this knowledge are said to be half-witted or foolish; but they who attain to a profound knowledge of things intelligible are a very small minority in respect to the rest. Since their eternal happiness, consisting in the vision of God, exceeds the common state of nature, and especially in so far as this is deprived of grace through the corruption of original sin, those who are saved are in the minority. In this especially, however, appears the mercy of God, that He has chosen some for that salvation, for which very many in accordance with the common course and tendency of nature fall short.⁴⁶

By contrast, *Vatican II*'s *Nostra Aetate* says nothing about humanity's ultimate destiny but, in the spirit of 1 *Tim* 2.4, it makes clear that God, even in the face of original sin, leads each to beatitude. This document unabashedly proclaims a teaching of Universal Divine Goodness. In this instance, Universal Divine Goodness is prudence's primary component. Again, *Nostra Aetate* states:

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal, God. His providence, his manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men, until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.⁴⁷

How does Wojtyla weigh in on the conflict between Universal and Limited Divine Goodness? In *Love and Responsibility* (1960 A.D.), he upholds *Wisdom*'s account of human personhood by writing that each should be viewed as end-in-himself rather than as means-to-end. To Wojtyla's mind, those thinking like St. Thomas, in *S.T. Ia*, 23.7, reply to objection 3, have reduced humanity or personal nature to the level of the *saeculum*'s common good, *i.e.*, (as Maritain advocated) *to the order of terrestrial values*, and/or to the level of things (*viz.*, of animals, plants, and artifacts). Although the philosophies of Kant and Scheler are (as previously mentioned) an obvious medium within Wojtyla's notion of personhood, it is apparent—at least from this study—that he sets one of St. Thomas's teachings (*e.g.*, *SCG*, 3.112-113) against another (*e.g.*, *S.T. Ia*, 23.7, reply to objection 3). He writes:

Anyone who treats a person as the means to an end does violence to the very essence of the other, to what constitutes its natural right. ... This principle has a universal validity. Nobody can use a person as a means towards an end, no human being, nor yet God the Creator. On the part of God, indeed, it is totally out of the question, since, by giving man an intelligent and free nature, he has thereby ordained that each man alone will decide for himself the ends of his activity, and not be a blind tool of someone else's ends. God allows man to learn His supernatural ends, but the decision to strive towards an end, the choice of course, is left to man's free will. God does not redeem man against his will.⁴⁸

Likewise, in his 1994 A.D. *Vatican II* inspired *Crossing The Threshold Of Hope*, St. John Paul the Great wrote this concerning Christian eschatology:

This truth which the Gospel teaches about God requires a certain change in focus with regard to eschatology. First of all, eschatology is not what will take place in the future, something happening only after earthly life is finished. Eschatology has already begun with the coming of Christ. The ultimate eschatological event was His redemptive Death and His Resurrection. This is the beginning of "a new heaven and a new earth" (cf. *Rev* 21:1). For everyone [note the universality], life beyond death is connected with the affirmation: "I believe in the resurrection of the body," and then: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins and in life everlasting." This is *Christocentric eschatology* [his italics].⁴⁹

The encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990 A.D.) presents a similar doctrine. St. John Paul II writes:

The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the gospel revelation or to enter the Church. ... For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation.⁵⁰

As I mentioned at the outset regarding *Vatican II*'s counsel, this perspective does not deny that humans should pursue virtue; nor does it assert that God counsels or is responsible for moral evil. Rather, it views human action in terms of what, certainly for the Christian, is OBJECTIVE instead of subjective teleology. Pope John Paul II maintains that moral action is properly assessed in view of Universal instead of Limited Divine Goodness and, therefore, in the context of viewing persons as ends rather than as means. Considering the relationship between objective teleology and the agent's subjective teleology does not entail moral relativism. Indeed, as Pope John Paul II's encyclical *The Splendor of Truth* (1993 A.D.) makes evident, this process requires judging the subject (firstly, oneself) by normative doctrine, *i.e.*, by the moral absolutes belonging to objective teleology.⁵¹ Hence, among other things, murder and adultery and contraception are intrinsically wrong, and understanding why that is so is concomitant with the distinction between viewing persons as means and viewing them as ends.⁵²

In any event, it is obvious that Karol Wojtyla/St. John Paul the Great fashions prudence in the likeness of *Wisdom*.

Hence, Catholic philosophy is intrinsically personalistic since it properly embraces Universal Divine Goodness. Moreover, that *Vatican II* inspired development toward universally applying Divine Goodness in Catholic philosophy is essentially subaltern for that doctrine has long belonged, as Maritain and Wojtyla show, to Catholic thought.⁵³

Finally, the *Vatican II* council's emphasis on promulgating Universal Divine Goodness, as Maritain and Wojtyla obviously advocated and embraced in advance of *Vatican II* (and as Wojtyla did afterward as Pope John Paul II), has helped bring about that development.

Endnotes:

1. *Nostra Aetate, The Documents of Vatican II*, Vatican Edition (Strathfield, NSW; St. Pauls Publishing; 2009), 387-90.
2. *Gaudium et Spes, The Documents of Vatican II*, Vatican Edition (*op. cit.*), 1.12-22, 132-40.
3. As this essay's *Conclusion* shows, St. John Paul the Great wrote many books and encyclicals focusing on ethics that advocated, whether by presupposing or by making explicit, the *Vatican II* approach to Universal Divine Goodness (*e.g.*, *Love and Responsibility* (1960 A.D.), *Man in the Field of Responsibility*

- (1972, 1991 A.D.), *Redemptoris Missio* (1990 A.D.), *The Splendor Of Truth* (1993 A.D.), *Crossing The Threshold Of Hope* (1994 A.D.), and *Fides et Ratio* (1998 A.D.).
4. St. Teresa of Calcutta's practical life, not simply of prayer and pious reflection but also of taking care of the sick and needy, had universal scope. She did not simply care for India's Roman Catholics but for *anyone* sick and needy—whether they be Roman Catholic, Hindu, or otherwise. There can be little doubt that St. Teresa embraced the same kind of philosophical anthropology as St. John Paul the Great. As St. Teresa's 'ministry to everyone' showed, her Christian activity was grounded in doctrine that God is intimately present in each person's life to guide them, by His Love leading to human responsive love, to beatitude. In this respect, St. Teresa's activity's scope, like St. John Paul the Great's, instantiates, in league with *Vatican II's* outlook, the fullness of Divine Goodness. (See also: *Mother Teresa; Come Be My Light, The Private Writings of the "Saint of Calcutta,"* [ed.] B. Kolodiejchuk (New York and London: Doubleday Religion; 2007).)
 5. *Nostra Aetate* (*op. cit.*), 1.2, 387. Cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 10, paragraph 3, 131: "The Church firmly ... problems of our time."
 6. *1 Timothy* 2.4: "for he [*i.e.*, God] wants all men to be saved and come to know the truth." *New American Bible*, translated by members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America (Iowa Falls, IA.: World Bible Publishers; 1976), 1408.
 7. St. Paul, *e.g.*, *Letter To The Romans*, 11.23-36 (55-7 A.D.). I cite this passage since its teaching on the ultimate reconciliation, in God, of 'Jew' and 'Gentile' necessarily includes the teaching that God leads each toward beatitude. For recent commentary see I.L.E. Ramelli, *A Larger Hope? Universal Salvation from Christian Beginnings to Julian of Norwich* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books; 2019), 41-63.4-19.
 8. Origen of Alexandria, *e.g.*, *On First Principles* (~230 A.D.) 1.6; and 3.6. I cite these texts in Origen since his teaching on universal beatitude necessarily includes the teaching that God leads each person toward beatitude. Recent analysis of Origen's doctrine of universal restoration is found in Ramelli (*op. cit.*), 41-63.
 9. St. Augustine, *e.g.*, *Confessions* (*conf.*), [397-400 A.D.], 1.1.1: 10.27.38; and 13.1.1-2.3. Since Augustine's meaning of *confessio* shows that God structures each person for beatitude because He leads each person thereto, these texts teach that God leads each person toward beatitude. (For recent commentary see B. David, *On The Confessions As Confessio* [London and New York; Bloomsbury Academic; 2022].)
 10. St. Thomas Aquinas, *e.g.*, *Summa Theologiae* (*S.T.*), [~1265-72 A.D.], *Ia*, 1-13. These texts imply that God leads each person toward beatitude since St. Thomas's robust account of God as Self-Sufficient and Creator together with his teaching, implied in those passages, but explicitly stated in *S.T. Ia*, 45.7, brings the inference that God leads each person to beatitude.
 11. This is visible in St. Augustine, *City of God* (412-25 A.D.), 21.12, and in St. Thomas Aquinas, *S.T. Ia*, 23.7, reply to objection 3 (which I consider later), since these teachings on eschatology maintain that human responsibility prohibits *God* from leading each to beatitude.
Although Augustine's earlier *On The Morals Of The Manicheans* (387-8 A.D.), 7.9, had maintained an eschatological outcome of universal beatitude, which certainly implies that God leads each person toward beatitude, he later rejects that teaching in his *Retractations* (426-7 A.D.) I, 7.6.
 12. See *Gaudium et Spes* 1.12-22, 132-40.
 13. The *Vatican II* documents *Gaudium et Spes* and *Nostra Aetate* underscore the normative claim of Universal Divine Goodness by showing how this doctrine implies that each person has an objective teleology. To see this reality, philosophers might find helpful the logical doctrine of subalternation. Since the true A proposition entails that each proposition falling beneath is also true, it follows that Universal Divine Goodness means it is true that God leads (i) each to beatitude, (ii) some to beatitude, and (iii) Tom to beatitude. Hence, these *Vatican II* documents claim that God leads some toward beatitude since He leads each toward beatitude.

14. *Fides et Ratio*, 2.10-11.
15. See ahead, section 3, paragraph 9, and nn. 51-2.
16. Concerning *good will* and *bad will* see *Gaudium et Spes* 1.1.19-22. This topic relates to the document's account of human dignity, meaning not only that man is made for supernatural union with God but also that man properly exercises his God-given abilities to attain that end. While people of *good will* genuinely pursue truth (*ibid.*, 1.1.22), those of bad will, *viz.*, "those who willfully shut out God from their hearts" (*ibid.*, 1.1.19, 137) do not.
17. J. Maritain, "The Positions of St. Thomas on the Ordination of the Person to Its Ultimate End," *The Person And The Common Good*, translated by J.J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press; 1946, 1947, 1966), 15-30.
18. Maritain, "The Name of Person" *Degrees of Knowledge*, translated by G.B. Phelan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press; 1959, 1995), 245-50.
19. K. Wojtyła, "Analysis of the verb 'To Use,'" *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press; 1960, 1981), 21-44.
20. Concerning Scheler's significant influence on Wojtyła, see P.J. Colossi, "The Uniqueness of Persons in the Life and Thought of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II, with Emphasis on His Indebtedness to Max Scheler," *Karol Wojtyła's Philosophical Legacy*, (edd.) A.B. Curry, N. Mardas, and G.F. McLean (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy; 2008), 61-99. This essay was brought to my attention by my colleague, Dr. M. Fedoryka.
21. Again, that is probably related to Wojtyła's using Scheler and Kant as part of his material cause. How so? To begin with, it is obvious that their common focus on universality helped Wojtyła to develop Catholic (including) St. Thomas's teaching, perhaps from *SCG* 3.112-3, into his normative doctrine concerning human personhood. For its part, however, St. Thomas's own account of the matter, whether in *S.T.* or *SCG*, is grounded in understanding that man, in some way, is *imago Dei* (e.g., *S.T. Ia*, 45.7). As a Catholic philosopher, Wojtyła agrees that man is *imago Dei* and, as such, the notion of God (understood with St. Thomas's decisive aid—e.g., *Fides et Ratio* 4.43-4) is, in principle, Wojtyła's primary notion—for, on St. Thomas's view, humans are 'irreducible' by virtue of participating in The Irreducible God. (Cf. *Fides et Ratio*'s counsel [83] that contemporary Catholic thinking should transition 'from phenomenon to foundation.'). However, St. Thomas maintains, on the one hand, that each human is actively *imago Dei* (*SCG*) and, on the other, that only some humans are actively *imago Dei* (*S.T. Ia*, 23.7) In other words, St. Thomas himself maintains that some persons are 'irreducible' but others are not.

For his part, Wojtyła maintains that all humans are actively *imago Dei*. But this is obviously aided by engaging Kant and Scheler. In this respect, Wojtyła agrees with Kant and Scheler that each person is properly viewed as end, but he embraces Scheler's view much more than Kant's since Scheler grounds his doctrine of man's participating in the transcendent 'kingdom of God' (e.g., M. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, translated by L.B. Coser and W.W. Holdheim [Milwaukee, WI; Marquette University Press; 1998, 2003], 72). With Scheler, then, Wojtyła seems to maintain that the universality of 'irreducibility' properly derives from man's relationship with God. For Wojtyła, the Catholic philosopher, this implies that right understanding of God's relationship with man entails understanding that each man is *imago Dei*. Consequently, Wojtyła develops the Catholic, and therefore especially Thomistic (e.g., Colossi [*op. cit.*], 72-3), doctrine of man as *imago Dei* by adding to that notion the sort of universality advocated by Scheler. Viewed in this way, Wojtyła's formal notion holds that each person is irreducible because each participates in God as *imago Dei*. But Wojtyła appears to achieve this through applying to man what he understands as the authentic Catholic, and therefore principally Thomistic, notion of God. Concerning St. Thomas, Wojtyła seems to think that his notion of God is imperfectly embedded in his overall notion of man as *imago Dei*. Thus, Wojtyła's final notion of personhood, maintaining that each man is active *imago Dei*,

stands beyond St. Thomas's original doctrine. But, to Wojtyla's mind, that notion is what the Catholic, and therefore Thomistic, notion really implies.

What, on this view, makes up Wojtyla's formal notion? The reigning Catholic, especially Thomistic, notion of God (which Wojtyla implies that St. Thomas truncates in his original notion of human personhood) functions as primary material cause; St. Thomas's specific view of human personhood functions as a secondary material cause; Scheler's notion functions as tertiary material cause; and Kant's notion functions as fourth material cause. Wojtyla develops St. Thomas's notion of personhood by the dual help of (i) Kant's and Scheler's notion (more Scheler's notion than Kant's), and (ii) the Catholic, including Thomistic, notion of God. By implication, Wojtyla also develops, in a subordinate way, Kant's and Scheler's notions by taking them through his (i) Catholic, especially Thomistic, notion of God and (ii) finished notion of personhood. Hence, if I am right, the most decisive notion (*i.e.*, the primary material cause) within Wojtyla's formal notion is the Catholic, and therefore principally Thomistic, notion of God for it is ultimately by that that Wojtyla measures, evaluates, and relates together the other notions.

Finally, Wojtyla's formal notion of personhood is principally Thomistic since, above all else, his Catholic notion of God relies on St. Thomas's notion of God. In this regard, we see that Wojtyla developed St. Thomas's account of human personhood as *imago Dei*, *i.e.*, made that notion universal, by applying to it St. Thomas's notion of God. In other words, Wojtyla develops St. Thomas's original notion of personhood by adjusting the relationship between the components found therein. In this respect, St. Thomas's original notion of personhood has primary and secondary components, *viz.* concerning God and concerning man. Spurred on especially by Scheler's account of personhood, Wojtyla notices that St. Thomas's original notion truncates its primary component. In other words, the *Dei* component is muted in St. Thomas's notion of *imago Dei*. Therefore, by presenting that component in its fullness, and by relating it to the secondary component, Wojtyla enlarges what it means that man is *imago Dei*. Since God Is Good, He is actively present to all, rather than to only some, men. Consequently, since each human is actively *imago Dei*, each is 'irreducible.' Universality has been attained.

Hence, engaging Scheler's account of person greatly helped Wojtyla because it alerted him regarding the need to develop the Catholic, and particularly Thomistic, notion of personhood. In the latter regard, Wojtyla saw that the universality present in Scheler's account was present, in principle, in St. Thomas's own account and, therefore, helped to motivate Wojtyla to develop the latter notion.

22. Maritain, "The Name of Person," (*op. cit.*). 245-50.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Maritain, "The Positions of St. Thomas on the Ordination of the Person to Its Ultimate End" (*op. cit.*), 15.

25. *Ibid.*, 17.

26. *Ibid.*, 16.

27. *Ibid.*, 25.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, 28.

30. *Ibid.*, 27.

31. Maritain, "The Person and Society," *The Person And The Common Good* (*op. cit.*) translated by J.J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press; 1946, 1947, 1966), *Ibid.*, "The Person and Society," 47-89, 82.

32. Wojtyla, "Analysis of the verb 'To Use'" (*op. cit.*), 21-44.

33. *Ibid.*, 30-1. Cf. St. Augustine, *City of God* 14.15-26.

34. *Ibid.*, 33-4.

35. Wojtyla's formal and chief material causes appear to depend principally on St. Thomas's doctrine. Other

material causes derive from elsewhere, especially from Scheler. For discussion of these matters see, previously, n. 21. Also view *Fides et Ratio* (1998 A.D.), promulgated by Pope John Paul II, wherein St. Thomas is embraced as exemplar on account of his profound orientation toward the Divine Exemplar, *viz.*, *Wisdom* (4.43-4) and, therefore, that Catholic thought should certainly take guidance from (though not necessarily repeat) St. Thomas's doctrine. (*Cf. Fides et Ratio* 101-103).

36. Wojtyła (*op. cit.*), 24.
37. *Ibid.*, 25-30.
38. *Ibid.*, 34-9.
39. *Ibid.*, 34.
40. *Ibid.*, 34-9.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, 40-4.
43. Bishop Augustine (354-430 A.D.) probably composes this ~ 423 A.D. But Augustine (see n.11), as Ramelli (*op. cit.*, 154-8) points out, held a doctrine of universal beatitude in 387-8 A.D. while writing against the Manicheans (*On The Morals of the Manicheans*, 7.9). He later repudiates that view (*Retractations* [426-7 A.D.], I, 7.6). It is interesting to note that Augustine espouses this view before being appointed to the episcopate (391 A.D.) and repudiates it while Bishop. There are many ways of interpreting Augustine's actions.
44. See n. 10 concerning *S.T. Ia*, 1-13. I add *De ente et essentia* since that treatise's treatment of how existence and essence is found in creatures instructs how creatures, including each human person, depend on Divine Being, and since God, as Self-Sufficient, creates to share His Goodness, it follows that He leads each person toward beatitude.
45. Arguably, this view of eschatology is twice removed from the teaching of *1 Tim 2.4*. How so? If the latter entails that 'God leads each to beatitude,' this implies that Divine *Wisdom*'s primary component consists in Universal Divine Goodness and its secondary component consists in human responsibility. But a claim of minority beatitude sets the secondary component over the primary component so that what is primary becomes secondary and vice-versa. This means minority beatitude is removed from the ideal. Moreover, a claim of majority beatitude is superior to a claim of minority beatitude since the former claim, in a way, makes each component primary so that some portion of what is secondary becomes primary. This means the claim of minority beatitude is twice removed from the ideal. Therefore, if *1 Tim 2.4* entails setting human responsibility beneath Universal Divine Goodness, a teaching on minority beatitude is twice removed from Divine *Wisdom*.
46. St. Thomas Aquinas, *S.T. Ia*, 23.7, reply to objection 3, translated by *Fathers of the English Dominican Province, S.T.*, vol. 1 (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics; 1948, 1981), 132.
47. *Nostra Aetate* (*op. cit.*), 1.2, 387.
48. Wojtyła (*op. cit.*), 1.2, 27.
49. St. John Paul II, *Crossing The Threshold Of Hope* (Toronto, CA: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.; 1994), 27, 184-5.
50. Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (Dec. 7, 1990), chapter 1, section 10. (https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html, accessed Oct. 11, 2023).
51. Pope John Paul II, *The Splendor Of Truth/Veritatis Splendor*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, translated by the United States Conference Of Catholic Bishops (Washington, DC: USCCB Communications; 1993), 3.95-9, 143-9.
52. *Ibid.*, 3.71-83, 108-27.
53. The claim that the teaching on Universal Divine Goodness is essentially subaltern to Catholic philosophy, taken in conjunction with the claim that Maritain's and Wojtyła's development of Catholic thought is principally Thomistic, can raise this question: If Catholic philosophy is personalistic, is Thomistic

philosophy personalistic? Although this matter is worthy of a longer study, this paper, agreeing with *Fides et Ratio*'s view of St. Thomas as guide (e.g., 4.43-4), maintains that Thomistic philosophy is personalistic.

To begin with, Maritain's reliance on Thomistic thought is obvious since he explicitly engages and at least implicitly develops St. Thomas's teaching. What, though, about Wojtyla's thought? Its grounding in Thomistic thought might be less obvious to some, but Wojtyla often mentioned this in conjunction with acknowledging his debt to philosophers practicing phenomenology (e.g., Colossi [op. cit.], 72-3). Therefore, as I argued in n. 21 above concerning Wojtyla's doctrine of personhood, Wojtyla, as a self-identified Catholic philosopher, gave preference (or, in the spirit of 1998's *Fides et Ratio* encyclical, 'pride of place') to St. Thomas's teaching. In the doctrinal development that much of Wojtyla's work manifests (see below), Thomistic teaching is viewed as next to normative (*Inexhaustible Wisdom* is normative) and, consequently, as the primary material cause. It is true that much of the impetus for Wojtyla's development of St. Thomas's doctrine arises from engaging teachings arising within other philosophical schools. However, the latter, as Scheler's teaching on personhood shows, ultimately function in a subordinate manner.

More evidence of Wojtyla's decisive commitment to Thomistic philosophy (in the service of Wojtyla's greater commitment to *Inexhaustible Wisdom*) is found in the following considerations. To begin with, *Love and Responsibility*'s "Analysis of the Verb 'To Use,'" whose account of personhood (we argued in n. 21) is grounded in a Thomistic notion of God, finishes by identifying 'the Personalistic Norm' with the Biblical injunction to 'love God and neighbor' (*Love and Responsibility* [op. cit.], 40-4). Moreover, Wojtyla's final book before becoming Pope, viz., *Man In The Field Of Responsibility* (1972, 1991 A.D.), develops St. Thomas's worthily famous teaching on 'Natural Law,' i.e., concerning rational guidance for moral activity (*S.T. Ia, IIae*, 94.1-6). This is to show that Natural Law is present to *all persons* for the purpose of leading each to embrace God in Christ and, therefore, that upholding objective moral norms (a project subsequently undertaken in *The Splendor Of Truth*) belongs to the pathway whereby humans might be joined with God (*Man In The Field of Responsibility*, translated by K. Kemp and Z. Kieron [South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press; 2011], 71-9). By emphasizing the connection between Eternal Law and Natural Law, Wojtyla develops the universal element somewhat camouflaged in St. Thomas's doctrine. Additionally, as stated in *The Splendor of Truth* (op. cit., 2.28, 47), Pope John Paul II noticed that *Vatican II* inaugurated a "development in doctrine" which he, in part, helped to catalyze. Furthermore, while viewing St. Thomas as exemplar in seeking *Inexhaustible Wisdom* and, therefore, St. Thomas's teachings, as *Fides et Ratio* (1998 A.D.) shows, as close to normative as possible, St. John Paul the Great worked to develop certain of those teachings in ethics (e.g., *The Splendor of Truth* [op. cit., 2.71-83]) according to the mindset expressed by *Vatican II*. With that in mind, it is valuable to regress for a moment. *Fides et Ratio* 4.43-4 upholds St. Thomas as exemplar. But, as the previously mentioned passage and the document's 6.73-4 and *Conclusion* (101-2 and 107-8) make crystal clear, this is less because St. Thomas's doctrines are exemplary but more on account of his outstanding zeal for *Inexhaustible Wisdom*. By upholding *Wisdom* as St. Thomas's Exemplar, this document stands as a charter for Thomistic development; and the guidance it offers is manifested, *inter alii*, in many of John Paul II's earlier and later writings.

Most important, what permeates Wojtyla's doctrinal development is the proliferation of an essentially Thomistic doctrine of Universal Divine Goodness. Taking his cue from *Vatican II*'s emphasis on Universal Divine Goodness and from his own Thomistic notion of God, St. John Paul the Great everywhere instructs that each person is, in a way, graced (i.e., structured by Divine Presence), and that the latter's purpose (and, therefore, of acting as person) is for each to embrace God Incarnate *via* Christian grace. As a developer of doctrine, Wojtyla shows himself loyal to Thomistic thought in the service of *Wisdom*. In this respect, Wojtyla's view of Catholic philosophy is much the same as Maritain's.

Therefore, this paper's modest study of Maritain and Wojtyla gives evidence that insofar as Catholic philosophy is personalistic, Thomistic philosophy is also personalistic.

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How Do You Know What You Are Doing Now?

Cathrine V. Felix

Department of Social Sciences, Religion and Ethics

Norway Inland University of Applied Sciences

Postboks 400 Vestad

2418 Elverum, Norway

Email: cathrine.felix@inn.no

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4514-3438>

Abstract:

In this paper I explore Anscombe's claim that agents have non-observational, non-inferential knowledge of their own actions. I show that many of the arguments against the claim are based on a misinterpretation but agree with Anscombe's critics that her claim has certain shortcomings. The paper seeks to mitigate these by developing an alternative. I argue that agent's knowledge of own actions is based on a grasp of previously acquired practical competence and suggest a reason-based account built on the idea of teleological activity, according to which agents know non-observationally intentional actions that fall under certain types of broad descriptions. This account of knowledge of own actions is not based on observational evidence, but on empirically grounded knowledge of capabilities, skills and past successes.

Keywords: Anscombe, philosophy of action, non-observational knowledge, intentions, reasons

Introduction

Imagine that you kick a ball. How exactly do you know you are doing it? You seem to know directly, without any need to observe or infer. By contrast, if another person kicks the ball, you must observe it to know what is going on. You *can* observe the external bodily motions of your own kick, but you do not have to observe them to know about them. You seem to have some privileged epistemic relation to your own actions that you do not have to the actions of others. This led G.E.M. Anscombe (2000) to claim that some of the knowledge one has about one's own actions is non-observational. Sarah K. Paul (2009: 1) calls this "a provocative claim" because human beings are fallible creatures lacking any godlike knowledge of their own behavior.¹

Philosophers roughly split into two opposing camps regarding Anscombe's claim. On the one hand, there are such skeptics as Bratman, Davidson and Paul who find the claim obscure, unsound, and open to counterexamples. On the other hand, there are those like Gjelsvik, Setiya, and Thompson who think it fundamentally correct and who believe that rejecting it puts one in conflict with facts about action and agency. Nonetheless, even those who support Anscombe's claim struggle to justify it. The main difficulty in describing some knowledge as non-observational is explaining what such

knowledge consists of. How can agents be said to know what they are doing without observing whether their intentions have successfully been transformed into action? This has yet to be answered uncontroversially.

I wish to defend a version of Anscombe's claim, but – unlike Anscombe – I hold that non-observational knowledge is grounded in previously acquired practical competence. This competence, together with an agent's knowledge of the reasons she is, at present, acting on, provides the basis for non-observational knowledge of particular actions: precisely because the agent can offer certain broad descriptions of them. The main difference between Anscombe's account and mine is that an agent's knowledge of her own (present) actions for Anscombe is spontaneous, whereas I argue that such knowledge rather than being spontaneous is grounded in the agent's knowledge of her capabilities and past successful action. I suggest that the Anscombean spontaneity or groundlessness of agent's knowledge of own actions should be rejected in order to provide a credible epistemology. Anscombe's crucial insight, that if an agent acts intentionally, she knows without observation what she is doing under the descriptions under which the action is intentional, is preserved with the addition that this knowledge (of the agent's present act) is grounded in previously acquired capabilities.

I begin with a presentation of non-observational knowledge. Section 2 discusses Paul's inferential theory. Section 3 argues for my own, reason-based account according to which non-observational knowledge of one's own actions concerns only actions that are intended under certain broad descriptions. These actions are normal activities in everyday life. Interpreted this way, Anscombe's claim has a narrower application than it is normally assumed; much of the criticism of her account evaporates.

1. Non-observational knowledge

A theorist who wants to determine, precisely, the knowledge one has of one's own actions can choose between three options. She might take the view that such knowledge is gained by introspection: i.e., it is knowledge the agent has about her mental life, or what many would call the self. Alternately, she might conclude that such knowledge is of exactly the same kind as knowledge one has about the actions of others. Finally, she could carve out a middle course between these two extremes: this is what Anscombe tries to do. I take it to mean the following:

Anscombe's claim

If an agent acts intentionally, she knows – without observation – what she is doing, under the descriptions on which her action is intentional.

I take Anscombe's point to be that one *can* observe one's intentional actions; one *can* gain knowledge of what one is doing on the basis of observation. However, it is not necessary. So, Anscombe writes (2000: 24), "intentional actions are a sub-class of the events in a man's history which are known to him *not* just because he observes them". As Gjelsvik notes, Anscombe's strategy for capturing

intentional action differs from the standard Davidsonian alternative of interpreting actions as bodily movements, caused in the right way by the agent's (primary) reason. Anscombe "categorizes actions with other things towards which we typically have first person authority" (Gjelsvik): intentional actions belong to the sub-class of things one knows without observation.

Indeed, as Gjelsvik further notes, part of Anscombe's point is precisely that there are many things, in addition to intentional actions, that one knows without observation: e.g., believing, remembering, fearing, hoping, and regretting.

Among many others Donald Davidson relied on Anscombe's idea of actions as *intentional under a description*: one ascribes an intention to an agent through a process of rationalization; one tries to (Davidson, 2001: 3)

see something the agent saw... some feature... of the action the agent wanted, desired, prized, held dear, thought dutiful, beneficial, obligatory, or agreeable.

What one does is to imagine the situation from the agent's perspective and describe the action as intentional under that description. Of course, Davidson does not claim that the agent must herself try to make her performance intentional under a description. When the action is a slip, for example, it is especially hard to imagine what the description could be. In all such cases, the agent does not want, desire, prize, etc. the slip. The difficulty for Davidson is that he both defines actions as intentional under a description and wants one to take the agent's perspective: something that does not straightforwardly work with slips.²

Anscombe has a different solution. According to her understanding of falling under a description, when someone is *Φ-ing intentionally*, a class of descriptions applies to what she is doing, with a subclass of these being descriptions she knows to be true of her action. She knows directly, without observation, that they are true. Any given action is intentional only under certain descriptions. To determine whether an action *is* intentional, it is appropriate to ask "why" questions: e.g., "why are you sawing that book?" If the agent replies, "I did not realize that I was", then her action is not intentional *under that description*. Her action might be intentional under another description: e.g., "sawing a plank"; maybe a book was underneath the plank, without her realizing it. If so she cannot be said to have sawed the book intentionally. The agent knows the description under which her action counts as intentional, and she knows it without any need to observe. Consider Anscombe's example (2000: 51):

Say I go over to the window and open it. Someone who hears me calls out: What are you doing making that noise? I reply 'Opening the window'. I have called such a statement knowledge all along; and precisely because in such a case what I say is true – I do open the window; and that means that the window is getting opened by the movements of the body out of whose mouth those words come. But I don't say the words like this: 'Let me see, what is this body bringing about? Ah yes! The opening of the window'.

The example pinpoints how – most of the time when one acts – one knows what one is up to; one seems to be armed with this knowledge without needing to infer it. Under normal circumstances, a person need not observe herself to know that the movements of her body bring about the opening of a window. She does not need to ask: “what is this body of mine bringing about?” For the observer who merely hears the sounds of the movements, on the other hand, it makes perfect sense to ask: “what are you doing making that noise?” Of course, the agent can take a look to check whether she really is bringing about the action she intends; but it is not the observation *per se* that offers her knowledge of her performance.³ In this way, human action could be seen as godlike: human beings can make changes in the world and have non-observational knowledge about these changes simply because they happen in the way the human beings intend.

It does not follow from Anscombe’s claim that one has non-observational knowledge of one’s own actions that one cannot be mistaken. Perhaps one cannot be mistaken when one says “I have a headache” or “I feel nauseous”, but one can be wrong if one says “I’ll push Button Three” but actually pushes Button Seven⁴ or if one says “I take your knight!” while removing the castle from the chess board. Indeed, slips and other mistakes in the performance of actions are common. Anscombe draws attention to this early on in *Intention* (2000: 4-5): “in some cases the facts are, so to speak, impugned for not being in accordance with the words, rather than *vice versa*”. When one says to oneself “now I press Button Three” pressing Button Seven, the mistake is not in what is said but in what is done (*cf.* Anscombe, 2000: 57).⁵

The subclass of non-observational knowledge that comprises intentional actions is susceptible to a special sort of “why” question whose use as a tool for enquiry dates at least to Aristotle, though Anscombe makes no reference to Aristotle when she introduces her version of it (*Intention* §8). That said, much of what she says is reminiscent of Aristotle, so a few words about his account will be illuminating. According to Aristotle, “proper” knowledge is knowledge of a cause, revealed through the answer to a “why” question; a “why” question is a request for explanation. One can be said to have knowledge of something when one has grasped its cause (Aristotle, *Physics*: 194 b 17-20).⁶ Anscombe ties the “why” question specifically to the notion of intentional action: “intentional actions are ones to which a certain sense of the question ‘why?’ has application” (Anscombe, 2000: 11). This “certain sense” is the agent’s reason for Φ -ing. The sense she has in mind does not involve the notion of a cause – including mental cause. She offers a list of what she considers proper ways to answer the “why” question: a proper answer may mention past history, interpret an action, or mention something in the future (Anscombe, 2000: 24). The latter two offer reasons for action; the first is a proper reply only if ideas of good or harm are considered.

To have non-observational knowledge is to have an answer to the “why” question, where the final answer typically just is the intention; while the set of answers to a “why” question reveals the structure of an agent’s practical reasoning. Consider a version of Anscombe’s famous example (2000: 38):

Q: “Why are you moving your arm up and down?”

A: “I’m pumping”.

Q: “Why are you pumping?”

A: “I’m pumping the water supply for the house”.

Q: “Why are you pumping the water?”

A: “Because it is needed at the house and to poison the people inside”.

Q: “Why are you poisoning these people?”

A: “They are party members”.

Q: “Why do you want to kill the party members?”

A: “If the party members die, the government can be overthrown”.

The structure need not look exactly like this, nor would the agent necessarily think through the steps in exactly this manner: what this shows is one possible scenario. Through a series of repeated “why” questions and answers, which reveals the means the agent thinks she must achieve before she can reach her aim, one arrives at *the* aim, the intention: in this case, to overthrow the government.⁷ In this way, the enquirer comes to know just what the agent wants and gains knowledge about the action that the agent performs; while the agent knows her action already, as the product of her practical reasoning: she does what she meant to do. As an agent, she has practical knowledge of her actions, where “practical knowledge” is understood, in formal terms, as “the cause of what it understands”⁸; by contrast, the observer’s knowledge is speculative, “derived from the objects known” (Anscombe, 2000: 87). The agent’s understanding of what she is doing is not merely one more description side by side with all other possible descriptions of her action; rather, it has some claim to determine what the action is. The movements of maneuvering the pump which is leading up to the poisoning of the party members and thereby the overthrowing of the government would not count as (intentionally) overthrowing the government if the agent’s practical understanding did not conceive of it in these terms.

Obviously, one must often see what one is doing in order to make sure that one is doing what one plans to do. However, the eyes are merely an aid. Knowledge of one’s own action is aided by observation; it is not *based on* observation (Anscombe, 2000: 53):

So without the eyes he knows what he writes; but the eyes help to assure him that what he writes actually gets legibly written.

If one must observe or be told that one is Φ -ing then, on Anscombe’s account, one is not Φ -ing intentionally; the knowledge one gains is speculative, rather than practical and non-observational. Like Gjelsvik, I see awareness as crucial for Anscombe. Gjelsvik writes: “missing awareness of what we do cancels ascriptions of intentional agency on Anscombe’s view, and this point is fundamental to her thinking on intentional agency”. If the agent’s reply to a “why” question is that she was unaware of doing the thing she is asked about, then it does not count as something she did

intentionally. In short, “the facts about being aware of something (p) and doing something (p) intentionally are... tied into each other” (Gjelsvik).

Kieran Setiya (2007: 25) describes Anscombe’s cases of *refused application* as “the basic insight of Anscombe’s argument”. A case of apparent intentionality is refused application by the answer: “I was not aware I was doing that” (Anscombe, 2000: 11); the agent lacks knowledge of her own agency. Anscombe offers several ways this can happen. The resulting action cannot be said to accord with the agent’s intention to act; the agent is not properly aware of her action. Anscombe writes (2000: 50-51):

By the knowledge that a man has of his intentional actions I mean the knowledge that one denies having if when asked e.g. ‘Why are you ringing that bell?’ one replies ‘Good heavens! I didn’t know I was ringing it!’

In cases of refused application, the agent is, in the midst of her acting, unaware – in some important way – of what she is doing. Should she be made aware she is doing something contrary to plan, she would stop what she is doing and do what she planned to do instead. She is likely to be surprised by the discovery of what she is doing: something that normally does not happen when one does what one means to do.

It is not always easy to follow Anscombe’s argument; also, her account has many details I have chosen to gloss over here. My point has only been to provide sufficient background material to discuss her account. In the next section I explore an inferential account of agent’s knowledge of actions.

2. Inferential Theory

Paul writes that “a middle course must be found between... two extremes” in the debate over non-observational knowledge: the extremes of skepticism and strong cognitivism. She ascribes the first to Davidson and the second to Velleman and Setiya. Davidson rejects Anscombe’s argument on the grounds that acting intentionally does not entail acting knowingly (2001: 92):

In writing heavily on this page I may be intending to produce ten legible carbon copies. I do not know, or believe with any confidence, that I am succeeding. But if I am producing ten legible carbon copies, I am certainly doing it intentionally.

The point appears to be that intention plus success need not amount to knowledge of success. Davidson makes no mistake in his performance, yet he must look to know whether he has succeeded. This and similar examples lead Davidson into skepticism.

Meanwhile, strong cognitivism is the view of intention as a special kind of belief; an intention to Φ is a belief that one is Φ -ing or will do so. So long as an agent successfully performs according to her intentions, her beliefs about her actions are true. She forms her intentions because of preferences to perform certain actions, not on any evidence that they will be performed. In other words, the belief that accompanies action is not grounded in observation or inference: it originates in the agent’s practical knowledge as “the cause of what she understands”; non-observational knowledge of one’s

actions is embodied in the intentions themselves. The action that the agent brings about is the representational content of the intention-belief. Setiya writes (2007: 26):

when someone is acting intentionally, there must be something he is doing intentionally, not merely trying to do, in the belief that he is doing it.

Setiya's reply to Davidson is that Davidson need not know that he is making ten simultaneous copies successfully; nevertheless, he has non-observational knowledge of what he is doing, because he knows he is pressing down hard with his pen. At the same time, it is not sufficient that he knows he intends to make ten copies; there are things that he must actually do, like pressing hard with his pen (Setiya, 2007: 25). According to the strong cognitivist, when one is successful in one's intention, one's belief about what one is doing is true. Having an intention to Φ is considered to consist in a causally *self-fulfilling belief* that one will Φ . It can be hard to grasp exactly why this should amount to knowledge. William James can be helpful. He writes (1956: 25): "faith in a fact can help create the fact". Velleman cites James before he states his own view in the following way (2007: 64):

An agent may therefore form an expectation about his forthcoming action without being prompted by evidence. Although the agent's expectation of acting is a conclusion to which he jumps before the evidence is complete, he jumps with the assurance that the conclusion will achieve verity even as he lands.

Paul sees (2009: 3, 6) a "kernel of truth" in the non-observational knowledge claim that Davidson fails to acknowledge; but she thinks that the strong cognitivists exaggerate its role. She criticizes them for the view that beliefs can be formed without sufficient prior evidence, in contradiction to common theories of rationality. She takes aim as well at Velleman's understanding of intention as "licensed wishful thinking", according to which "the agent's thoughts are licensed to be wishful because they are self-fulfilling" (Velleman, 2007: 69).

According to Paul's middle path, intentions are not beliefs. She claims there are many counterexamples: e.g., one can seriously intend to get a Ph.D. without fully believing one will get it. After all, many obstacles stand in the way of long-term plans, and intentions can fail. One assumes that the doctoral student will do all she needs to toward her intended goal without needing further to assume the belief that she will (necessarily) arrive there; nonetheless, it is reasonable to say that she intends to do so (Paul, 2009: 7).⁹

There are other cases of intended actions that need not involve a belief that one will do as one intends. Consider the agent who intends to stop and get gas on the way home from work but counts on the possibility she will forget her plan and drive straight home instead (Paul, 2009: 7; see also Bratman, 1987). Paul allows that one could argue against her examples and claim that the person who doubts her success does not really intend to succeed, only to try; but this idea – that the only thing one knows non-observationally is one's intention to try – she sees as problematic for Anscombe, given her view that what one knows is that which actually happens.

Anscombe's thoughts on agents' non-observational knowledge of what happens is a real worry for Paul, because "intending and doing are not the same thing" (Paul, 2009: 2). As Paul's examples show, merely having an intention is often insufficient to pull off a plan. All manner of things might hinder one from doing what one intends: weakness of will, procrastination, self-deception, change of mind, and so on (Paul, 2009: 12):

We routinely misidentify the motives behind our decisions, agonize over trying to figure out what it is we want, spend years not knowing that we are really in love, and so on. Why should we expect our knowledge of our intentions to be dependable and accurate enough to serve as the basis of non-observational knowledge of action?

The worry is understandable and one that most people can likely relate to, simply by recalling times when plans went wrong: the diet that ended up in weight gain, the intention to visit the gym regularly whose only sign is an expensive membership.

Though Paul does not accept Anscombe's argument as it is, she sees some sense to the notion of non-observational knowledge of what one is doing. Paul sees her approach as neo-Gricean, sharing with Grice the view that agents achieve knowledge of their agency (Paul, 2009: 12) "by tending to believe, in the absence to the contrary, that we are doing what we intend to be doing". Grice famously held that an agent intends to Φ just in case she wills to Φ and believes that she will Φ simply because of her willing to do so, based on her knowledge of her own will. Anscombe considered theories like Grice's to be "mad" precisely because of the role they give to the will (2000: 52): "the only sense I can give to 'willing' is that in which I might stare at something and will it to move". What one knows when one knows one's intentional actions should not be separated into non-observational knowledge of one's intentions and observational knowledge of one's performance. For Anscombe, such a view attributes an absurd role to the will. One does not stare at a matchbox and will it to move; one does not treat one's arm like a magician's wand and give it orders like "arm, wave!" or "arm, pick up that pencil!" A willing in and of itself cannot make something happen; and intention, for Anscombe, must relate to *something that happens*. However, Paul departs from Grice on this point. Instead of giving the role to willing something that he wishes to, she offers the following alternative (2009: 11):

If we think of intentions as distinctively practical, conative commitments that do not constitutively involve the belief that one will do what one intends, then we can replace the role of willing in the Gricean structure with intending.

Of her Inferential Theory, Paul writes (2009: 9):

The central idea behind the Inferential Theory is that our beliefs about our intentional actions are not spontaneous, but evidence-based – based largely, I will argue, on our knowledge of what we *intend* to be doing, where intentions are not themselves beliefs.

Highly relevant for Paul is an agent's background of belief in her ability to perform the actions she intends. *Contra* Velleman, she holds that it is unlicensed for an agent to believe she is doing something just because she intends it. The agent must have good reasons, derived from previous experience, to back this up. That means that the agent must have knowledge of her own history to know about her actions. Knowledge of one's history can reveal how likely it is that one will end up doing what one intends: e.g., a researcher might be reliable when it comes to paper deadlines but unreliable in other settings (Paul, 2009: 15). Knowledge for Paul is given through experience; but she does not want to claim that all that one knows without observation is what one intends to do. What exactly does that leave for non-observational knowledge of one's own agency?

For Paul, it is crucial that the knowledge an agent has of her actions does not come about "just like that": at some point in her history, she acquired it; but the observational/experiential basis of that knowledge need not apply to every performance of it.

Paul's inferential theory lays out the conditions under which agents need not depend on observation of action in particular performances. (1) The agent must be confident that she has the abilities she needs to fulfill her intention. (2) The agent must have a proper grasp of the conventions that apply to the situation she is in, and she must understand the cause/effect structure on which her intention relies. (3) The agent must know how likely she is, given her previous history, to carry through with her plan. Echoing what Anscombe might say, Paul also mentions a fourth condition on the agent (2009: 18):

His understanding of the way some action descriptions apply partly in virtue of his intention in acting. The last consideration in particular makes it possible for him to know what is actually happening, under a certain description, in knowing what he intends to be doing.

Paul emphasizes throughout that the agent's beliefs *per se* do not cause the actions she performs (2009: 18):

According to the Inferential Theory, the agent's non-observational belief about what he is doing is based on the cause of its truth, but is not itself the efficient cause.

Paul sees this point as driving a wedge between her position and that of strong cognitivism. Agential knowledge is evidentially based on intention in two senses. First, it is because of the intention that the agent initiates and successfully completes the action. Second, the intention determines whether the agent's action falls under the intended description. What the agent arrives at is not mere speculation but counts as non-observational knowledge. It forms not simply a response to antecedent evidence about the external world; "the truth of the belief depends on the agent's choice to *make* it true, by carrying out the intention on which the belief is based, and not on its being an accurate reflection of the way things already stand" (Paul, 2009: 18-19).

This argument might work against strong cognitivism, but it is not an argument against

Anscombe.¹⁰ At the time that Anscombe's agent performs her action, she knows what she does, because she causes what happens. This, however, is to talk about causation formally. In the case of intentional action, any speculation about Aristotelian *efficient* cause is ruled out, and the answer to the relevant "why" question is not of the kind that can be provided by a neurophysiologist: a point on which Anscombe is quite explicit.

Aristotle's *formal cause* concerns the "form": e.g., the shape of a statue; while efficient cause is the primary source of change and what directly produces someone's bodily movements. As Moran (2004: 67) writes "speculative knowledge is not the cause, either formally or materially, of what it understands". Anscombe points out that, when dealing with human behavior, what one wants to know are not the efficient causes behind the human machinery; rather, one wants information to make actions intelligible and meaningful. Knowing that someone's C-neurons fired says nothing about the norms that govern the situation nor the agent's grasp of it. Efficient causal factors are always to be found, but Paul and Anscombe are not looking for them.

Paul's account is less distinct from Anscombe's than first blush might suggest. Indeed, I think Anscombe would agree to many of Paul's points. With Paul's unconfident Ph.D. student in mind, consider Anscombe's view (2000: 87) that "the failure to achieve what one would finally like to achieve is common". Anscombe discusses other cases where the agent intends something without believing that her intention will amount to action, even as "one can be as certain as possible that one will do something, and yet intend not to do it" (Anscombe, 2000: 94): e.g., a person can intend not to break down under torture and yet thoroughly expect to do so. However, such cases are rare. More typically, the agent says "I am going to do such and such" and does what she says.

Anscombe in no way suggests that an agent cannot be wrong or uncertain whether she will do what she intends. The agent could change her mind or be prevented from acting. An issue I find highly relevant for Anscombe is almost always overlooked: namely her focus on "the small activities of everyday life" (Anscombe, 2000: 92). When it comes to these matters, one does – most of the time – what one intends to do. Of course, one can also talk of knowledge of long-term plans, but there so much more can go wrong.¹¹ In these cases, I would suppose Anscombe to say that the agent who fulfills her long-term plan knows, without observation, at the precise moment when she finally e.g. signs her marriage contract. One cannot know what one is doing unless one is doing it, and the things one intends must actually happen before one can be said to have knowledge about them.

Nevertheless, Anscombe's critics put forth examples such as the following, focusing not on typical, everyday actions, but on sophisticated skills (Velleman, 2007: 202):

Anscombe believes that if one is trying to shoot a bull's eye, intends to shoot one, and will consequently end up having shot one intentionally, then one already knows without observation that one is shooting a bull's eye, not just that one is intending or trying to do so, or moving one's limb with that aim.

How can the content of one's intention to hit the bull's eye constitute knowledge of doing so? Such examples make Anscombe's position seem unreasonable. Not even the most professional dart player

can know beforehand that she will hit the bull's eye, though she intends to do so.¹² Again, however, Anscombe's focus is not on the extraordinary but the ordinary: the "small activities of everyday life", the totally standard things one plans to do on a daily basis. "I intend to paint the wall". "I intend to go to the cinema". "I intend to open the window". There is a difference between intending to hit a bull's eye and intending to go to the cinema. The first is a complex feat of eye to hand coordination, the other places next to no performative demands on the agent.¹³ How often does one set out for the cinema with the ticket in one's pocket, filled with excitement wondering, "will I really manage to see a movie?" Of course, such obstacles as weakness of will and self-deception can intervene; but as Anscombe (2001: 87) writes:

What is necessarily the rare exception is for a man's performance in its more immediate descriptions not to be what he supposes. Further, it is the agent's knowledge of what he is doing that gives the descriptions under which what is going on is the execution of an intention.

Seen this way, Anscombe's position seems far less improbable than it is often read.

Contra the strong cognitivists, Anscombe does not take intention as a form of belief. If an agent fails to act as she intends and the mistake is not due to a false belief about the means or possibilities for action, then "the mistake is not one of judgment but of performance" (Anscombe, 2000: 57). The intention sets the standard for success. If a claim to non-observational knowledge turns out to be wrong, it is because of a mistake in the performance: the agent fails to perform in accordance with her knowledge (judgment). If the agent makes a mistake in performance, she lacks (non-observational) knowledge of her action.

I think a typical misreading of Anscombe takes her claim to concern knowledge of one's self. True, knowledge is, for Anscombe, related to intentions. However, the intended relation is not such that one has transparent knowledge of the kind of person one is. Rather, the descriptions under which an agent would appropriately say that her action counts as intentional are such that she knows them without having to observe them. One might spend one's whole life contemplating such questions as "who am I?" But if one needs to speculate about what one is doing, it will not count as knowledge for Anscombe. One might find oneself in situations where one starts asking oneself, "what am I doing?" If one needs to know what one is doing and this, in and of itself, is insufficient to provide the answer, one cannot be said to have non-observational knowledge of what one is doing. One has entered the domain of speculation. For the agent with non-observational knowledge, the wanting to know is sufficient to provide the information: one knows directly.

Paul is certainly correct to question Anscombe's claim: it is hard to pin down. Though numerous philosophers have written on the topic recently, it remains one of considerable debate. I think Paul makes points that should be taken seriously, particularly regarding previous experience as an important source for knowledge of agency: the agent must, at some point in her history, have acquired the skills on which she bases her intentional performances. Such grounding must exist, even though the agent need not speculate about it every time she applies it. One must learn what one is

capable of doing intentionally before it makes sense to speak of non-observational knowledge. Agential experience seems to be missing from Anscombe's account. Experience belongs to the epistemological and phenomenological issues on which she is silent. Paul covers some of them.

It is important to grasp what exactly one is meant to have non-observational knowledge about. I have tried to show that, on Anscombe's account, such knowledge is supposed to be – not about one's self and personality – but rather about one's actions. I am convinced that many seeming counterarguments to Anscombe evaporate if one makes this distinction properly. I hope to have said enough on this admittedly complex topic to move on. I turn now to an argument against non-observational knowledge that centers around the act rather than the self.

3. A reason-based account

I see two main keys to a proper understanding of non-observational knowledge of one's own actions. The first is Anscombe's notion of mistake in performance, the second her notion of practical reasoning. In addition to the Paul's work, I wish also to draw on the work of Betty Powell (1967) and Anne Newstead (2009). Powell suggests that the question "how did you find out?" is generally inapplicable as a request for an agent's knowledge of what she is doing. This is a good point, but Powell says too little about why this is so. Drawing on Newstead's account I suggest that the question is inapplicable because the agent knows her reasons for doing what she is intentionally doing, under broad descriptions: that is, in a teleological sense; she seems not to be aware of the narrowest descriptions that apply to what she does: the smallest bodily movements, etc. I agree with Newstead's claim that the agent has knowledge of her present intentions by knowing her reasons for action; but I also part from her in several important respects. For example, I accept Paul's claim that the agent – at some point in her history – must have gained the knowledge she has of her practical capacity to perform intentionally, knowledge from which she can now benefit non-observationally; and whereas Newstead (2009) does not focus on the "why" question, it plays an important role in my account.¹⁴

Let me begin with Powell's suggestion that the question "how do you know what you are doing (now)?" is inappropriate, if what one really is asking is: "how did you find out?" An agent need not wonder who is performing Φ when *she* is the one doing so. Consider the difference between the questions "how do you know that S did Φ " and "how do you know that you are Φ -ing (now)?" In comparing the possible answers to these two questions, the inappropriateness of the latter comes to light.

Consider the first question. Imagine asking some person – say, Sarah – "how do you know that Serena Williams won the tennis match?" If Sarah watched the match on television, she might answer: "I saw it on TV". Given an everyday setting, this seems an acceptable answer, even though it is not the only way to answer the question. Maybe Sarah did not watch the match herself; she could have read about it and so reply: "I read about it in the newspaper". Maybe she got the news from a person she trusts; if so, she might say, "I know because Linda told me so". Maybe she was in the

audience when the match was played; if so, she could offer a reply people often find trustworthy: “I was there when it happened”. All are potentially proper ways to satisfy the enquiry, even though some might invite further probing: “are you sure *that* is what you read in the newspaper?” In short, everyday justifications for knowledge about the actions of others include “I saw it”, “I was told”, “I was present when it happened”, etc.

Now consider the second question. Imagine asking Michael: “how do you know what you are doing just now?” A natural reaction from him would be to remark that the question seems odd. Suppose that, for the sake of argument, one really asks that question. What exactly is one asking? In what enlightening way can Michael respond? Suppose he is baking bread. To make a proper analogy with Sarah’s case, imagine asking him: “how did you find out that you are baking bread just now?” It is not very helpful if Michael responds that the reason he knows he is baking bread is that he is present for the occasion. A person cannot completely fail to be present, when performing some action. Admittedly, one sometimes says things like “I am not myself today” or “sorry, my thoughts are elsewhere”: there is a sense in which one can fail to be fully mentally present when going about one’s business. Nevertheless, one cannot be wholly absent from one’s own action. It also sounds absurd if Michael says, “well, I observe myself doing so”. This is where Anscombe’s idea of mistake in performance comes in. Think of this mistake as a slip. It seems natural to suppose that a person normally has direct knowledge of what she does; it is only when something goes wrong that one questions her knowledge: the agent’s claim to non-observational knowledge breaks down when she makes a slip. Slips do not occur because the agent lacks the appropriate practical competence; nor, for Anscombe, do they occur because of a false belief, but rather because they fail to accord with the agent’s knowledge. She writes (2000: 57):

Can it be that there is something that modern philosophy has blankly misunderstood: namely what ancient and medieval philosophers meant by *practical knowledge*? Certainly in modern philosophy we have an incorrigibly contemplative conception of knowledge. Knowledge must be something that is judged as such by being in accordance with the facts. The facts, reality, are prior, and dictate what is to be said, if it is knowledge.

With few exceptions (e.g., Gjelsvik; Moran, 2004; Newstead, 2009; Vogler, 2001), researchers who discuss Anscombe ignore the direct move she takes from practical knowledge and mistake in performance to practical reasoning. In the paragraph after her treatment of mistake in performance and introduction of practical knowledge, Anscombe writes: “the notion of ‘practical knowledge’ can only be understood if we first understand ‘practical reasoning’” (Anscombe, 2000: 57). For Anscombe, a claim to practical knowledge is based, not on observation or inference, but rather on actions that manifest the conclusion of a process of practical reasoning.

Anscombe’s “why” question is meant to be posed to the agent performing the action, not to an observer. The resulting series of questions and answers reveal the structure of the reasoning leading to the agent’s intention. The final answer to the final “why” question typically is the intention. It can be

and often is a broader description than the observer can derive from watching the action.¹⁵ This is the sense of broad description I am after: not a description of basic bodily movements like “I’m contracting my muscles in such and such a way”, but a description under which the action counts as intentional for the agent, revealing the action’s purpose or *telos* like “I’m pumping water with the aim of overthrowing the government”. The agent may well not know the narrowest descriptions that apply. Broad descriptions are not, however, to my mind, sufficient to count as non-observational knowledge.

Anne Newstead writes (2009: 166): “practical knowledge is simply *knowledge of reasons for acting*”. I see this as a step in the right direction, but matters are not quite so simple. As Paul has pointed out, the agent must – at some point – have gained the skill in which her non-observational knowledge is grounded. With this confirmed, one does not only know these broad descriptions Newstead refers to; one can also actively intend and perform them, precisely because of practical competence one has previously acquired. Such practical competence grounds the agent’s action repertoire and provides the basic explanation for why something like the claim from Anscombe (2000: 87) that “it is the agents’ knowledge of what he is doing that gives the descriptions under which what is going on is the execution of an intention”. Of course, it is important to remember that “an intended effect just occasionally comes about by accident” (Anscombe, 2000: 39).

Anscombe does not discuss the distinction between expert and novice. I think it important: most of the time, someone expert in a skill will accomplish what she intends; the novice, who has not yet acquired the grounding for the appropriate non-observational knowledge, will experience more setbacks. That knowledge should qualify as non-observational in this way distinguishes my position from that of Newstead or Anscombe. Along with Paul, I cannot see how non-observational knowledge can arise completely without such grounding. The skill, ability, competence, know how, reliability – whatever one chooses to call it – that the agent needs to perform the actions she intends must have been acquired at some point. That achievement in hand, she needs not intend her use of the skill on every occasion for which it is necessary to the performance of an action. As Stanley (2010) argues, the agent must somehow have grasped that she has the competence and can apply it to perform what she intends. I see some problems in Stanley’s approach, but on this point he must be basically right – even though I am not sure what exactly the *something* is that the agent has grasped (Stanley calls it a truth). I might be inclined to say, as Lucy O’Brien does (2007: 165), that “one [is] acting against a grasp of possible things one could have done as basic actions”, even though she does not pinpoint just what the agent has grasped, either: only that one is aware of one’s options. Still, this may be all I need, and I can say that what the agent has grasped are simply the available ways to realize her intention practically. This practical knowledge is constitutive of what she is doing whenever her actions are intentionally performed, for reasons that fall under certain broad descriptions. Again, the narrow descriptions are often unknown to the agent, as Anscombe emphasizes (2000: 53):

The only description that I clearly know of what I am doing may be of something that is at a distance from me. It is not the case that I clearly know the movements I make, and the intention is just a result which I calculate and hope will follow on these movements.

Put differently, things that are teleologically basic are such that the agent need not intend them to perform them successfully. The agent is so skilled at performing them that she can do them even while making a slip – in which case, she lacks non-observational knowledge of what she is doing, precisely because she acts contrary to her intention. Some hold that this still counts as intentional behavior; but, clearly, in some sense it is not. The agent performs goal-directed movements, but the “why” question does not apply, and what the agent does is not the product of her practical reasoning. I believe people perform fewer intentional actions than is often assumed. Much of what one does is done automatically, with little or no reflection. One need not confer with one’s reasons; one simply falls into familiar routes and routines. I think this is how days go by for most of us.

Conclusion

Anscombe’s view that agents have non-observational, unmediated, or groundless knowledge of their own actions – a creator’s knowledge of what she herself creates – has been regarded by many as being highly problematic. For good reasons, I believe. It is not epistemologically satisfying. Knowledge does not appear out of thin air – not even for the agent who creates her own intentional act. Actually, Anscombe attests to the fact in her own theory through the concept of “mistake in performance”. The agent who makes such a mistake lacks, as Gjelsvik remarks, awareness of her act i.e. she does not know what she does then and there. She thinks that she does, but she is wrong. But if she is wrong, then the belief is based on *something false*¹⁶. In other words, it is based on something. It is not unmediated nor groundless. Anscombe should have offered further explanation here.

My suggestion is that though the agent does not have unmediated or groundless awareness of her own action, she does have non-observational knowledge, knowledge based on prior observations of her own behavior and agentive capabilities. Think about a novice learning to dance versus an accomplished master. The novice has to rely on observations of her own body in order to copy and reproduce the correct steps and movements. The novice dancer typically keeps looking at her feet. The master, on the other hand, knows what she does without looking.

It is often overlooked in the literature that Anscombe in her philosophy of action foremostly wrote about actions of the everyday kind, and not goals for the distant future. She focused on the elementary acts people perform in an everyday life, like reading books, getting cups of coffee, and opening windows. So, when Anscombe speaks about non-observational knowledge, these are the things she speaks about. Not getting Ph.Ds, getting married, or shooting bull’s eyes at target ranges. Importantly, non-observational knowledge does not constitute a psychological profile of oneself as an agent. It is the knowledge that one has about what one does as one is doing it. When opening a window I do not have to empirically verify that I am opening a window in order to know that I am opening a window. I do the motions, and I know that I do it because I know my capacity for executing my own intentions. Sometimes, though, I go through the motions and end up doing something else than what I intended, like getting up to fetch coffee and ending up in the bathroom wondering: what am I doing here? These are instances where non-observational knowledge is

lacking. Hence, they are good examples of just what Anscombe's means by non-observational knowledge. Namely, direct awareness of myself as an agent.

Having stated this, I agree with Anscombe's critics that she does not provide an adequate explanation as to how an agent comes by this knowledge. It is here I believe I can contribute by pointing out that non-observational knowledge is grounded in an agent's repertoire of basic actions, that our non-observational knowledge about what we do comes from an understanding of ourselves as doers and the knowledge how that we possess.

Anscombe holds that an agent's knowledge of her actions must involve more than mere knowledge of internal goings on: intentions, desires, etc. This "something more" is what happens in the world when one acts, as Anscombe emphasizes through her formula "I do what happens" (2000: §29): "...when the description of what happens is the very thing which I should say I was doing, then there is no distinction between my doing and the thing's happening".

The view that what one knows non-observationally when one acts is only the intention – the internal trying, willing, etc. – is nothing more for Anscombe than a "mad account" (2000: 52). I think she is right. That said, I argue with Paul for a more restrictive view, according to which the agent must have acquired her knowledge at some point previously. *Contra* Anscombe, it cannot be that knowledge comes – ever – completely without grounding. For any of an agent's actions, previously acquired knowledge lurks in the background. The agent can be made to reveal her reasons in response to a series of "why" questions about her action, in which case she will describe what she is doing under broader descriptions than the observer would otherwise have access to. This knowledge is unique to the agent. It allows her to say that what she is doing is overthrowing the government, when all that the observer can see is that she is pumping water.

Endnotes:

1. Paul writes: "In spite of our patent lack of omnipotence, it has been thought by some that through our intentional actions, we human agents can also have a special kind of knowledge of the world." (2009: 1) And: "our knowledge of our own minds is notoriously fallible and prone to error" (2009: 12).
2. In order to defend Davidson's theory, it could be objected that his theory is supposed to explain actions, but slips are not actions. This, however, is problematic seeing as slips are thoroughly intertwined with intentional action. Slips are clearly not intended *per se*, yet they always occur within a sequence of behavior that is. Moreover, slips are something that agents identify as their own doing. For example, pressing the wrong elevator button. Of course, the Davidsonian could object that the act is intentional under the description "the agent pushes a button", but allowing actions to be counted as intentional under a more generalized description is not a good move, for the agent did not simply intend to push whatever button – she intended a specific button, and she ended up doing something else. I will not dwell further into the topic, nothing substantial hinges on it.
3. Moran's (2004) article on the topic is illuminating; see in particular pp. 57-58.
4. My variation on Anscombe's example (2000: 57).
5. See Moran and Stone (2008) for a detailed discussion of Anscombe's view on expression of intention.
6. See also Falcon's SEP article on Aristotle and causality.

7. The agent can, of course, have further reasons beyond the reasons she has for the exact action that she is at present performing. In this case, for example, unless she is being irrational, she has reasons for wanting to overthrow the government. One such reason could be that the party members are corrupt (see Anscombe, 2000 p. 40: "...there is probably a further answer, other than 'just for fun'...").
8. Anscombe took inspiration from Aquinas. For him it described God's knowledge of His creation. God knows what the world is like, not because he finds out what it is like, but because it is just like he meant it to be. He knows what the world is like simply by meaning it to be that way. Anscombe's idea is that agents create their intentional actions in a similar sense.
9. Note that Paul is not explicitly attempting to interpret Anscombe in her paper. What she does is rather to make sense of Anscombe's claim about agency and non-observational knowledge in light of the discussions that Anscombe's claim spawned. However, in doing this, she does paint a picture of what is contained in Anscombe's claim, and it is this picture that I discuss. In general, I argue against the way Anscombe has often been received in the philosophical debate regarding agency and non-observational knowledge and offer a different take on the issue.
10. For the record, Paul acknowledges that Anscombe did not hold the view that practical knowledge is the efficient cause of the action it represents (Paul, 2009: 2).
11. Anscombe said very little about long-term plans. See Bratman's work for a thorough treatment of plans in all its facets.
12. Of course, the skilled dart player understands how good her throw is before the dart actually hits. She knows from experience what a good throw feels like, she can measure the wind etc., however Anscombe's focus was standard everyday actions and not endeavours that demand expertise.
13. That is, no performative demands that are not readily met by any normally functioning individual.
14. For the record: Newstead mentions the "why" question elsewhere, for example in her "Knowledge by Intention? On the Possibility of Agent's Knowledge" (2006).
15. Anscombe also thinks that an observer can often say straight off what a person she observes intends simply by reporting what this person is doing (2000: §4).
16. It is important to notice that what is false here, is not a false belief about how to perform the action in question, for example, the agent has no false belief about how to push the right button, she has a *true* belief about how to push the button she intends to push and she has the necessary skill, it is just that then and there her intention slips on the world, so to say, and she pushes the wrong button.

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Avoiding *Façons de Parler*: Potentiality and Possibility in Aristotle's Philosophy

José Luis Fernández

Department of Philosophy

Fairfield University

1073 North Benson Road, Fairfield, CT 06824, USA

E-mail: Jfernandez1@fairfield.edu

Abstract:

The distinction between potentiality and possibility in Aristotle's modal teleology is sometimes conflated by the implicative conjunction that potentiality implies possibility *and* possibility implies potentiality. In his unpublished doctoral dissertation Richard Rorty warns that trying to pin down Aristotle's definition of potentiality often leads to treating the term as a "mere *façon de parler*." Consonant with Rorty, this paper observes that the definition of possibility in Aristotle's works is not without its own share of semantic snags. Subsequently, I abide by Rorty's caveat not only to resist the lure of expressive convenience some commentators have taken in describing potentiality, but also to elucidate possibility's two-fold field of modal application. Consequently, this paper aims to present a nuanced account of how notions of potentiality and possibility are presented in Aristotle's treatises for the sake of demonstrating that both sides of the *potentiality/possibility conjunction* do not mutually imply.

Keywords: Aristotle, Teleology, Modality, Potentiality, Possibility, Necessity, Jaakko Hintikka, Giorgio Agamben

Any attempt to engage with Aristotle's teleological and modal concepts requires close attention paid to the distinction he makes between potentiality and possibility; however, after performing this crucial categorial demarcation one must then be careful in how one chooses to articulate these constituent modal concepts.¹ Jaakko Hintikka suggests that for Aristotle possibility's field of application is twofold, with possibility proper (e.g., logical possibility within the domain of propositions) and with contingency (e.g., metaphysical possibility within the domain of phenomena).² In accordance with Hintikka, I shall employ the notion of possibility as it is generally given in modal discourse and does not do violence to Aristotle's fine gradations, i.e., as that which is *not necessarily not* and, subsequently, can be otherwise.³ Potentiality, too, is not free of semantic snags. In his rich, reflective, and reinforcing treatment of this topic, Giorgio Agamben offers an inviting introduction into the concept,

The concept of potentiality has a long history in Western philosophy, in which it has occupied a central position at least since Aristotle. In both his metaphysics and his physics, Aristotle opposed potentiality

to actuality, *dynamis* to *energeia*, and bequeathed this opposition to Western philosophy and science. My concern here is not simply historiographical. I do not intend simply to restore currency to philosophical categories that are no longer in use. On the contrary, I think that the concept of potentiality has never ceased to function in the life and history of humanity, most notably in that part of humanity that has grown and developed its potency (*potenza*) to the point of imposing its power over the whole planet (Agamben 2009, 177).

Agamben's focus on the manifold implications that realized and unrealized potentialities have in the world is judicious, and his mention of Aristotle's opposition of *dynamis* (potentiality) and *energeia* (actuality), (which, I would add, are always joined in teleological tandem), provides a clearing into which the concept of potentiality can appear to examine ideas ranging through a luminous collection of thinkers that includes, *inter alios*, Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, G.W.F. Hegel, Martin Heidegger, William Shakespeare, and Herman Melville. However, in forging his teleologically driven study, Agamben arrives at the problem that can be characterized as something possessing a negative potential or a potential not to x. Drawing from Aristotle's ground-breaking genius in the *Metaphysics*, he identifies a seminal passage, but not without unintentionally introducing another problem,

Aristotle writes: "A thing is said to be potential if, when the act of which it is said to be potential is realized, there will be nothing impotential" (*esti de dynaton touto, hoi ean hyperxei be energeia ou legetai ekhein ten dynamen, ouden estai adynaton*) (*Metaphysics*, 1047a 24-26). Usually this sentence is interpreted as if Aristotle had wanted to say, "What is possible (or potential) is that with respect to which nothing is impossible (or impotential). If there is no impossibility, then there is possibility." Aristotle would then have uttered a banality or a tautology (Agamben 2009, 183).

Here Agamben points out an infelicitous interpretation that indeed leads to a trivial redundancy; however, although Agamben frames it this way (e.g., "possible (or potential)," the same thing is not being said twice. *Dynaton* and *dynamis* are not coterminous. This conflation can sometimes be attributed to the likeness of the Greek terms *dunaton* (possible) and *dunamis* (potential), but they are different modal/teleological categories.

Indeed, Richard Rorty points out that trying to pin down Aristotle's definition of potentiality often leads to the temptation of using the term as a "mere *façon de parler*."⁴ Taking Rorty's lead, I will resist this lure of convenience and treat potentiality as that which has the *power* not only for change, but also for moving toward a more completed state of development.⁵ I set out these markers in advance because this paper will not only look closely at the distinction between potentiality and possibility, I will also endeavor to challenge the view that holds this tandem as joined by a material biconditional, *i.e.*, that potentiality implies possibility and possibility implies potentiality (henceforth, the potentiality/possibility conjuncts or *PPC*).

The Ontological Primacy of Actuality over Potentiality

Aristotle's notion of potentiality or potency is ubiquitous in some form or other among his works and we can find important discussions of it in *Physics*⁶ and *De Anima*;⁷ however, as we have already seen, its most instructive consideration resides in *Metaphysics*.⁸ The fundamental idea of potentiality is located in the capacity of an object to *become* something or to perform some action. For example, as seen in the distinction Aristotle makes between passive potentiality and active potentiality: "Potency' means (1) a source of movement or change, which is in another thing than the thing moved or in the same thing *qua* other" (*Meta.*, 1019a 15-16), and similarly, "Potency then means the source, in general, of change or movement in another thing or in the same thing *qua* other, and also (2) the source of a thing's being moved by another thing or by itself *qua* other" (*Meta.*, 1019a 18-21).

Moreover, this source of change or movement does not do violence to a thing's essence (*Meta.*, 1046a 11-12). An acorn has the potentiality to become an oak tree, and a tadpole has the potentiality to become a frog. In both of these examples it is important to see how potentiality relates to substances; hence, the acorn and tadpole are such that they may experience change without losing their essential properties. At this juncture, we might posit the following ascriptions for potentiality:

- (i) x has the potentiality to become F only if x is the kind of thing that can become F without losing its essential properties; and
- (ii) x has the potentiality of doing F only if it is the kind of thing that can do F, whether it does F or not.

An important element of potentiality is that it differs in sense from actuality. Indeed, in *Metaphysics* 9, Aristotle's project is partly a response to the strange views of the Megaric school,⁹ which seems to have conflated the two notions, "There are some who say, as the Megaric school does, that a thing 'can' act only when it is acting, and when it is not acting it 'cannot' act. ...It is not hard to see the absurdities that attend this view" (*Meta.*, 1046b 28-30). The "absurdities" being referred to are of the following manner, "For that which stands will always stand, and that which sits will always sit, since if it is sitting it will not get up; for that which, we are told, cannot get up will be incapable of getting up" (*Meta.*, 1047a 15-20).

The above is sometimes referred to as the "Immobility Argument,"¹⁰ and Aristotle takes issue with the Megaric school because if potentiality is denied, then actuality will fail to be understood as the actuality of some potentiality. And this would amount to a rejection of change. Hence, for Aristotle, the Megaric position not only triggers a Parmenidean extermination of movement and change,¹¹ but it also leads to a static and rigid ontology, "Therefore these views do away with both movement and becoming... [T]hese views make potency and actuality the same, and so it is no small thing they are seeking to annihilate" (*Meta.*, 1047a 14-20). The upshot of the Megaric position amounts not only to a negation of change, but also to the view that all things that exist are eternal

and necessary, i.e., timeless. Aristotle will deny this view. For him, a potentiality is always directed toward a definite actuality that takes place in time. Actuality, then, is not, as Aristotle's portrait of the Megaric school implies, simply what is extant; rather, it is the *fulfillment* of a specific potentiality.

Recall now my two preliminary ascriptions of potentiality, namely,

- (i) x has the potentiality to become F only if it is the kind of thing that can become F without losing its essential properties; and
- (ii) x has the potentiality of doing only if it is the kind of thing that can do F , whether it does F or not; *and now let us add*,
- (iii) x has the potentiality to become or do F only if F is a directed end or activity for x .

In Aristotle's teleological ordering, a potentiality x is acquired *for the sake of* an actuality y ; hence, things that exist potentially exist *for the sake of* an actuality:¹² “[T]hat for the sake of which a thing is, is its principle, and the becoming is for the sake of an end...and the actuality is the end, and it is for the sake of this that the potentiality is acquired” (*Meta.*, 1050a 8-10).

Just before this passage, we note Aristotle's famous assertion, “it is clear that actuality is prior to potency” (*Meta.*, 1049b 4-5).¹³ Aristotle's granting primacy to actuality over potentiality is in harmony with his *hylomorphism*¹⁴ insofar as actuality corresponds to form and potentiality corresponds to matter. Just as actuality is prior to potentiality, Aristotle also argues that *form is prior to matter*;¹⁵ moreover, actuality is prior in substance vis-à-vis potentiality because that which comes before “already has its form, and [that which comes after] has not” (*Meta.*, 1050a 6). For Aristotle, the act of “becoming” is for the sake of an end. And while actuality is an end, potentiality is acquired for actuality's sake; what is more, the order cannot be reversed, “For animals do not see in order that they may have sight, but they have sight that they may see. And similarly men have...theoretical science that they may theorize; but they do not theorize that they may have theoretical science” (*Meta.*, 1050a 10-14). Thus, by saying that actuality or form is prior to potentiality or matter, Aristotle affirms that actuality *is* the end *for the sake of which* potentiality serves, and this takes place only within the domain of substance.

What is Possible Cannot be Time-less

Aristotle's notion of possibility finds expression in, *inter alia*, the *Prior Analytics*: “I use the term ‘to be possible’ and ‘the possible’ of that which is not necessary but, being assumed, results in nothing impossible” (*Pr. An.*, 32a 18-20). Richard Patterson refers to this modal characterization of possibility as “not necessarily not”.¹⁶ Or as Sarah Waterlow has put it by applying *modus tollens* onto modal discourse:

[I]f ‘ q ’ is a consequence of ‘ p ’ and ‘ q ’ represents an impossibility, then so does ‘ p ’. Whereas if and only if nothing impossible follows from ‘ p ’, we are entitled to regard ‘ p ’ as meaning something possible. This is precisely the principle stated in *Prior Analytics* I.13, 32a18-20 (Waterlow 1982, 19).

The idea here is that possibility is defined as that which is *not necessary* and *not impossible*. However, just as with our treatment of potentiality, we will have to flesh out Aristotle's notion of possibility some more.

In *On the Heavens* (I.12, 281a 27-283b 22) the following idea of possibility emerges:

(i) If it is possible that p, then at some time it is the case that p.¹⁷

That is to say, p is possible *if and only if* it is actual at some time *t*. However, there is scholarly concern on whether Aristotle's notion of possibility can be extended to include not only objects, but also states of affairs.¹⁸ For example, as in the problem of future contingents, i.e., that of a future sea battle (sb) depicted in *De Interpretatione* appears to accommodate discussion for the latter state of affairs. Briefly, the issue at hand is whether at some time *t*, say, tomorrow, it *is* true or false that there will be a sea battle (let 'true' be Tsb and 'false' be Fsb). The two states of affairs are contraries, and, hence, cannot be simultaneously true. However, at some time *t*, which is prior to *t_n*, it does not seem the case, either Tsb or Fsb, that there will be a sea battle at *t_n*; for the state of affair has not yet taken place.

According to the Law of the Excluded Middle, it seems that either one of Tsb or Fsb must be correct. But if I utter Tsb and it is now true, then, *necessarily*, there must be a sea-battle tomorrow; that is, there *cannot fail* to be a sea-battle tomorrow. Hence, the upshot is to commit to the notion that nothing is possible except what actually happens, viz. there are no unactualized possibilities. A direct consequence of this seems to hold Aristotle to the necessity of future contingents. However, Aristotle avoids this commitment by holding that contingent things, i.e., things and state of affairs *capable* of being or not-being, do not have their existence of necessity, "Now that which is *must needs be* when it is, and that which is not *must needs not be* when it is not. Yet it cannot be said without qualification that all existence and non-existence is the outcome of necessity" (*De Int.*, 19a 23-25; my emphasis).

Hence, although everything that exists does so of necessity ("must needs be") at the time when it exists, prior to a thing's existence, it is not the case that it was already modally necessary for it to exist. Moreover, Aristotle suggests that in cases which allow for the truth of either contrary, "One of the two propositions in such instances must be true or false, but we cannot say determinately that this or that is false, but must leave the alternative undecided" (*De Int.*, 19a 38-39). One contrary, then, must be true rather than the other, but it must not be already true or false. That is, at a time prior to the actualization of one of the contraries, say, Tsb, a truth value is *not determinate*, i.e., one must not yet be assigned to it, and there must not be any "third way" or intermediate between contradictories. This comports with Aristotle's assertion in *Metaphysics* 7:

But on the other hand, there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories, but of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate. This is clear, in the first place, if we define what the true and the false are. To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true; so that he who says of anything that it is, or

that it is not, will say either what is true or what is false; but neither what is nor what is not is said to be or not be (*Meta.*, 1011b 23-25).

Thus, we can link Aristotle's Law of the Excluded Middle with states of affairs as follows: "In the case of that which is or which has taken place, propositions, whether positive or negative, must be true or false" (*De Int.*, 18a 28-29). For Aristotle, things are only *possible* if they are realized at some point in time. Hence, something is impossible if it is never actualized, and something is necessary if it is always actualized, i.e., if it is eternal.¹⁹ This is a crucial point: impossibilities and necessities have something fundamentally in common, namely, both deal with objects or states of affairs that *are not* contained in time. On the one hand, impossibilities are not contained in time because they have no actualization in time. On the other hand, necessities are also not contained in time because their temporal location is not limited, i.e., they are timeless by virtue of having no beginning and no end.

By framing necessity and impossibility this way, we may gain some insight on Aristotle's notion of possibility, namely, by being made aware that merely possible objects and states of affairs are distinguished from impossible and necessary objects and states of affairs insofar as *possible* objects and states of affairs are *contained in time*. Things that are possible are actualized at some point in time; likewise, if things are possible rather than necessary or eternal (i.e., timeless), then there must exist some time at which they are not actualized. Therefore, if *p* is possible, there must exist some time at which it *is* actual, and some time at which it *is not* actual.

The Possible is Potential but the Potential might not be Possible

It is clear from the above that Aristotle means to set out markers to distinguish between potentiality and possibility. However, as already seen, some commentators posit that potentiality implies possibility and possibility implies potentiality. In what will ensue, focus will be given to the relation between 'x is possibly F' and 'x is potentially F'. Before doing so, however, let us recall some preliminaries. Remember that for *x* to be possibly F, *x* must exist some *time* at which it is actually F and not-actually F. And for *x* to be potentially F, *x* must be *that for the sake of F*.

Charlotte Witt suggests that the "Immobility Argument" in which Aristotle avoids joining potentiality with actuality leans on the negative conditional 'if *x* is incapable of F, then F is impossible for *x*'.²⁰ Stated positively, this implies that 'if it is possible for *x* to F, then *x* is capable of F'. The idea here is that potentiality is a necessary condition for possibility. Similarly, Witt's analysis of Aristotle holds that possibility is a necessary condition for potentiality: "Aristotle's criterion for when a substance is capable of doing something says that if *x* is capable of F then it is possible that *x* do F."²¹ If the above holds true, Aristotle seems to be committed to a biconditional connecting the possibility for *x* to F and the potentiality for *x* to F.

However, an objection to the claim that holds Aristotle to the biconditional can be formulated. Namely, a thing may have a capacity to F that is never realized. Recall that while some potentialities are never actualized, every possibility *must* be actualized at some point in time. For

example, an acorn might hold the potentiality to be an oak tree, but if it gets eaten up by a hungry squirrel before realizing its potential, the possibility of becoming an oak tree will be denied. We can imagine any number of similar examples describing unobtained possibilities. Hence, we can show that x having a potentiality to F does not necessarily imply that x also has the attendant possibility to F . These examples of where a potential fails to be possible takes us back to one of Hintikka's constituents of twofold possibility, namely, of possibility as contingency. Hintikka is right to link possibility with contingency, but here we may ask: what about possibility with necessity?

A fairly clear distinction can be seen by recalling how Aristotle links possibility with time and necessity with the eternal or timeless, i.e. what is necessary has neither a beginning nor an end. Indeed, in *On Generation and Corruption*, Aristotle states,

[I]f its coming-to-be is to be 'necessary', it must be 'always' in its coming-to-be. For what is 'of necessity' coincides with what is 'always', since that which 'must be' cannot possibly 'not be'. Hence a thing is eternal if its 'being' is necessary: and if it is eternal, its 'being' is necessary. And if, therefore, the 'coming-to-be' of a thing is necessary, its coming-to-be' is eternal; and if eternal, necessary (*GC*, 337b 35-338a 1).

Hence, if possibility and necessity are distinct notions, and if what exists of necessity always exists, then what is possible does not always exist. Moreover, in the case of possibilities, 'always' may be interpreted as 'at some time', because, as we have seen, necessities are outside of time, whereas possibilities are contained in time. Recall that Aristotle posits that if something is impossible, then it never occurs. He suggests that "the impossible is that of which the contrary is of necessity true" (*Meta.*, 1019b 23-24). This implies that if there is such a time at which x happens, then x is *not* impossible.

If we now turn our focus to potentiality, we note that if x is potentially F , nothing impossible will follow if not- F is actualized. If it is true that x is potentially F , both F and not- F do not need to be actualized at some point in time; likewise, they may never both be actual at the same point in time. However, Christopher Kirwin suggests that when 'always' is discussed in the context of potentiality as, the term 'always' must not mean 'at every time' but rather it ought to be assumed as a temporalized modal operator.²² That is, 'always' must not mean 'at every time' in the context of potentiality, because if 'always' did mean 'at every time' in the context of potentiality, then the contrary of an unactualized potentiality would be necessary, and, hence, the potentiality itself would be impossible.

The above view of potentiality and possibility supports the claim that possibility implies capacity.

(i) If x is possibly F , then neither F nor not- F is impossible.

(ii) If x is potentially F , then neither F nor not- F possess impossible consequences.

In (i) F will be actualized; in (ii) F could be actualized. Therefore, this seems to bear that possibility implies capacity, but capacity does not imply possibility.

Given that both possibilities and potentialities admit of either contrary, both concepts are more broadly connected to change. Since if x is possibly F , x will be F at some point in time and not-

F at another point in time, every possibility involves an actual incidence of change. That is, if an acorn is possibly an oak tree, the acorn must become an oak tree at some point in time, *i.e.*, a change or movement from not being an oak tree to being an oak tree is needed in order to make the statement possibility true. Potentiality is similarly connected to change, though this change *might* never become actual. For instance, an acorn may have the potentiality to become an oak tree without ever undergoing the change or movement in order to actualize this capacity.

In the case of possibility, a change from F to not-F, or its converse, is required to make the statement ‘*x* is possibly F’ true. But in the case of potentiality, no actual change is needed: if *x* is potentially F, then *x* *could* change from F to not-F or from not-F to F with no impossible consequences. If *x* has a capacity to be F, then it is open to *x* to change into F. This analysis is consistent with the thesis that possibility implies potentiality, but not the other way around: if *x* actually changes to F, it is open to *x* to change to F; but if it is open to *x* to change to F, *x* might not change to F. Possibilities and potentialities both deal with changes in objects. Thus, what it means for *x* to be ‘possibly F’ or ‘potentially F’ is tied up with Aristotle’s theory of change. Simo Knuuttila relates that “Aristotle uses the notions of generation and corruption so that they denote...the initial state and end state” of change.²³

In *GC*, Aristotle suggests that there is a difference between the changes involved in “‘coming to be’ and ‘alteration’ – for...these changes are distinct” (319b 6). A change is one of alteration if when *x* changes to F, F is a property of *x*. In contradistinction to alteration, a change is one of ‘coming to be’ when F must not a property of *x* (319b 20-24). Aristotle’s proceeds to flesh out his example of alteration by giving us the “passed away” *musical man* and the “come-to-be” *unmusical man*: in this case, the change is merely “in quality”, *i.e.*, “it is ‘alteration’”, since the man persists, and ‘musical’ and ‘unmusical’ are simply properties which belong to the man (319b 25-31). On the contrary, “nothing persists of which the resultant is a property (or an ‘accident’ in any sense of the term), it is ‘coming-to-be’, and the converse change is ‘passing away’” (320a 1-2).

Therefore, what we ought to note from Aristotle’s argument of generation and alteration is the idea that in order for *x* to be changed into F, *x* must not be destroyed. This interpretation closely resembles my ascription of potentiality that was given earlier, and indeed only needs matter added to properties: *e.g.*, *x* is potentially F only if *x* has the capacity to become F, by means of itself or something other, while retaining its same essential matter. If anything is added to *x* or taken away from it such that it loses its essential nature, then *x* is destroyed and F is subsequently generated. So, just as when a man becomes musical, the man persists through the change, it also holds that the man has the capacity to become musical. For being musical is simply a property that is added to the man.

Another objection to the biconditional linking potentiality to possibility is seen in the example whereby a human being does not have the potentiality to become a corpse (*Meta.*, 1045a 2-6). However, if we return now the problem of a corpse, we ought to note that a “corpse...only begins to exist”²⁴ at the death of a human being. Put differently, in the case of when a human being becomes a corpse, the human being does not persist; rather, the human being is destroyed. A human being and

a corpse have different essential properties, namely, the first is a *hylomorphic* compound, whereas the second is simply un-enformed matter.²⁵ Since the object in question does not survive the change, we do not say that a human being is capable of becoming a corpse, but rather that a corpse “comes-to-be” when a human being is destroyed.

The above discussion of generation and corruption also lends itself to possibility. For example, a human being is not possibly a corpse, since at no time is there both a human being and a corpse composed of the same matter. This change, then, is one of alteration. Since x is possibly F only if x is F at some time t_0 , and there is no time t_1 such that the human body is also a corpse, it is *not* possible for the human body to be a corpse. Here one might take issue that possibility, in contradistinction to potentiality, ought not be restricted to cases of alteration, but rather should be additionally open to cover cases of generation. A critic may say that it does not have to matter if the human being is destroyed, possibility should cover cases in which one object is destroyed and a new object is generated. However, by limiting our study to cases in which ‘ x is possibly F’, this objection doesn’t hold, given the temporal restrictions upon possibility. For instance, we might point out that at some time t , ‘a human body is possibly a corpse.’ If this statement is true, there must exist some time t_{n+1} such that the human body actually is a corpse. However, ‘human body’ and ‘corpse’ are not coterminous. There is no such time, given that for any object x , x cannot simultaneously be both a human being and a corpse. Hence, since there is no time at which x actually *is* a human being and a corpse, then it is not *possible* for a human being to be a corpse.

Conclusion

This paper’s aim was to provide an examination on the relationship of potentiality and possibility in Aristotle’s teleological and modal theories. It embarked on this goal by giving a preliminary account of potentiality by using not only various sources from Aristotle’s texts, but also by looking closely at the contemporary scholarship. The study concluded that an important understanding of Aristotle’s use of the teleological term consisted in being made aware of his notion that an for an object to be potentially F, it must be capable of being or becoming F, either from an active or passive source of change, during which it retained its essential matter. Moreover, we saw how actuality is the end *for the sake of which* potentiality is acquired

From its study of potentiality, this paper sailed on to investigate Aristotle’s idea of possibility. Immediately it showed how more difficult this task was in relation to potentiality due to the complex and subtle nature of Aristotle’s modal discourse. Nonetheless, it was able to draw some important distinctions between possibility and necessity, likewise for impossibility and eternity. Key to this paper’s study of possibility was Aristotle’s insistence that merely possible objects and states of affairs are distinguished from impossible objects and states of affairs by virtue of its time encapsulation. That is, things which are possible must be actualized at some point in time. Moving forward, the paper put forth a position commonly held by Jaacko Hintikka, namely, that Aristotle is committed to a biconditional linking possibility and potentiality, i.e., that potentiality implies possibility and

possibility implies potentiality. Consequently, this paper demonstrated how to avoid treating the categories of possibility and potentiality as a “mere *façon de parler*,” and it argued that their being joined by a biconditional is difficult to maintain.

Endnotes:

1. Indeed, in an exposition on actuality and potentiality, Aristotle cautions, “...we must not seek a definition of everything but be content to grasp by analogy.” See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*: 1048a 36-37.
2. Briefly, Hintikka points out that Aristotle sometimes uses ‘possibility’ to connote either set of (i) {contingency : necessity} or (ii) {possible : impossible}. See Hintikka, *Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle's Theory of Modality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 27-40.
3. Richard Patterson also lays out the difficulties of what he calls Aristotle’s “two-way possibility.” namely, the conflating of logical possibility with natural or causal possibility. See Patterson, *Aristotle's Modal Logic: Essence and Entailment in the Organon*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 124-132. For a short treatment of Aristotle’s “one-sided possibility (‘not impossible’ as including necessity) and...two-sided possibility (neither necessary nor impossible),” see A.P. Brogan, “Modality and Quantification in Aristotle,” *Mind*, Vol. 82, No. 325 (Jan., 1973), pp. 123-124. My dual qualification of possibility above treats it as being “two-sided.” For what is invariable is impossible to be otherwise, both logically and causally. Hence my formulation is commensurate with Richard Sorabji’s interpretation that Aristotle does not distinguish logical possibility from causal possibility. See Sorabji, “Aristotle and Oxford Philosophy,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 6, (1969), pp. 127-135, and “Deterministic and Indeterministic Accounts of Possibility” in *Necessity, Cause, and Blame: Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 128-140.
4. See Richard Rorty, *The Concept of Potentiality*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Yale University, 1956), p. 1.
5. This implies that some potentialities will find fulfillment and others will not. Hence, a potentiality becomes active when the proper conditions for its fulfillment are present *and* nothing inhibits it from reaching a stage of completed development. See, e.g., *Metaphysics*: 1047b 35-1048a 16. This idea will prove key to the ensuing sections.
6. See especially 191a 24-192b 2 for how potentiality relates to matter, and 200b 25-202a 12 for its relation to motion and change.
7. See especially 412a 7-418a 7 for Aristotle’s discussion on the distinction between potentiality and actuality, and how the two differ in cognitive value, i.e., the “different senses in which things can be said to be potential and actual” (417a 22-24). See also *Metaphysics*: 1045b 27-35.
8. See especially Book 9.
9. The Megaric school of philosophy is said to have been founded by Euclides of Megara, a pupil of Socrates. For an overview of Aristotle’s clash with the Megaric school, see Jiyuan Yu, *The Structure of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), pp. 12-13. See also Nicolai Hartmann’s lucid treatment of this topic in “The Megarian and the Aristotelian Concept of Possibility: A Contribution to the History of the Ontological problem of Modality,” trans., Frédéric Tremblay and Keith R. Peterson, *Axiomathes* (2017) 27:209-223.
10. Aristotle also provides further arguments against the Megaric school, namely, the “Techne Argument, [which] focuses on agent powers” and “The Perception Argument, [which] addresses the passive power of being perceptible.” See Charlotte Witt, *Being and Becoming: Potentiality and Actuality in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 23.
11. Briefly, Parmenides was committed to a “motionless block universe” through his assertion that the existence of change can be dialectically (i.e., logically) disproved. See Karl Popper, “Beyond the Search for Invariants” in *The World of Parmenides: Essays on Presocratic Enlightenment*, eds. Arne

- F. Peterson and Jørgen Meyer (London: Routledge, 1998), especially, pp. 156-158.
12. For an interesting and, I might add, entertaining account of how Aristotle's explanation of *for the sake of which* fits with his notions of *matter-form*, *potentiality-actuality*, *teleology* and *necessity*, see Martha Nussbaum, *Aristotle's De Motu Animalium: Text with Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), specifically, Part III.
 13. Cf. Jonathan Barnes, "Metaphysics" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Briefly, Barnes hints at a *reductio*, namely in the form of a regress, in the actuality prior to potentiality schema: "...Aristotle does not manage to point to any general priority of actuality over potentiality: if he is right, then before every potential F there was an actual F – and equally, before every actual F there was a potential F" (p. 96).
 14. However, for a discussion of how Aristotle's *matter-form scheme* may not always be associated with the *potentiality-actuality scheme*, see Jiyuan Yu, "Two Conceptions of Hylomorphism in *Metaphysics ZHΘ*," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 15, ed. C.C.W. Taylor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 119-146. Briefly, Yu argues that Aristotle employs two distinct conceptions of *hylomorphism*. In one, matter and form do not run alongside with potentiality and actuality; he calls this the "isolated" conception. In the other, form and matter are integrated; he calls this the "conjoined" conception.
 15. See also *Metaphysics*: 1018b 8-1020a 6.
 16. See Patterson, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
 17. See Waterlow, *Ibid.*: p. 2. Cf. Patterson, *op. cit.*, p. 161. Briefly, Patterson argues that there are scant grounds for believing Aristotle says "that anything that is possible *will* at some time be actual."
 18. See, e.g., Allan T. Bäck, *Aristotle's Theory of Predication*, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 86; and Lambert Marie de Rijk, *Aristotle: Semantics and Ontology*, Vol. One, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), p. 46. Briefly, states of affairs are propositions that carry truth or falsity by virtue of their truth-bearers.
 19. Hintikka points out that, "when [Aristotle] spoke of certain things being 'not in time,' he made clear that he merely meant that they are not 'in the middle of time,' so to speak, i.e. that their existence is not limited by the earlier and later moments in time." See Hintikka, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
 20. See Witt, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-34.
 21. See Witt, "Powers and Possibilities: Aristotle vs. the Megarians," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy XI*, eds. John J. Cleary and William C. Wians (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995), p. 263.
 22. See Christopher Kirwin, "Aristotle on the Necessity of the Present," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, eds. Julia Annas, Michael Woods, J.L. Ackrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 174.
 23. See Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 20-21.
 24. See S. Marc Cohen, "Hylomorphism and Functionalism," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, eds. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amelie O. Rorty, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 69.
 25. *Loc. Cit.*

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Conflicts and Antinomies of Multiple Modernities from Eisenstadt

Paulo Vitorino Fontes

University of the Azores

Centre for Humanistic Studies

Rua da Mãe de Deus, 9500-321, Ponta Delgada, Portugal

E-mail: paulo.v.fontes@uac.pt

Abstract:

The idea of multiple modernities implies that the best way to understand the contemporary world and to explain the history of modernity is to conceive of it as a history of the successive constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programmes. The concept “multiple modernities” has two implications. The first is that modernity and Westernization are not identical; the Western pattern or patterns of modernity do not constitute the only “authentic” modernities, although they have been historically precedent and constitute a central reference for other visions of modernity. The second is that the term modernities includes the recognition that these modernities are not “static” but are in continuous transformation. These transformations lead to the postmodernity that has occupied a primary place in the contemporary debate of ideas, pervading a myriad of diverse issues with a wide range of political ramifications.

Keywords: Multiple modernities, Post-modernities, Institutional and ideological patterns

Introduction

With the resurgence of historical, cultural and postcolonial studies that discuss the modern condition, but no longer only modern, the hybridity of social practices and discourses that characterise the modern condition is manifest.

The main aim of our work is to expose and reflect on the different possibilities and readings of modernity. We will question a homogenizing vision of modernity and modern people which, being univocal, is problematic. We intend to contribute to the clarification of the debate that opposes pluralism versus uniformity in almost all contemporary societies.

This work follows the approach of the sociologist Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt who has contributed considerably to the understanding of cultural and structural processes of change, highlighting their tensions and antinomies as opposed to what could be understood as a uniform process of development of modernity. From various works of Eisenstadt we intend to problematize in the theoretical level modernity understood in its plurality and continuous dynamics, highlighting the various models of development of modernity, what the author calls multiple modernities. The present work, after having framed the approach to be presented and before the final conclusions, is divided into five

parts: the first part presents some considerations about the concept of multiple modernities; the second part seeks to deepen the configurations of the programme and political process of modernity; the third part characterises the different antinomies, social movements and conflicts of modernity; the fourth part identifies the effects of globalisation on modernities, and the fifth part seeks to understand the structural change of the public sphere and “postmodernity” as a critique of modernity.

On the concept of multiple modernities

According to Eisenstadt (2001, 139), the concept of *multiple modernities* “contradicts the long prevailing views in academic and general discourse”, since they all assumed that the programme of modernity and the institutions arising from it would eventually subject all societies in the process of modernisation.

Mainly after World War II, it became evident that the homogenising and hegemonic purposes of the Western programme of modernity would not support these assumptions. Despite the structural changes in family, economic, social and political life that took place in various parts of the world, these developed according to different dynamics and interpretations of the original Western project, giving rise to various ideological and institutional patterns (Eisenstadt 2001, 139-140).

“The idea of multiple modernities presupposes - as the best way to understand the contemporary world (...) to see it as a continuous history of constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programmes” (Eisenstadt 2001, 140). It is relevant from here, according to the author, the way to explain the history of modernity, with implications in the differentiation between modernity and westernization, because despite modernity having started in Western Europe and remaining, in a certain way, as a reference for the rest of the world, it assumes multiple forms and cultural programs. In this way, Eisenstadt (2001, 140) confronts us “with the problem of what constitutes the common core of modernity?”. A problem which in view of the transformations in the “classical” nation-state models and the revolutionary states in particular, due to globalising influences, assumes special importance.

The programme and the political process of modernity

The cultural and political programme of modernity began in western and central Europe from the 17th century onwards, implying different ideological and institutional assumptions. “An intense reflexivity thus developed around the basic ontological premises of the structures of social and political authority” (Eisenstadt 2001, 141).

The cultural and political programme of modernity implied, despite distinct conceptions of human action, the central idea of human autonomy: the emancipation of men and women from the bonds of traditional political and cultural authority. Great importance was attached to the autonomous participation of individuals in the constitution of the social and political order of society. There was, according to Eisenstadt (2001, 141-142), an opening to different possibilities of building a new order in rupture with all the traditional legitimations, with two complementary and even contradictory orientations around the best ways of achieving social construction through

conscious human activity. On the one hand, there was a belief in the possibility of narrowing the gap between the transcendent order and the mundane order and, on the other, there was recognition of the legitimacy of numerous objectives and interests, both individual and collective, with implications for the emergence of various interpretations of the common good.

For Eisenstadt (2003, 121-129), the modern programme implied a radical transformation of the conceptions and premises of political order and process, with the opening of the modern political arena to the active participation of the periphery of society. The incorporation of protest themes from the periphery into the centre around the ideas of equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity, were constituted as the central elements of the modern project of human emancipation. The ideology and the fundamental assumptions of the modern political process were constituted, with the emphasis on three essential characteristics: changes in the centre-periphery relationship as the main objective of the political dynamic; a great politicisation of the demands and conflicts of and between the different sectors of society and the continuous dispute over the definition of the domain of the political.

Another consequence of modernity was the change in the construction of the boundaries of collectivities and collective identities, according to Eisenstadt (2003), by constituting new meanings of the fundamental elements of collective identities: civil, primordial and universalist, transcendental or sacred. New links were drawn between the public sphere and cultural collectivities. In rupture with the pre-modern era, collective identities are no longer acquired as received and pre-ordained by a transcendent authority or ancestral custom.

Jürgen Habermas (2003) highlights a structural transformation of the public sphere, pointing out several virtues of the bourgeois public sphere of the 18th century, in which the social status of its members was not relevant. Everyone would be able to take part in public discussion and many issues that had not been discussed until then would now be subject to critical discussion. The public sphere, as a free space for critical and rational debate, becomes an instance of control and legitimisation of political power.

Man and women began to play an active role in the construction of society. As the “civilisation of modernity developed”, according to Eisenstadt (2001, 144), various antinomies, internal contradictions and various ideological and political conflicts arose, which gave rise to a continuous critical discourse. Divisions were accentuated both in the world of ideas and in politics, the one that the author highlights as one of the most critical being “that which separated universalist and particularist visions”. A tension manifested in horizons that accept various different values and rationalities as opposed to a vision that sees rationality above all in a totalising way. Paradoxes have also developed within the programme of modernity, between the basic assumptions of the cultural and political dimensions and the major institutional developments. Of particular importance and well explained by Max Weber, according to Eisenstadt (2001, 145) was the creative character implicit in visions that led to the crystallisation of modernity, and the erosion of these visions, the “disenchantment” of the world, due to excessive routinisation and bureaucratisation. This tension is reflected in a tension

between freedom and control, that is, between the emphasis on man's autonomy and the restrictive control caused by the institutionalisation of modern life.

Antinomies, social movements and conflicts of modernity

Several constant tensions in modern political discourse became evident, between totalitarian ideologies and pluralisms, which legitimise numerous abstract individual and group interests, with distinct conceptions of the common good and moral order (Eisenstadt 2001, 145). These tensions were related to the different ways of legitimising modern regimes, and national movements emerged. During the 19th century and until the 1960s of the 20th century significant social movements such as the liberal and the socialist / communist developed, which were followed by two others of nationalist ideology, the fascist and the national socialist. Although these movements arose in specific countries, they became international. Numerous conflicts arose between these movements and others which were not solely ideological in character, such as religious, cooperative, trade unionist or anarchist movements. According to Eisenstadt (2001, 146), "in all modern societies patterns of conflict have developed between social actors around poles founded on the antinomies inherent in the specific political and cultural programmes of modernity". These tensions emerged in all modern collectivities and states, originally in Europe, then in America and gradually throughout the world (Fontes 2016).

The first "alternative" ideological modernities emerged in the 1920s and 1930s in modern political discourse, such as those of the fascist / national socialist type, which sought to redefine the limits of modern collectivities. Their critique of the existing social order denied the universalist components of the cultural programme of modernity, especially in its Enlightenment version. Despite rejecting these components, the movements tried to transpose them in various ways into their particularist visions (Eisenstadt 2001, 147).

There is the continuous development of multiple modernities in Europe, so that Eisenstadt (2003, 559), inspired by Nilüfer Göle (1996), points out that one of the most important characteristics of modernity is simply its potential capacity for continuous self-correction. The 'crystallisation' of European modernity and subsequent diffusion were by no means peaceful. Contrary to the most optimistic predictions that thought of modernity as inevitable progress, at the same time as the crystallisation of modernities took place, numerous contradictions and tensions emerged in the development of capitalist systems and in the growing demands for democratisation in the political arena. Parallel to these factors, international conflicts arose, exasperated by the modern state and capitalist systems, so that war and genocide, although not new phenomena in history, were transformed and intensified, generating specifically modern modes of barbarism. The ideology of violence became more expressive after the French Revolution, becoming one of the components of citizenship for the sustenance of modern states. According to Eisenstadt (2003, 508-509, 547), ideologies of violence were closely related to the fact that the nation-state became the focal point of symbols of collective identity. The extreme manifestation of this ideology was seen in the Holocaust, the concealed barbarity at the centre of modernity, which became a symbol of its negative and destructive potential.

Of the various conflicts and tensions, Eisenstadt (2003, 547) highlights most importantly the ongoing confrontation between more 'traditional' sectors of society and modern sectors. There is tension between the culture of modernity, in its "rational" modern Enlightenment model, which emerged in a dominant form in certain places and periods, and other programmes that reproduced cultural traditions. An enduring ambivalence develops about modern cultures, with particular emphasis on the incessant variation between cosmopolitanism and localism.

With the expansion of modernity, first of all to the Americas, the first radical transformation of its cultural and political premises took place, with the emergence of distinct modernities within Western civilisation. Different patterns of modernity crystallised in the Americas through the discursive conflict with Europe. Although with differences between Latin America, which maintained greater referential links with Europe, and the United States that considered itself the centre of modernity (Eisenstadt 2003, 548).

The different modernities were materialised through imperialism, colonialism, economic and military superiority and communication technologies. Modernity goes beyond the limits of the West, reaches Asian societies and finally Africa. In all these societies the basic model of the territorial state was adopted, followed by the nation state, as well as the fundamental assumptions of Western modernity. But the encounter of modernity with non-Western societies caused profound changes in the assumptions, symbols and institutions of modernity - giving rise to new problems, since the appropriation of the values of modernity implied the choice, reinterpretation and permanent reformulation of imported ideas (Eisenstadt 2003, 549). There was a significant tension between integration into the modern world and ambivalent attitudes towards modernity in general and the West in particular.

The processes of reconstitution of new modern patterns, which do not break with the past but reconstruct many traditional components, are among the most fascinating in the analysis of modern societies, as Eisenstadt stated in an interview with Shalva Weil (2010, 455). The possibility that different civilizations have to create ontological perspectives of their own cultural and institutional patterns, to give different responses to the challenges and opportunities of modernity and to develop and crystallize them according to their particular interests and experiences is, for Eisenstadt (2003, 28), the core of multiple modernities.

Modernities and Globalisation

Deep transformations have taken place in many societies, influenced by the impact of diverse historical traditions and different forms of inclusion in the new modern world system. From the 1960s onwards, the institutional, symbolic and ideological contours of modern national states changed radically with the intensification of the forces of globalisation (Eisenstadt 2001, 151). New social, political and civilisational visions emerged, heralded by new social movements, with emphasis on Western countries, as were the student and anti-Vietnam War movements, which underpinned wider ones - the feminist movement and the environmental movement. These movements were

significant of a broad shift that was no longer around the construction of nation-states, but in the construction of new social, political and cultural spaces (Eisenstadt 2001, 152). These movements are considered *multicultural* and *postmodern*, instead of being carriers of a model of society, as the totalitarian movements, they developed proposals for a multicultural identity politics, with essentially local reach and programmes.

Later fundamentalist movements of a religious nature occurred among Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, Hindu and Buddhist communities. Marked by various themes opposed to modernity and, concomitantly or not, adverse to the West. Another type of movement emerged, most prominently in the last two decades of the 20th century, the *ethnic* movement. With horrendous manifestations in Africa and the Balkans, with greater magnitude in the former Yugoslavia. Thus, new types of collective identity emerged, overcoming and no longer centred on the model of the nation-state and the revolutionary state, contested the hegemony of the previous homogenising programmes. All these developments demonstrate the erosion of the fundamental characteristics of modernity and the weakening of the hegemonic ideology of nation-states (Eisenstadt 2001, 152-153).

The efforts to interpret and appropriate modernity on its own terms do not end with fundamentalist movements, but are part of a much wider set of developments, which have taken place all over the world, in a continuous variation between cosmopolitanism and particularist tendencies. For Eisenstadt (2003, 973), the continued salience of the tensions between pluralist and universalist programmes, between multifaceted as opposed to closed identities, and the continued ambivalence of the new centres of modernity towards the main traditional centres of cultural hegemony testify to the fact that, in overcoming the model of the nation-state, these new movements have not overcome the basic problems of modernity.

All the inadequacies, or unfulfilled promises of modernity remain part of the discourses of modernity itself. All of them are deeply reflexive and do not advance conclusive answers. Even if each, in its own way, seeks to provide final and incontrovertible answers to the irreducible dilemmas of modernity, they only reconstruct them in new contexts and in new ways.

Structural change of the public sphere and postmodernity

With the decadence of the public sphere at cultural level, as Jürgen Habermas (1990, 2003) well elucidated, the public that debated culture gave way to a public consumer of culture. Mass culture was developed with great emphasis on entertainment, in a way at the service of the dominant ideology, to the detriment of critical and emancipatory discussion. The mediating function between State and Society has shifted from the public to institutions, embodied in associations and political parties. Previously, public debate legitimised political power; now, the public sphere is used to influence consumers and voters. The public sphere is being refeudalised: public opinion is dominated by private organisations, companies and economic groups, and by the state as public authority. The figure of the political consumer emerges.

The 18th century public sphere, as Graig Calhoun (1996, 462-463) states, although not

marked by rigid boundaries of social stratification, was elitist and, as a greater number of citizens were incorporated into this and public opinion, along with government intervention in the economy, the prominence of multinationals and the emergence of welfare states, political and social decisions moved further and further away from the public sphere. Habermas, like his predecessors of the Frankfurt School, named the phenomenon of mediatic communication in mass society, together with the breakdown of the differentiation between society and state due to the 'administered society', as the most significant transformations that occurred in the structures of the public sphere.

Habermas concerned with the structural change of the public sphere, far removed from the model of bourgeois public space of the eighteenth century, considers that it has decayed until today. Discourse in the public sphere was based on rational-critical argumentation, in which regardless of the identity of its proponents or opponents, the best argument was decisive (Calhoun 1996, 461). The public sphere offered a model of public communication that could potentially realise the ideal of rational guidance of society. Between Kant's optimism and the Marxist critique, the bourgeois public sphere entered a process of decay, but it continues to have a rational, critical and democratic potential that *should* be harnessed. Modernity for Habermas remains unfinished.

Another great theorist and critic of modernity is the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000), who characterises modernity from two distinct periods: solid modernity, characterised by the modern project of control of the world by reason and technique, founded on the solidity of the nation-state, which is called into question after Auschwitz, the Gulacs and the nuclear tragedy and, the second period, liquid modernity, also called postmodernity, characterised by ambivalence, uncertainty, demand for difference and individualisation, mobility; liquidity of relationships, loss of a sense of community and by consumer society.

Exploring Bauman's sociological concept of liquid modernity, with recourse to Adolfo Rocca (2008), this represents change and transience, deregulation and liberalisation of markets. It intends to account for the precariousness of human bonds in an individualistic and privatized society, marked by the transitory and volatile nature of its relationships. Love is fluctuating, without responsibility towards the other, reduced to the faceless bond offered by the internet. Society is constantly changing, uncertain and increasingly unpredictable, and the welfare state is on the decline. We are in a time without certainties, where men and women who fought for civil liberties and to free themselves from tradition now find themselves obliged to be free, assuming the fears and anxieties that such freedom entails.

In order to try to understand what post-modernity is, we call upon the contribution of Onésimo Teotónio Almeida (2006, 6), a Portuguese-American philosopher, who tries to filter from an endless bibliographical list, what may constitute the core of the question. In fact, as this author points out, when we read Lyotard or Foucault, Derrida or Rorty, Habermas or Baudrillard, we get the feeling that the edifice of modernity is not destroyed, but its foundations, which until a century ago seemed unshakable, have begun to crumble.

Almeida (2006, 7) lists the three main shocks caused by postmodernism. The first derives from the awareness of the limits of language. Through the work of Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Davidson, Derrida and Rorty, among others, the ability of language to mirror reality has been called into question. The second blow derives from the awareness of the limits of the sphere of reason. The recognition of the existence of a huge part of reality that lies outside the sphere of reason exposes its limits. Finally, there is the realisation of the contingency of values; once the foundation of the idea of God is removed, everything becomes possible in a certain way.

Almeida (2006, 8) believes to be the sense of limits and obstructions of all kinds; the recognition of the distances between utopias and their realisation, between ideologies and praxis; the deeper awareness of the inevitable conflicts in the attainment of antinomic goods - such as freedom and justice, for example - and of the tensions between divergent tendencies - such as the individual and society - which characterise the core of the postmodern worldview.

Returning to Eisenstadt's (2001, 157) reasoning, we can state that the process of continuous transformation of modernity does not imply Francis Fukuyama's (1992) "end of history", in the sense of inevitably reaching a stable society, nor Samuel Huntington's (1996) "clash of civilisations", which would only be possible in a pre-modern framework. On the contrary, there is a continuous reinterpretation of the cultural programme of modernity, in which various groups and movements appropriate and redefine the discourse of modernity on their own terms.

The clashes that persist, as Eisenstadt (Weil 2010, 462) has stated, are "between different states, movements and, above all, between different interpretations of modernity". Multiple modernities continue to emerge, beyond the premises of the nation-state, while at the same time new ways of questioning and reinterpreting the different dimensions of modernity emerge within various societies.

Concluding remarks

Modernity was constituted on the basis of the central idea of the human autonomy: the emancipation of men and women from the bonds of traditional political and cultural authority. Modernity was transformed with the incorporation of protest themes from the periphery into the centre around the ideas of equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity, which were constituted as the central elements of the modern project of emancipation of the human being.

The concept of multiple modernities presupposes a continuous history of constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programmes. Although modernity began in Western Europe and remains, in a way, a reference for the rest of the world, it takes on multiple forms and cultural programmes. The boundaries of collectivities and the construction of collective identities have been redefined. New links have been forged between the public sphere and cultural collectivities. In rupture with the pre-modern era, collective identities are no longer acquired as received and preordained, but can be constructed by the action of individuals.

One of the most important characteristics of modernity is its potential capacity for continuous

self-correction and its ability to face new problems, never imagined in its original programme, such as the environment, gender equality, and new political and economic conflicts. This constant self-correction, in a dialectic between modern and traditional forces of construction, makes it difficult to establish the limits of modernity.

If on the one hand, we can state with Almeida (2006, 14) that the ideals of modernity are not yet outdated, on the other hand, the postmodern condition is now real. Fragmentation has operated and manifested the limitations of the construction of knowledge and of the social and political practice. Although the world today presents many faces and meanings, which can enrich the democratic pluralism of ideas, there is still no alternative to modernity that is now aware of its limitations.

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Logic and Liberalism

Noah Friedman-Biglin

Philosophy Department

San Jose State University

201 Faculty Office Building, One Washington Square

San José, CA 95192-0096, USA

E-mail: noah.friedman-biglin@sjsu.edu

Abstract:

What does it take for a society to become enlightened? Kant suggests that the members of it must be free to use their ‘public reason’. Arendt develops this thought, adding that we must be able to recognize the others in our society as worthy of intellectual engagement. But, what happens when we disagree in extreme ways, for example about the laws of logic? On some traditional conceptions of the connection between logic and rationality, disagreements of this kind force us to regard others in our society as irrational. In this paper, I argue that, if we want to maintain a Kantian model of enlightenment, then these kinds of disagreements push us towards a logical pluralism. I examine two forms of pluralism, Beall and Restall’s, and Carnap’s, and show that Beall and Restall’s version conceals a lurking monism, and so cannot be the kind of pluralism needed for enlightenment. But, I argue that Carnap’s pluralism is. I conclude by examining the history of Carnap’s pluralism, and show that using it for political ends – namely, for facilitating discussion in pursuit of enlightenment – is consistent with Carnap’s initial motivations for his work, and clears the way back towards Kantian enlightenment.

Keywords: Rudolf Carnap, Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, history of analytic philosophy, logical pluralism, philosophy of logic

Analytic philosophy in the hands of the Vienna Circle had an idealistic and activist mission: the goal was to use the tools of modern logic to expose irrational thinking, and thereby to reform of society according to rational principles. At some stage, analytic philosophy lost these ambitions, though it is hard to pinpoint the precise moment in its history; perhaps it was on the steps of the University of Vienna where Moritz Schlick was murdered, in the death camps and mushroom clouds of World War 2, or in the stifling atmosphere of Cold War academia where suspicion of ‘scientific attempts to reform society’ could get advocates investigated by the FBI and hauled before the House Committee on Unamerican Activities, and blacklisted from academia. And, though many members of the Circle had long careers after these traumatic events, the philosophical movement they spawned never again regained the vision of unity between philosophical pursuits and social and political orientation activity.

In this paper, my aim is to help to reverse this trend and to show a route back towards these

politically engaged founding impulses. In so doing, I bring two at least apparently different traditions together: the liberal tradition found in Kant, and logical pluralism as found in the work of Rudolf Carnap. I articulate the role that systematic, formal thinking can play in some political ideas central to a liberal way of life.¹ Moreover, it is my business here to try to set out the ways in which logic, understood in the way that I argue Carnap understood it, supports the kind of pluralistic thinking that is central to a liberal democratic society of the kind that Kant envisions.

I start in section 1 by examining Kant's brief essay "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" with a primary focus on his distinction between public and private reason. I conclude the section by raising a problem for Kant's view that is, at least in part, based in the commentary on it given by Hannah Arendt in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. But, I give a new version of it – one that is grounded in a traditional understanding of the relationship between logic and rationality. In short, the problem is this: in order for a society to achieve 'enlightenment' in Kant's sense, the members of that society must be (1) free to engage each other in discussion, and (2) able to recognize each other as worthy of such engagement. But, as I will argue, if one were to cling to a traditional conception of logic, whereby a single logic uniquely encodes the laws of thought, then they will be unable to recognize those who disagree with the laws of logic as worthy of the requisite engagement because they will not be able to see their interlocutors as rational. This, I will conclude, would be a disaster for the project of societal enlightenment because such disagreements are not matters of mere philosophical speculation, but, as I show, actually occur.

Next, in section 2, I turn my attention to certain contemporary understandings of logic, and try to make clear how I think they can help us overcome the difficulty that I, along with Arendt, have raised. Ultimately, I conclude that a Carnapian understanding of logic can help. This is no anodyne incitement to "be more logical". Rather, it involves a radical departure from logical orthodoxy, and a turn towards pluralism about logic. I will explore two forms of pluralism about logic: the recent form developed by Beall and Restall in their book *Logical Pluralism*, and an older one due to Rudolf Carnap from his book, *The Logical Syntax of Language*. With this exploration I will show that the kind of pluralism required for the project of preserving a liberal notion of public engagement must be a more open one than is found in Beall and Restall's work. In section 2.1, I argue that the deeper pluralism that is required can be found in Carnap's work, in particular in his (Carnap 1937). There, I find a pluralism that forecloses on as few possibilities as possible, and, I argue, one that is motivated by an explicitly political project. Taken together, these two features make Carnap's pluralism particularly suited to the goal at hand: regrounding an analytic approach to philosophy in the political life of the day, and using it to pursue a project of societal enlightenment.²

1. Enlightenment and Rationality

In his essay "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?", Kant says that for a person to be enlightened is for them to think for themselves in all matters. That is, they cannot simply take the word of experts as truth. He further claims that there is more chance of the whole society becoming

enlightened if each member of society is allowed to think freely. In particular, the kind of freedom that is required is the freedom to use one's reason publicly.

In order to see what Kant means, we must understand what it is to use one's reason publicly. It is also helpful to try and think through what the contrast case might be. I begin with the contrast: Private reason, Kant tells us, is any act of reasoning or publicly accessible use of your reasoning that is done in any kind of official capacity. So, for example, when the general tells her officers what to do, she should communicate her orders to her soldiers clearly, directly, and without commentary or disagreement. This is because, in their capacity as officers, their use of reason is not their own, but subject to the rules of their profession – which is to say, it is private in Kant's sense. As he puts the matter:

Now, for many affairs conducted in the interest of a commonwealth a certain mechanism is necessary, by means of which some members of the commonwealth must behave purely passively, so as to be directed by the government, through an artful unanimity, to public ends [...]. Thus it would be ruinous if an officer, receiving an order from his superiors, wanted while on duty to engage openly in subtle reasoning about its appropriateness or utility; he must obey. (Kant 1784, 18-19)

It must be noted, however, that the private use of one's reason does not mean that the act of reasoning is not accessible to others, or even that it happens in a private space, as for example in the home. Instead, and to reiterate what was said above, it is the use of one's reason when it is constrained by the demands of one's public persona – as in the case of speaking in one's official capacity as an officer in the military, or, in a more mundane example, in one's capacity as the spokesperson for a corporation.

So, if some acts of reasoning which take place in public are nonetheless called 'private' by Kant, what could 'public' reason be? Public reasoning, for Kant, is the use of reason to communicate a person's views, independently of any official positions they might hold. So, to return to the military case, the officer is free to use her reason to represent her own views, even to criticize military strategy or leadership in, for example, letters to the editor of newspapers. Continuing the quotation above, Kant says: "But [the military officer] cannot fairly be prevented, as a scholar, from making remarks about errors in the military service and from putting these before his public for appraisal" (Kant 1784, 19). In this case, she is speaking simply as one citizen among many, albeit a particularly informed one on military matters. What she cannot do, is to claim that the view she is presenting in the letter is that of the military itself, or is endorsed by them. She must take individual ownership of the ideas she presents if they are to count as public reasoning in the way Kant intends us to understand.

Moreover, what is being explicitly allowed in the public use of reason is disagreement. What must be permitted, Kant thinks, is for people as their private, non-professional selves, to publicly disagree with established experts, and other orthodoxies. The example Kant uses is that of religious matters; he says we must allow individual people – even those employed as religious officials such as Priests or Ministers – to disagree with the official positions of their religion.

There are two features of this disagreement which are critical for my present purposes. Firstly, the disagreements are public – that is, what Kant exhorts us all to do is not just to think bold thoughts

that might challenge authorities and orthodoxies in the privacy of our minds, but share and debate them with others, or at least participate in discussions about them. In short, there must be dialogue with others who are similarly making use of their public reason. Second – or perhaps this is really just reiterating a part of the first point that may have slipped past without notice – it is this process of debating ideas via the use of our public reason that Kant believes will lead us, individually and collectively, to enlightenment (“[...] the *public* use of one’s reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among human beings [...] (Kant 1784, 18).

So, to sum up Kant’s view, in order for an individual to have the possibility to be enlightened, they must be free to make public use of their reason, even if it means they will disagree with important people or with important ideas. And, he claims, a society which allows this kind of freedom is more likely to become enlightened as a society than one which does not. So far, I imagine, all this sounds pretty reasonable. And, indeed, these ideas have a long history in political philosophy. The name that has been traditionally given to this kind of view in political philosophy is Liberalism. To see what my problem is we must interrogate the notion of disagreement.

1.1. Arendt

What does it take to disagree with someone? This is a difficult question, and one which philosophers have spilled a lot of ink trying to answer. I will not attempt to summarize all the discussion on this matter here. What I will do, though, is explore what Kant must mean, and to articulate a problem that I find there.

In her lectures on Kant, Hannah Arendt says that what is required of a society if it is to be enlightened in the way Kant says it should be, is that the members of it must expand the circle of people whose views it can consider. As she puts it, “... critical thinking implies communicability ... [which] ... obviously implies a community of [people] who can be addressed and who are listening and can be listened to” (Arendt 1992, 40). What happens, then, in the exercise of public reason – which Arendt calls “critical thinking” – is the following: (1) we engage with the views of others in our community, (2) we examine their views and attempt to make clear any hidden or latent implications of them, and (3) we hold our interlocutors accountable to be able to explain not just what they think, but why they think it. In other words, we examine their reasoning. This demands from us a kind of pluralism – we must be able to both entertain and engage with the views of others who are exercising their public reason, no matter who they are, or what dogma they might be challenging. This, then, is what the process of becoming enlightened in Kant’s sense is like: we exercise our public reason together, and we hold each other accountable for our reasoning supporting our views. If they do not, we should not accept the views; conversely, if they do, we ought to accept them. And, what is more, we ought to accept them without consideration for the professional standing of the person who articulates the view.

Now I have arrived at the heart of the problem: by what mechanism are we to evaluate the arguments of those in our community who are exercising their public reason? What is needed is a

neutral tool which all can use to assess matters. What kind of tool could this be? Of course, I imagine some will naturally think: it must be logic! If the view is not logical, then I should not believe it; and if it is, then I should believe it no matter whose view it is. Now the difficulty: this view, no matter how good it might sound, assumes that there is this single, univocal thing, logic, which is a neutral tool which all can accept. But what are we to do when it is the standards of logic itself about which we disagree? That is, what if my logic is different from your logic? How are we to decide these kinds of disagreements? Obviously, we cannot simply appeal to logic again – to do so would beg the question against our interlocutor. This kind of disagreement might strike some as too farfetched to be seriously entertained. After all, if someone disagrees with logic itself, then they must simply be confused or irrational, and that is reason enough to dismiss their view.

There are two problems here, one historical and the other – for lack of a better term – logical. They run as follows: imagine for the sake of argument that there really is one uniquely right way of reasoning. Then, either someone has discovered it in the past, and we should all reason as that person recommends, or no one has yet discovered it. If someone has already discovered it, then when we look at the history of logic, and assuming that we ourselves are rational, we should see one way of reasoning that is obviously correct. But, unfortunately, this is not what we see when we examine logic's history. We do see a kind of convergence towards a certain style of reasoning that we would now call 'classical logic', but the story is more complicated than that. We also see a process of discovery followed by a forgetting and subsequent re-discovery. To wit, there are three independent discoveries of classical logic in the history: Aristotle, the medieval logicians of the 13th and 14th Centuries, and the 19th Century mathematical logicians. But, running in parallel to this convergence towards classical logic is another logical tradition with a similar history of discovery and re-discovery, namely that of connexive logic.³ Importantly for our purposes, we do not see convergence on a *single* style of reasoning. What this suggests is that even if there is one uniquely correct way of reasoning, no one has found it yet.

So, perhaps our task is to do more research and to find the right logic. But, what would happen if we did find it? We would have to communicate our findings to others, that is, we would have to tell everyone that they have been reasoning incorrectly, and show them how to reform their thinking. But, by what standards should these others assess our claims? They cannot use our (purportedly) correct logic without the evaluation being circular. And they should not use their (purportedly) incorrect logic. It would seem, then, that they are in a bind.

But, the problems get worse. It has been a commonplace in the history of philosophy that there is a tight link between logic and rationality. As Frege put it: "Logic marks the boundary stones of thought" (Frege 1893, xvi), and earlier in the same passage, though somewhat less poetically, "... [the laws of logic] are the most general laws, which prescribe universally how one should think if one is to think at all" (Frege 1893, xv). I take Frege to mean that the laws of logic are, in his view, constitutive of rational thought. He goes on in the same passage as above to say: "But what if beings were found whose laws of thought directly contradicted our own and therefore frequently led to contrary results in practice as well? [...] I would say: here we have a hitherto unknown kind of madness" (Frege 1893, xv).

What this adds up to is the following thought: if someone disagrees with you about logic, then by a standard view, that person is irrational or does not count as thinking at all.⁴

The implications of this tight connection between a particular conception of logic as the laws of thought and rationality for our investigation into Kant's view is devastating. Remember, that in order to be properly enlightened, we must be able to reason with others, even when they disagree with deeply held dogmas – as, for example, the laws of logic. But, if we cannot recognize such a person as thinking at all, then how could we ever engage them in a project of public reason? And, further recall Arendt's analysis of what Kant's view requires: there must be a community of people who are listening and who can be listened to. How could we listen to those who we cannot recognize as thinking? Moreover, since such disagreement actually happens, not only historically but in contemporary philosophy as well, it would seem that we can never achieve the kind of enlightened society that Kant imagined.

2. Logical Pluralism

Up to now, I have been writing as if there is one thing, Logic with a capital L, which rules univocally on which inferences are valid – or, in Frege's poetic formulation, marks the boundary stones of thought. But this way of looking at logic forces me to the following conclusion: if an interlocutor reasons differently from me, and if I were to accept the orthodox view of the relationship between logic and rationality, then my interlocutor is not only not reasoning – they are not thinking (at least not properly so called)! This view is hardly compatible with the pluralism that Arendt's articulation of Kant demands of us. So, if we are to live up to the requirements of Kantian enlightenment, we must either abandon the connection between logic and (public) reasoning altogether, or find a way to reflect the required pluralism in our logic; I prefer the latter course, and it is to this that I now turn.

What are we to make of those who reason differently from us? What are we to say to the person who, for example, denies the Law of the Excluded Middle? In recent work, JC Beall and Greg Restall have proposed a view that I will call 'closed' logical pluralism. They say that the pre-theoretic notion of validity is vague, and as such, is best captured by what they call the Generalized Tarski Thesis (GTT):

An argument is valid_x if, and only if in every case_x where all the premises are true, so is the conclusion.

This gives us a recipe for creating accounts of logical consequence by stipulating an account of cases. Each such stipulation constitutes a precisification of the pre-theoretic notion of validity. So, for example, if one were to be concerned with building a logic to capture necessary truth-preservation, then one might stipulate that possible worlds are to be the range of cases; this would result in the following instance of GTT:

An argument is valid if, and only if, in every possible world where all the premises are true, so is the conclusion.

But, one might instead be concerned to track a tighter notion than mere necessary truth-preservation, and so one might stipulate Tarskian models as the range of cases under consideration, and so get an instance of GTT where the phrase ‘Tarskian model’ replaces ‘possible world’ in the example above. Either of these stipulations constitutes a potential instance of the GTT as Beall and Restall intend it.⁵

An account of consequence is admissible when it meets three criteria: (1) necessity, (2) normativity, and (3) formality. That is, for a given relation to be a relation of logical consequence, it must be the case that the relationship between the premises and the conclusion is not a contingent matter, that if an argument is valid and you accept the premises, then you go wrong in some way if you fail to accept the conclusion, and finally that the notion must be a formal one, even though the precise way in which it is to be formal is an issue they do not settle.⁶ Finally, Beall and Restall claim that there is more than one stipulation of cases which produces an admissible relation of logical consequence. So far, this approach might seem promising, though the sense in which it is ‘closed’ will soon become apparent.

They go on to say that how one should reason – that is, what kind of case we should include in our account of consequence – is determined by the ‘situation’ one is in. A situation, they explain, is a part of the world. But, as I see the matter, there is a difficulty here. For, if we are to try and adopt their view, some questions impose themselves on us rather immediately. How do I know which reasoning style goes with which situation? And, how do I know which kind of situation I am in? To me at least, these questions present significant challenges for the closed pluralist.⁷ Without an answer to them, the prospects for using closed pluralism for our current purposes seems dim. The cause, I argue, is a lurking absolutism.

The urgency of the questions posed against closed logical pluralism stems from this thought: for each situation (or perhaps for each kind of situation), there is a uniquely correct way to reason. This is, to be sure, a more lax view than the old monism of orthodox approaches to logic. But, we still must think that there is a single correct way to reason, albeit that it’s correctness is now relative to a situation. For my part, I am not sure which situation I am in. Perhaps worse, I am not sure how I would go about determining that the situation I am in now – whatever that might be – is relevantly similar to other situations such that I could know which logic, that is, which style of reasoning, I should use. And these questions press in on us because, even according to closed pluralism, there is only one style of reasoning which is appropriate for this (type of) situation. Finally, this entails that, in a given situation, if two people reason differently from each other, then at least one of them is making a mistake. For, if we reason otherwise than the single logic appropriate to the (kind of) situation we are in, we reason incorrectly. In other words, this kind of logical pluralism is *closed* to the participation of those who reason differently. I am forced to conclude that closed pluralism leaves us no better off than we were before.

So, given that we must find a way to reason together in order to be properly enlightened in Kant’s sense, and that no one way of reasoning can do the job, I turned to a kind of logical pluralism, which I termed closed pluralism, in hopes that it would show a path towards a more inclusive way or reasoning together. And, it is more inclusive! But, as I have argued, not inclusive enough because it conceals a lingering commitment to a monism about logic. Given this, what are those of us who

want to be pluralistic participants in an enlightened society to do? The answer, I think, is not to turn our back on pluralism about logic, but to abolish all traces of the lurking monistic absolutism. We must find a logical pluralism which is ‘open’.

2.1. Open Logical Pluralism

The starting point for an open logical pluralism can be found in the work of Rudolf Carnap, in particular in his 1934 book *The Logical Syntax of Language (LSL)*. The title is abstruse, and one could be forgiven for not immediately seeing it as a work of import for political ends. So, let me first say a bit about why I think this is the place to look before getting into some of the details of what we can learn from Carnap’s view.

As mentioned briefly at the outset of this paper, Carnap and the Vienna Circle saw their mission, as they make clear in a manifesto published in 1929 – and which was principally authored by Carnap – as articulating a vision of philosophy which uses the tools of modern logics and modern philosophy of language to engage in a project of societal reform.⁸ As they put in the manifesto:

[T]he work of ‘philosophic’ or ‘foundational’ investigations remains important in accord with the scientific world-conception. For the logical clarification of scientific concepts, statements and methods liberates one from inhibiting prejudices. [...] We witness the spirit of the scientific world-conception penetrating in growing measure the forms of personal and public life, in education, upbringing, architecture, and the shaping of economic and social life according to rational principles. (Carnap, 1929, 316-318)

For the Circle, the investigation of logics, and the use of them to analyze arguments, was bound up with “the shaping of economic and social life according to rational principles”. It is important to note that the specific parts of life that they saw the ‘spirit of the scientific world-conception’ are parts of common life – art, architecture, and family life (i.e. upbringing); the Circle does not see its mission as limited to academic philosophy (though that is included as well, I take it, under ‘education’). In short, the aims of their project were ultimately political. The end goal was reforming discourse in society to be more rational, and to avoid the errors that they believed had led to the tragedy of the First World War, and the turn towards irrationalism that followed in its wake.⁹ In other words, they wanted the society they lived in to use logic to become enlightened.

But, as we have seen, there is no orthodox view of logic that will do the work we need for an enlightened society. So, how does Carnap help us with this problem? In one of the most famous, and indeed most controversial passages in *LSL*, he presents what he calls the principle of tolerance:

Our attitude [...] is given a general formulation in the Principle of Tolerance: *It is not our business to set up prohibitions, but to arrive at conventions.* [...] *In logic there are no morals.* Everyone is at liberty to build up his own logic, i.e. his own form of language, as he wishes. If he wishes to discuss it, then he must state his methods clearly, and give syntactical rules instead of philosophical arguments. (Carnap 1937, 51-52, original emphasis)

This principle is a rich one, and it bears careful consideration. I begin with the first clause: “It is not our business to set up prohibitions, but to arrive at conventions”. We must ask two questions of Carnap here: (1) what are conventions, and (2) how could we arrive at them without a straightforwardly circular process whereby we must reason our way to the principles which will govern our reasoning? We will tackle each in turn.

By ‘conventions’, Carnap means the rules which will govern our reasoning. But, if this is what is meant, then why not just call them that? After all, we already know what rules are (or, at least that is a subject for another day). The reason has to do with considering the nature of justifications for rules. If the claim is really a rule for reasoning in the usual sense of ‘rule’, then as I argued in section 1.1 above, no non-circular justification could be given for it. But, at least according to the view Carnap presents us with here, we must be able to choose amongst possible rules. These rules are not carved in stone, but are merely agreed to by the participants in the discussion – that is, they are conventions of that discussion. And, that they are chosen by those participants is all the justification that the rules could have.¹⁰

This last observation – that the rules are merely agreed to by the participants in the discussion – gives a guide to answering the second question, namely: (2) how could we arrive at our conventions without a straightforwardly circular process? The answer, I’ve just suggested, is that the participants in a discussion will voluntarily agree with each other to be bound by those conventions for the conversation at hand. But, what kind of agreement could this be that is not circular? This is the heart of the second question, and the answer to it is a delicate one. First, I note that we enter into a conversation to discuss some particular topic. And, at the risk of saying something painfully obvious, not every conversation has the same topic – topics vary from conversation to conversation. So, what is needed are rules to guide the conversation which are appropriate to the subject matter of that very conversation. There is no reason to expect, as the earlier monism about logic does, that one and the same collection of rules will be appropriate for every subject matter. So, for example, there is just no obvious reason that we should think that the rules we should adopt for a discussion of physics will be the same as the rules we should adopt for a discussion of literary criticism – though, of course, they could be. Similarly, there is no reason to think that the rules we should adopt for a discussion of physics will be the same as the rules we should adopt for a discussion about what rules we should adopt for a discussion of physics. To put that more plainly: the rules for a conversation about some subject are (or at least could be) different from the rules for a conversation about picking rules. It is this which gets us out of the circularity. In a slogan, I might say: different topic, (at least the possibility of) different rules. In this way, the Carnapian pluralist avoids appealing to the very rules that are the subject of discussion.

Let me conclude this section by summing up Carnap’s view plainly. There are many logics, and none of them are the uniquely correct logic. For each conversation, we must first fix the rules. The process we use to establish these rules does not rely on those very rules and so is not circular. So, we avoid the absolutism of the orthodox view of logic because we are able to entertain many logics,

and so it is not a problem if someone does not reason the way we might antecedently believe they ought to. And, we avoid the concealed absolutism of closed pluralism because we allow for the choice of logic to be determined by the participants in the conversation, not by any external factors like 'situations'. What remains to be done is to tie this, admittedly rather abstract idea, back to the project of enlightenment.

3. Back to Enlightenment

The problem I had at the outset of this paper was that I wanted to find a way for society to become enlightened. This required, or so Kant claimed, that the people who make up the society had to be free to exercise their public reason together, so that they might individually become enlightened, and drag society along with them, so to speak. But, following Arendt, I noted that a prerequisite for reasoning with others is the ability to recognize them as rational, thinking beings. Adding on to Arendt's problem, I noted that if our interlocutors challenged certain ideas, in particular the laws of logic itself, and if I stuck to the classical notion of logic as the laws of thought, then the required recognition became impossible. That is to say, I saw that no one logic could do the job of accommodating the level of collective reasoning that Kant (and Arendt) requires of an enlightened society, and neither could closed pluralism. To try and solve the difficulty, I have introduced a more open pluralism based in the work of Carnap. In this final section, I will address one final objection, namely whether and to what extent it is legitimate to co-opt Carnap's work in logic for political ends.

Many scholars are now acknowledging the political aspects of Carnap's work, especially during his period with the Circle. But this understanding comes with an explanatory burden. In his *Intellectual Autobiography*, there are some passages which seem to suggest that my interpretation of Carnap's work, which integrates his philosophical work with political aims, is inappropriate. So, I owe a story about why I think I can safely integrate these two aspects of the view without misunderstanding or misrepresenting Carnap. I will argue that there are substantial historical and contextual reasons to doubt what Carnap says in the *Intellectual Autobiography* as accurately describing his views on the relationship between his work in philosophy – and in logic – and his political aims. Before these arguments, however, there is some nuance that has been added to my claim.

What do I mean when I say that Carnap saw his work as political? For my purposes here, I mean that he saw his work as part of an active attempt to reform the way people live their life, both within the practice of academic philosophy, but very importantly also outside of it. However, care must be taken to not confuse this with promoting the cause of any particular political group; that is, while I understand Carnap's work to be political, I *do not* take it to be party-political.¹¹

With this distinction in hand, I turn my attention to addressing a passage from Carnap's *Intellectual Autobiography* which seems to say that my interpretation of him as presenting a view whereby his work in logic and in philosophy are to be understood as part of, and done in service to, a political agenda is mistaken. Carnap writes:

All of us in the Circle were strongly interested in social and political progress. Most of us, myself included, were socialists. But we liked to keep our philosophical work separated from our political aims. (Carnap 1963, 21-22)

Taken at face value, this seems to be a direct refutation of the idea that we ought to understand Carnap's work in logic and philosophy as continuous with his political ideals. And, some scholars have been inclined to accept this face-value reading.¹² But, I argue that this is mistaken, and that what Carnap says in his *Intellectual Autobiography* must be understood in the context in which it was written. So, in the remainder of this section, I will give an overview of the relevant parts of that context, and show its connection to my interpretation of Carnap's work.

Carnap fled the rise of fascism in Europe in 1936, moving from his position at the German University of Prague to the United States, eventually settling at the University of Chicago. At the time Carnap arrived in the US, left wing politics were in vogue with certain academic and intellectual circles with which the members of the Circle (including Carnap) associated.¹³ But, after the conclusion of World War 2, feelings quickly changed, and the ensuing Cold War environment was much more hostile to the political ideas of the members of the Circle and their associates. As Reisch reports, in 1951 *New York Times* reported the overall climate of fear regarding the ways ideas were presented, even inside the confines of academia:

College campuses around the nation, the *New York Times* reported, were attacked by “a subtle, creeping paralysis of freedom of thought and speech.” Faculty avoided speaking about controversial issues and students worried that using “the wrong word at the wrong time might jeopardize their futures.” (Reisch 2019, 173)

This climate of fear impacted several former members of the Vienna Circle directly. Two of them, Philipp Frank and Carnap, were investigated by the FBI for possibly being Soviet spies. Though the investigation, which ended in 1954, concluded that Carnap did not pose a threat and that no further action needed to be taken in his case, the danger of being investigated by one's own government was surely not lost on those who had fled the Nazis. In addition to these formal threats, there were informal ones. For example, in 1949 Carnap was included in the philosophers targeted by Sidney Hook, a philosopher well-known for anti-communist crusades in the immediate post-war years, for his appearing on a list of sponsors for the ‘Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace’. Ultimately, Carnap refused to withdraw from the list, but being publicly tarred as a communist sympathizer would, no doubt, have been dangerous.¹⁴

During this same time, there was a growing consensus amongst the group of Vienna Circle emigrés and their philosophical allies, that logical empiricism had to distance itself from any appearance of political motivation or entanglements. As Reisch puts it, albeit with a slightly different focus:

Though the view that logical empiricism properly had nothing to do with noncognitive, normative claims of ethics or politics had circulated since the 1920s, there are several reasons to identify Reichenbach's popular book *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (1951) as the final vector in this debate. It appeared at the beginning of the decade, when logical empiricism, if it were to grow and thrive in the age of the Red menace, would have to appear – as Reichenbach urged it was – free of ideological contamination. (Reisch 2005, 355)

What this goes to show is that presenting logical empiricism as 'free of ideological contamination' was both a change from logical empiricists' – and in particular Carnap's – previous presentations of their views, and it was an intentional change brought on by the hostility of the intellectual climate in the United States.

It is in this increasingly hostile environment that Carnap wrote his *Intellectual Autobiography* as part of the volume dedicated to his work, and subsequently published in the *Library of Living Philosophers* series. And, importantly, the bulk of the writing was done in the period from 1956 – 1958, precisely in the time during which the transformation in the way logical empiricists presented the relationship between their work in logic and philosophy took place.¹⁵ I contend that the comments Carnap makes about the separation of his work in philosophy, and in logic, from his political orientation must be interpreted in this light. Put plainly, I believe that Carnap was actively trying to distance himself, the Vienna Circle, and logical empiricism more generally from their politically oriented aspirations. And, most importantly for my purposes here, he was not trying to do so because of a change in heart, but instead to avoid further dangerous scrutiny from a hostile government, and anti-communist crusaders in academia. Finally, it is for this reason that I believe it is legitimate to make use of Carnap's open logical pluralism in reconnecting work in logic, and in philosophy, with political questions.

Given this, I believe that redrawing the connection between this kind of theoretical work – both in logic, but in analytic philosophy in general – and political action is a return to the founding impulses of contemporary analytic philosophy. That is, what Carnap's open pluralism allows us to do is to always find a way to recognize each other as thinking beings, even when our preferred logic is different. It renders accessible even the most deeply held dogmas, like the laws of logic, to rational argument and assessment. That is, it makes good on Kant's ideal, and shows a way for society to become enlightened.

Endnotes:

1. By 'liberal way of life' I mean a way of life which values each person, and sees them as worthy of both inclusion and engagement
2. I am not alone in wanting to link Carnap's work to enlightenment projects. See (Carus 2007) for a masterful example.
3. Connexive logic validates Aristotle's Thesis: $\sim (P \rightarrow \sim P)$. See (McCall 2012) for an overview of the history of connexive logic.
4. While the very tight connection between logic and rationality is prevalent in the history of logic, there are, of course, other less extreme accounts of it. (MacFarlane 2004) is a classic example. See also (Milne 2009).
5. See (Beall and Restall 2006), chapter 4 for details.
6. (Beall and Restall 2006), pp. 14 – 23 provides a discussion of the properties of logical consequence as they understand it.

7. Questions about the nature of situations are distinct from questions about the nature of cases. For a discussion of how we ought to understand the notion of a case, see (Beall and Restall 2006), pp. 89-90.
8. The political nature of the Vienna Circle has been noted by many scholars; for a nice example, see (Friedman 2000), in particular chapter 2. For discussions of Carnap's activism in particular, see (Uebel 2004) and (Uebel 2005). Moreover, see (Uebel 2008) for a discussion of Carnap's role in the writing of the manifesto. But, see also (Richardson 2009) and (Richardson 2009a) for a critique of some aspects of Uebel's interpretation of Carnap.
9. The classic study of post-war irrationalism in Germany and Austria is (Forman 1971).
10. In fact, in the introduction to *LSL*, Carnap says something a bit stronger, namely that his view dissolves any question of justification for logical rules: "For language, in its mathematical form, can be constructed according to the preferences of any one of the viewpoints represented; so that no question of justification arises at all, but only the question of syntactical consequences to which one or other of the choices leads, including the question of non-contradiction" (Carnap 1937), p. xv).
11. (Romizi 2012) also draws this distinction.
12. See (Reisch 2005) and (Mormann 2012) for examples.
13. (Reisch 2005) provides a fuller account of this popularity.
14. (Reisch 2019), pp. 81-84. See also chapters 5 and 9 of that same book for further helpful context of the impact of the anti-communist crusades in academia.
15. (Carnap 2019) contains a useful timeline which includes the production process of the *Library of Living Philosophers* volume.

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Toward a New Interpretation of Prehispanic Discourses: Reconstructing the *Huehuetlatolli* in the Prehispanic Context

Jongsoo Lee

Department of Spanish
University of North Texas
1155 Union Circle #311127
Denton, TX 76203, USA
Email: Jongsoo.lee@unt.edu

Abstract:

Most current studies of Prehispanic Mexico have examined the indigenous discourse, *huehuetlatolli* (ancient words or words of the old men), not only as an indigenous oral tradition similar to European classical rhetorical speech but also as the symbolic representation of indigenous moral and religious philosophy. These studies, however, have overlooked possible colonial influence on the collection and evaluation process of *huehuetlatolli*, which the two Spanish priests, Andrés de Olmos and Bernardino de Sahagún, conducted in the sixteenth century. After the conquest, indigenous traditions were evaluated, modified, and even destroyed according to the colonizers' ideological purposes, and the current form of *huehuetlatolli* has survived after going through such colonial transformation. This essay tries to provide a new interpretation of *huehuetlatolli* through three steps: 1) by demonstrating how Olmos, Sahagún, and their fellow Spanish priests started to compare the *huehuetlatolli* to European classical and biblical rhetoric and moral philosophy; 2) by reconstructing how the indigenous old men and women as keepers of the Prehispanic discursive traditions practiced, transmitted, and preserved the *huehuetlatolli* at school and home; and 3) by proposing that the *huehuetlatolli* should be understood not only as a rhetorical oral discourse that promoted specific moral behaviors, but rather as the two main discourses, both oral and pictorial, with which the indigenous people used to record any cultural, historical, political, and religious aspect of indigenous society before the conquest.

Keywords: Huehuetlatolli, Prehispanic Discourse, Andrés de Olmos, Bernardino de Sahagún, Indigenous Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy, New Interpretation

The Nahua discourse, *huehuetlatolli*, known as ancient words or words of the old men, has been considered an essential source for the study of Prehispanic Mexico. Scholars of various disciplines such as anthropology, history, philosophy, and literature have paid special attention to the *huehuetlatolli* as it covered a wide range of cultural topics with a unique oral discursive mode. Most of them have viewed the *huehuetlatolli* not only as a European type of indigenous rhetorical orations focusing on its linguistic style and techniques, but also as the symbolic representation of indigenous moral and religious philosophy focusing on its primary themes. Miguel León-Portilla,

who could be considered one of the most influential scholars of Aztec studies of the twentieth century, presented the rhetorical works (“obras retóricas”) and the expressions of the moral philosophy and theology of the Nahuas (“la filosofía moral y la teología de los nahuas”) as two common denominators of the collections of huehuetlatolli (1992, 200). Likewise, Thelma D. Sullivan presents the huehuetlatolli as “the rhetorical orations in general—the prayers, discourses, salutations, and congratulatory speeches—in which the traditional religious, moral, and social concepts handed down from generation to generation were expressed in traditional language—that is rhetorical language” (1976, 82). Later scholars such as Josefina García Quintana (2000, 134), Carmen Espinosa Maldonado (1997, 18-19), and Don Paul Abbot (1987, 251) also see rhetorical and moral philosophy as the major characteristics of huehuetlatolli. I would, however, argue that this current widespread and predominant view of huehuetlatolli is indebted to Frays Andrés de Olmos and Bernardino de Sahagún, who first collected and evaluated indigenous discursive traditions with a European perspective as a part of their colonial project. By deconstructing how these Spanish priests collected and interpreted the huehuetlatolli, this essay proposes that the huehuetlatolli should not be limited to rhetorical oral traditions that primarily covered indigenous moral philosophy, but rather that it should be understood in a broader Prehispanic context as any type of indigenous discursive practice, either pictorial and oral, which dealt with any cultural, historical, political, and religious aspect of indigenous society.

Birth of Huehuetlatolli as Indigenous Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy

As the first collectors of huehuetlatolli, Frays Olmos and Sahagún gathered indigenous discourses as a part of their broader encyclopedic project in the first half of the sixteenth century. As Olmos started to collect and examine indigenous materials including the huehuetlatolli in 1533, which was earlier than Sahagún, his collection and translations could be an essential source for studying how the huehuetlatolli was initially understood and evaluated. Unfortunately, however, the original collection of the discourses in Nahuatl that Olmos completed and translated in Spanish have not survived except for only one that he included in his Nahuatl grammar book, *Arte para aprender la lengua mexicana* [Art for Learning the Mexica Language] (1972). This surviving speech is divided into two parts: the first part is titled “PLATICA QUE HAZE EL PADRE AL HIJO AVISANDOLE, O AMONESTANDOLE QUE SEA BVUENO” [SPEECH THE FATHER MAKES TO THE SON, WARNING OR ADVISING HIM TO BE GOOD], and the second part “RESPVUESTA QVE HAZE EL HIJO AL PADRE” [RESPONSE FROM THE SON TO THE FATHER]. As Olmos focused on Nahuatl grammar for the Spanish priests who wanted to learn Nahuatl, he did not provide detailed information about the surviving speech. However, he wrote a brief note about it twice in the book, which could show how he viewed the huehuetlatolli from the beginning stage of his collection. In the Introduction to the book, Olmos describes it as “una platica por los naturales compuesta, prouechosa y de buena doctrina, con otras maneras de hablar” [a speech composed by the natives, useful and of good doctrine, with other ways of speaking] (1972, 10).

According to this note, Olmos presents oral speech as the unique linguistic mode of huehuetlatolli and good instruction as its main theme. Olmos made his second note about this form of speech in the title of Chapter 8 as follows: “El octavo, de la manera de hablar que tenían los viejos en sus pláticas. Y después se pondrá una plática de las que solía hacer antiguamente un padre a su hijo, en que se descubre mucho de la propiedad de la lengua” [The eighth, about the way of speaking that the old people had in their speeches. And afterwards, there will be a speech like those that fathers used to give their sons in ancient times, in which much is revealed about the property of speaking] (1972, 266). In this note, Olmos presents the old men as the keepers of speeches which they used to instruct younger generations in Prehispanic Nahuatl society. This instruction was most likely a moral and religious education, as demonstrated in the surviving speech in which the father admonishes his son to devote himself to God, respect others, behave well morally, etc. Through the notes and the surviving speech in his grammar book, Olmos provided general characteristics of huehuetlatolli: it was spoken and kept by old men, practiced as oral speech (“plática” or “manera de hablar”), and dealt with moral content or education (“buena doctrina”).

Even though Fray Olmos’s original collection of huehuetlatolli in Nahuatl is missing, several chroniclers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century included some of his translations in Spanish in their chronicles. Among them, Bartolomé de Las Casas (1967, 2:437-448), Juan de Torquemada (1975, 4:265-270), Gerónimo de Mendieta (1971, 113-120), and Alonso de Zorita (2003, 112-122) included Olmos’s Spanish translations of huehuetlatolli in their chronicles, commonly presenting them as *pláticas* (speeches), *exhortaciones* (exhortations), *avisos* (warnings), *amonestaciones* (cautions), and *consejos* (advice) in which parents educate their children how to conduct themselves well morally and ethically. In addition, the chroniclers tried to understand and evaluate these indigenous discursive practices through the eyes of European classical traditions.¹ Las Casas and Torquemada compared the indigenous speeches to European rhetoric, focusing on their eloquence and figurative structures. After presenting the huehuetlatolli collected by Olmos, Las Casas recorded that “[T]odas las gentes destas Indias tienen natural elocuencia, y así les es fácil orar y representar sus bienes y sus males como si todas las reglas y colores de la Retórica hubiesen aprendido [. . .]” [All the people of these Indies have a natural eloquence, and thus it is easy for them to speak publicly and represent their goodness and their evil as if they had learned all the rules and techniques of Rhetoric, (. . .)] (1967, 2:447).

Torquemada also stated that the indigenous people were natural rhetoricians without learning any of the rhetorical techniques practiced in Europe: “[C]onfieso que en decir su razón estas gentes, así en contar sus bienes como referir sus males, son aventajadísimos retóricos, no porque ellos hayan oído ningún precepto retórico de los que enseña Quintiliano, ni de los que da Cicerón en sus particiones, sino por serlo ellos naturalmente y tan elocuentes que les es muy fácil decir cualquier cosa que quieren [. . .]” [I confess that in stating their reason, both in recounting their goodness and their evil, they are very excellent rhetoricians, not because they have heard any of the rhetorical precepts taught by Quintilian, nor of those given by Cicero in his partitions, but because they are naturally so eloquent that it is very easy for them to say anything they want (. . .)] (1975, 4:270). It

looks like Las Casas and Torquemada were not the first chroniclers who presented the huehuetlatolli through the lens of European rhetoric. Rather, as the original collector of huehuetlatolli, Fray Olmos must have noticed the similarities between the indigenous discourses and European rhetorical orations because he could understand the discourses in the original indigenous language, Nahuatl, better than any other of his Spanish contemporaries, including the Dominicans and Franciscans and, needless to mention, Las Casas and Torquemada.²

In addition to presenting the huehuetlatolli as a European type of rhetoric, Las Casas, Mendieta, and Torquemada also compared its themes and content to European classical philosophical and biblical traditions. In Volume 2 of his book *Apologética historia sumaria*, Las Casas examined several indigenous systems such as religion, laws, government, customs, education, etc. and compared them to those of European gentiles, mostly Greeks and Romans. By doing so, he tried to demonstrate that indigenous people in New Spain had a society that was as advanced and civilized as that of the classical Europeans (Lee 2021, 40-43). Las Casas paid special attention to how the Nahuas, especially old men and women, educated their children to be honest, modest, obedient, chaste, prudent, diligent, etc. through speeches at school and home. He frequently associated such indigenous education with the works of famous Greek philosophers such as Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* (1967, 2:427-436). According to him, all of the philosophers' guidance in their books could be found in the huehuetlatolli, which Olmos collected and translated: "Todo lo que habemos en esta parte de la crianza de los hijos destas nuestras indianas, en los que precedentes capítulos dicho, se confirma por unas exhortaciones [huehuetlatolli] que otro religioso de la orden de San Francisco [Fray Olmos] me envió de la Nueva España, estando yo en España la Vieja, [. . .]" [Everything that we have said here regarding the rearing of the children of these our Indians, in the previous chapters, is confirmed by some exhortations [huehuetlatolli] that another religious man of the order of Saint Francis sent me from New Spain, while I was in Old Spain (. . .)] (1967, 2:437).

Like Las Casas, Mendieta also linked the huehuetlatolli with European classical philosophical traditions. In his chronicle, Mendieta included three parental speeches and the responses of the children and provided a brief introduction before presenting them. In Chapter XX of Book II, titled "De cómo estos indios general y naturalmente criaban á sus hijos en la niñez, siguiendo las doctrinas de los filósofos, sin haber leído sus libros" [Of how these Indians generally and naturally reared their children in childhood, following the doctrines of the philosophers, without having read their books] (1971, 111), he cited several of Aristotle's ideas about child education to demonstrate that the Indians raised their children in the same ways the philosopher proposed in his book. One of these ideas was to prohibit children from seeing indecent pictures or activities, or from hearing or speaking slanderous words, which, according to Mendieta, the Indians promoted in their speeches: "Y de aquí proceden todos los filósofos à enseñar que à los mozuelos dende su tierna edad, sus padres y ayos los ejerciten en honestos ejercicios y trabajos. Y como esto lo uno y lo otro los indios lo cumplían para con sus hijos, parece bien claro en las pláticas y amonestaciones y trabajos en que los ejercitaban à ellos y à ellas dende su niñez, [. . .] y primeramente en estas pláticas que fueron traducidas de lengua

mexicana en nuestro castellano” [And from here all philosophers teach that, from a tender age, the parents and tutors should train young men in honest exercise and work. And as the Indians did this with their children in one way or the other, it seems very clear in the speeches, admonitions and works in which they trained their sons and daughters from their childhood, (. . .) and firstly in these speeches that were translated from the Mexica language into our Spanish] (1971, 112).

Torquemada more explicitly associated the huehuetlatolli with European biblical and philosophical childhood education. Like Las Casas and Mendieta, he first introduced the ideas of Greek philosophers (Plato and Aristotle) and biblical traditions about teaching moral behaviors to children. In his presentation of indigenous speeches, Torquemada frequently juxtaposed indigenous pedagogical ideas with the biblical and European approaches to child education (Lee 1971, 43). The following paragraph, for instance, exemplifies how Torquemada interrupted the flow of huehuetlatolli to demonstrate the similarities between indigenous and European traditions (Torquemada’s interruptions are italicized by the author): “[H]onra a todos, en especial a tus padres, a los cuales debes obediencia, temor y servicio. *Esto dijo Dios por estas palabras: Honra a tu padre y madres, para que vivas vida larga y buena.* Y proseguía el indio, diciendo: [. . .]; se bien criado y donde no fueres llamado no seas entremetido; *así lo dijo el otro Filósofo antiguo, no llegues a consejo antes que seas llamado, porque en lo contrario, demás de parecer mal criado y atrevido, darás pena con tu soltura*” [Honor everyone, especially your parents, to whom you owe obedience, fear, and service. *God said this by these words: Honor your father and mothers, so that you may live a long and good life.* And the Indian went on, saying: (. . .) be raised well, and where you are not called, do not meddle; *so said the other ancient Philosopher, do not come to counsel before you are called, because otherwise, in addition to appearing ill-bred and insolent, you will be embarrassed by your shamelessness*] (1975, 4:262). Torquemada furthermore argued that the practice of huehuetlatolli was as essential to the Indians as teaching children prayers and moral laws was to European Christians: “Estas exhortaciones, con otras, que por excusar prolijidad deo, son las que usaban hacer estos indios occidentales a sus hijos y con estas amonestaciones los criaban, [. . .], como entre nosotros los cristianos las oraciones y lo más forzoso de la ley divina; porque sabidas de memoria las supiesen poner en ejecución y así corrían de padres a hijos y de hijos a nietos y jamás se olvidaban” [These exhortations, with others, which I leave aside for the sake of brevity, are those which these western Indians used to make to their children, and with these admonitions they raised them, (. . .), as among us Christians the prayers and the most obligatory of the divine law; because they knew them by memory, they knew how to carry them out, and in this way they passed from parents to children and from children to grandchildren, and they were never forgotten] (1971, 4:269)

The indigenous speeches that Olmos originally collected and translated, and which Las Casas, Torquemada, and Mendieta partially included in their chronicles, were finally published in a collection by Juan Bautista in 1601. Bautista titled the collection *Huehuetlatolli que contiene las pláticas que los padres y madres hicieron a sus hijos y a sus hijas, y los señores a sus vasallos, todas llenas de doctrina moral y política* [*Huehuetlatolli, which contains the speeches that fathers and mothers made for their sons and daughters, and the lords for their vassals, all speeches full of moral and*

political doctrine], which included twenty-nine discourses in Nahuatl and in Spanish translation. Contrary to what the title indicates, however, this book does not include only indigenous speeches but also some Christian sermons. It is not clear which speeches in the collection were originally collected by Olmos, but as Leon-Portilla (1991, 26) argues, Bautista seems to have later added some Christian sermons. In any case, as a collection of speeches, this book provides a comprehensive understanding of the thematic and linguistic scopes of huehuetlatolli that was probably initiated by the original collector, Olmos. It contains the speeches that Olmos included in his Nahuatl grammar book, *Arte para aprender la lengua Mexicana*, and which Las Casas, Mendieta, Torquemada, and Zorita included in their chronicles. Thus, most of oral discourses collected in the *Huehuetlatolli* were those indigenous parents used to teach their children adequate moral behaviors before the conquest. In addition, it also included several speeches about political and civil moral behaviors that the king and vassals should follow, which Las Casas, Torquemada, and Mendieta did not mention in their chronicles. Yet Bautista appears to have extended the traditional comparison of huehuetlatolli to rhetoric and classical philosophy, as he quoted in his collection Las Casas's comparison of the speeches ("pláticas") to European rhetoric and classical philosophy in verbatim (1601, 91r-93).

Along with Olmos's collection, Sahagún's Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex* in Nahuatl and its Spanish version, Book 6 of *La historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, have been also indispensable sources for the study of huehuetlatolli. As several scholars already examined, Olmo's and Sahagún's collections share core similarities: parental moral admonitions and advice to children and political exhortations between the ruler and vassals as main themes appeared in oral speeches.³ Sahagún, however, added one more theme, theology, to the thematic scope of huehuetlatolli by including several prayers in his Book 6. Thus, Sahagún titled Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex* as "Libro sexto, de la Rethorica, y philosophia moral, y theologia: de la gente mexicana: donde hay cosas muy curiosas tocantes a los primores de su lengua: y cosas muy delicadas tocantes, a las virtudes morales" [Sixth book, of the Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy and Theology of the Mexica people, where there are very curious things regarding the beauty of their language, and very delicate things regarding the moral virtues]. This title demonstrates that Sahagún shared almost the same view of the two main aspects of huehuetlatolli that Olmos and his followers such as Las Casas, Torquemada, Mendieta, and Bautista maintained: Sahagún used the same term they did, rhetoric, to refer to the collection of huehuetlatolli, Book 6, and compared this book to classical European moral philosophy. Olmos and Sahagún's similar themes and evaluations of huehuetlatolli demonstrate that they might have communicated with one another about indigenous oral discourses. In fact, both collectors got to know each other in person and each other's works as well. Sahagún and Olmos worked together at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco in the 1530s, and thus they could have even exchanged their ideas about the indigenous traditions, and more specifically, the indigenous discourses, huehuetlatolli. For this reason, they started to commonly present and evaluate them as "retórica" (rhetoric) and "doctrina o filosofía moral" (moral philosophy or education), which has been widely accepted by colonial chroniclers and modern scholars up to today.⁴

Reconstructing the Huehuetlatolli before the Conquest

It has been well-known that Prehispanic traditions in Mexico were evaluated and classified after the conquest by European cultural, historical, religious, and social criteria. In this process, most indigenous traditions were transformed, trimmed, and even destroyed according to the colonizers' needs. The huehuetlatolli went through the exact same process. As collectors of indigenous oral speeches, Spanish priests converted them into indigenous versions of European rhetoric and moral philosophy and recorded them as such in the European alphabetic writing system after the conquest. Focusing on the case of Sahagún, Walter D. Mignolo and Colleen Ebacher presented the surviving huehuetlatolli as an outcome of the indigenous discursive practice that lost its original form and was redefined by European discursive system:

Sin embargo, al ser transcritos y fijados en escritura alfabética, los *huehuetlatolli* fueron sacados de su contexto original e insertado en otro. Sus nuevos receptores no eran ya participantes en un juego de vida, sino observadores de participantes en juegos de lenguaje. En este nuevo contexto los *huehuetlatolli* pasaron a ser textos aptos para el estudio, lingüístico y cultural y también para la cristianización. Las categorías que apoyaron este *traslatio* fueron derivadas de la escritura alfabética y es así que Sahagún describe los discursos del Libro VI como "retórica y filosofía moral y teología de la gente mexicana" que son géneros discursivos derivados de la tradición alfabética occidental y no de las tradiciones orales mesoamericanas. (1994, 24)

[However, by being transcribed and fixed in alphabetic writing, the *huehuetlatolli* were taken out of their original context and inserted into another. Their new recipients were no longer participants in a game of life, but observers of participants in language games. In this new context, the *huehuetlatolli* became texts suitable for linguistic and cultural study, as well as for Christianization. The categories that supported this *translatio* were derived from alphabetic writing, and thus Sahagún describes the discourses in Book VI as "rhetoric and moral philosophy and theology of the Mexica people," which are discursive genres derived from the Western alphabetic tradition and not from Mesoamerican oral traditions.]

Mignolo and Ebacher argue that the current form of huehuetlatolli was separated from its original indigenous discursive system and was forcefully inserted into a new alphabetic system, and then Sahagún classified this transformed huehuetlatolli as rhetoric, moral philosophy, and theology following European discursive categories. In this context, reconstructing how the original indigenous discursive system such as huehuetlatolli was created, practiced, and preserved before the conquest would be essential to deconstruct how Olmos and Sahagún defined, selected, and evaluated the huehuetlatolli.

While Olmos's major works about indigenous traditions in which his original collection of huehuetlatolli was included has gone missing, Sahagún's major works have survived and served as essential sources for the study of huehuetlatolli. His Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex* and its Spanish version, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, in particular, could provide important

information as to how the oral discourses of Prehispanic period were understood and practiced. Throughout the entirety of Book 6, Sahagún uses the term *huehuetlatolli* twice. In Chapter XXI of Book 6, “The father, ruler or nobleman, exhorted his son in order to provoke him to chastity (1950-1982, 6:113),” Sahagún used it to refer to the discourses of the old men (*buehuetque*) and old women (*ilamatque*), as shown in the following paragraph:

Thou who art my son, thou who art my youth, hear the words; place, inscribe in the chambers of thy heart the word or two which our forefathers departed leaving: the old men [*in buehuetque* (vevetque)], the old women [*in ilamatque* (jlamatque)], the regarded ones, the admired ones, and the advised ones on earth. Here is that which they gave us, entrusted to us as they left, the words of the old men [*buehuetlatolli* (vevetlatolli)], that which is bound, the well-guarded [words]. They went saying that the pure life is considered as a well-smoked, precious turquoise; as a round, reed-like, well-formed, precious green stone. There is no blotch, no blemish. Those perfect in their hearts, in their manner of life, those of pure life-like these are the precious green stone, the precious turquoise, which are glistening, shining before the lord of near, of the nigh. Like them are the precious feathers, the dark green ones, broad, well-formed, which arch over the earth. They are those of pure life, those called good-hearted. (1950-1980, 6:113)⁵

In this paragraph, the father presents the old men (*buehuetque*) and women (*ilamatque*) as the creators of *huehuetlatolli* and uses their words and lives to educate his son. The father advises his son to emulate them, explaining how exemplary and pure was the life they lived, and thus they were glowing in front of the god, *tloque nabuaque* (the lord of near, of the nigh). In addition, the father presents the old men and women’s words as *huehuetlatolli*, asking his son to keep them in his heart. These words are translated here as “the words of the old men,” but in context it should be translated more properly as “the words of the ancestors or ancient words” because the old men (*buehuetque*) and women (*ilamatque*) already departed the earth, in other words, they were already dead. Sahagún also confirmed this translation in the *Historia general* by presenting the *buehuetque* and *ilamatque* as “nuestros antepasados” [our ancestors] and the *buehuetlatolli* as “lo que nos dijeron y lo que nos avisaron” [what they said and what they advised] (1997, 355-56).⁶

The next appearance of *huehuetlatolli* in Book VI does not occur in one of the main chapters that include speeches but in one of the three additional chapters that deal with adages, riddles, and metaphors. In Chapter 43, “Here are told some of the figures of speech called metaphors, which are subtle expressions; and their interpretations, their explanations,” the word *huehuetlatolli* appears as follows: “ANOTHER’S SONG, ANOTHER’S WORDS: It means the one who spoke words not his own – perhaps the words of the old men [*buehuetlatolli*], the words of the noblemen [*pillatolli*]; but a mere commoner, if he took it upon himself to talk, was told: ‘Are these perchance thy words, thy song, which thou utterest? What thou utterest is not necessary’” (1950-1982, 6:250).⁷ The *huehuetlatolli* here could be ostensibly understood as the words or discourse of the old men, and there is no other possibility of different translation in the context. Yet this paragraph provides some

important clues for understanding the roles of the old men (*buebuetque*) and their words. The huehuetlatolli in this paragraph refers to the words of the old men who are not dead but still alive, and they seem to have had a certain authority like the noble men because their words, huehuetlatolli and *pillatolli*, respectively, were clearly distinguished from the words of the commoners, *macehuallatolli*. It looks like the old men as the speakers or utterers of huehuetlatolli before the conquest had their own discursive styles and content which distinguished them from other social groups, and they also seem to have enjoyed certain political power due to their age and experience in the Prehispanic society.⁸

Sahagún seems to provide contradictory information in Book 6 because he presents the living as well as the dead old men and women as creators or speakers of huehuetlatolli. However, it should be noted that Sahagún does not contradict himself because what they said, whether they were living or dead, referred to the same words. To put it another way, the living *buebuetque* and *ilamatque* were the knowers and transmitters of the ancient words that the dead *buebuetque* and *ilamatque* left behind. Thus, what the former said was essentially based on the ancient words of the latter, as Ruiz Bañuls argues: “[M]e inclino a afirmar que al pensar en ‘antigua palabra’ se está evocando el concepto de tradición, tan antigua como se quisiera, y al traducirla como “discurso de los ancianos” se hace referencia al hecho de que los viejos eran depositarios y transmisores de la misma” [I am inclined to assert that, by thinking of the ‘ancient word’ one is evoking the concept of tradition, as old as one would like, and by translating it as the ‘discourse of the elders,’ one is referring to the fact that the elders were the repositories and transmitters of it] (2009, 66).

Sahagún provided further information in Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex* about how the huehuetlatolli as the ancient words or words of the old men and women were transmitted from generation to generation. He stated that indigenous people learned them from childhood in school. According to him, when the children were ready to go to school at a certain age, their entire family got together and prepared a ceremony in which the old men (*buebuetque*) and women (*ilamatque*) of the family advised the children how to live and behave and informed them of what they would learn at the school. The following advice is one of the speeches that they gave to the children:

O my child, O my youth, thou art no longer much of a little bird; for already thou art understanding; already thou hast discretion. Here is a word or two to the satisfaction of us who are old men, who are old women. Go taking it as thy charge; do not reject it. If thou art to laugh at it, accursed art thou. But there thou wilt be told, thou wilt be given some more, for thou wilt goest to a school. There thou wilt examine, thou wilt compare the words of the old men. And if thou hearest something which seemeth not correct, thou art not to laugh. O my precious son, O my youngest son, it is time to go. Be diligent in the seeping, in the offering of incense. (1950-1982, 6:215-216)⁹

As a representative of the old men (*buebuetque*) and old women (*ilamatque*) of the family, the speaker asked the child to keep and remember well his advice. It appears that he himself called this advice “one or two words of the old men and women,” which could be clearly understood as

huehuetlatolli. The speaker further informed the child that he or she would learn various other types of the “words of the old men” (*jntlatol vevetque [huehuetque]*) at school, asking him to compare these words to those that he was given at home. The child who was addressed here would probably attend one of the Aztec schools, Calmecac, because, as Sahagún recorded, the children attending this school learned *qualli tlatolli* (good discourse): “Very carefully were they taught good discourse. If one spoke not well, if one greeted others not well, they drew blood from him [with *maguey* spines]” (1950-1982, 3:64-65).¹⁰

Sahagún did not specify how and what kinds of good words or speeches of old men and women the children would learn at the school, but several Spanish priests, as well as native and mestizo chroniclers, described how and with what materials they were instructed at Calmecac before the conquest. For example, Fray Juan de Tovar explained well how indigenous discourses, including oral traditions such as huehuetlatolli, were taught at the indigenous school. In his chronicle, *Historia y creencias de los indios de México*, Tovar included numerous speeches or oral discourses similar to the huehuetlatolli. After he finished his chronicle, Tovar sent a copy of it to his Jesuit religious brother, Fray José de Acosta, who was preparing his own chronicle, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*. After reading Tovar’s chronicle, Acosta questioned how the Indians could conserve the memory of so many and diverse things (“la memoria de tantas y tan varias cosas”) without letters and how much credibility the long and elegant orations included in the *Historia y creencias* had because, according to him, the Indians did not have letters like the Europeans, and thus it would not be possible for them to preserve such long and elegant orations (Tovar 2001, 56).¹¹ In his response to Acosta’s question, Tovar stated that the Indians had their own pictorial writing and calendar systems to record their past, and taught their children the orations or speeches based on their reading of the pictorial books:

Pero es de advertir que aunque tenían diversas figuras y caracteres con que escribían las cosas, no era tan suficientemente como nuestra escritura, que sin discrepar por las mismas palabras refiriese cada uno lo que estaba escrito; sólo concordaban en los conceptos. Pero para tener memoria entera de las palabras y traza de los parlamentos que hacían los oradores y de muchos cantares que tenían, que todos sabían sin discrepar palabra, los cuales componían los mismos oradores, aunque los figuraban con sus caracteres, pero para conservarlos por las mismas palabras que los dijeron sus oradores y poetas, había cada día ejercicio de ello en los colegios de los mozos principales que habían de ser sucesores de éstos, y con la continua repetición se les quedaba en la memoria sin discrepar palabra, tomando las oraciones más famosas que en cada tiempo se hacían por método, para imponer a los mozos que habían de ser retóricos; y de esta suerte se conservaron muchos parlamentos sin discrepar palabra, de gente en gente, hasta que vinieron los españoles que en nuestra letra escribieron muchas oraciones y cantares que yo vi y así se han conservado. (2001, 59)

[But it should be noted that, although they had diverse figures and characters with which they wrote things, it was not as sufficient as our writing system, which without differentiating through the same words, each referred to what was written; they only agreed on concepts. But in order to have a complete

memory of the words and a trace of the speeches that the orators made, and of many songs that they had, which they all knew without disagreeing on a word, which were composed by the same orators, although they represented them with their characters, but in order to preserve them through the same words with which their orators and poets spoke them, there was daily practice of them in the schools of the young noblemen who were to be their successors; and with continuous repetition it remained in their memory without any word differences, taking the most famous orations that were made at each time by method, in order to impose on the young men who were to be rhetoricians; and in this way many speeches were preserved without word differences, from people to people, until the Spaniards came and wrote in our writing many prayers and songs that I saw, and hence they have been preserved.]

Tovar explains here how the oral discourses (“parlamentos” or “oraciones”) included in his chronicle were created and practiced by the Indians. According to him, they used diverse pictorial figures to record things and thus there could be discrepancy among those who would interpret pictorial books because the indigenous pictorial writing system was not perfect like the European alphabetic system. To avoid such discrepancies and maintain the uniformity of how those books were read, the Indians had orators and singers who composed orations and songs based on the pictorial books. At school, the young noblemen learned and memorized the orations and songs through diligent repetition to preserve them through the generations with the same words without any difference or change. In this way, according to Tovar, the Indians were able to preserve Prehispanic orations and songs, which were then written in a European alphabetic system after the arrival of the Spaniards.

Tovar’s response to Acosta’s question about the lengthy orations provides important information as to how the *huehuetlatolli* was created and practiced before the conquest. More than anything, Tovar demonstrated that indigenous speeches such as the *huehuetlatolli* were not practiced alone but were always accompanied by pictorial books, as the former was a result of accurate readings of the latter. Some colonial chroniclers also verified the close relationship between the oral and pictorial discourses. Alonso de Zorita, who included in his chronicle several *huehuetlatolli* originally collected by Olmos, also confirmed this close relationship between the *huehuetlatolli* and its pictorial counterparts by recording that the indigenous nobles maintained their “good advice,” meaning the *huehuetlatolli*, as memory in their pictorial books: “Demas de criar los hijos con la disciplina e cuidado que se ha dicho, los padres asimismo lo tenían en les dar muchos y muy buenos consejos, y los tienen hoy en día los indios principales por memoria en sus pinturas [. . .].” [In addition to bringing up children with the discipline and care that has been mentioned, the parents also had to give them much and very good advice, and today the principal Indians possess it as a memory in their paintings (. . .)] (2003, 112).

Another chronicler, Fray Diego Durán, also presented the importance of pictorial books as the main sources for oral traditions. In his chronicle, Durán argued that the Indians must have been evangelized by one of the Christian apostles before the conquest because the indigenous people performed several religious practices very similar to those of the Christians, such as fasting, offering incense at the altars, playing musical instruments in the temples, etc. Based on this idea, Durán

identified one of the indigenous gods, Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, with the Christian apostle, Saint Thomas, who taught the Indians those religious rites and practices. To verify Topiltzin as Saint Thomas, Durán asked an old Indian man to explain to him the life of Topiltzin, which he recounts as follows:

I was desirous of finding out whether these things [the teachings of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl] were true. Therefore, I questioned an Indian advanced in years, from Coatepec, who was considered a wise man in his town. This man dies of the great plague. I begged him to tell me whether what was written and painted there was true, but the Indians find it difficult to give explanations unless they can consult the book of their village. So he went to home and brought back a painted manuscript, but the characters impressed me more as representations of magical things than history. Within this document was to be found in almost unintelligible signs the entire life of Papa and his disciples. This native narrated the life of Topiltzin to me as I had known it but in a better manner than I had heard before. (2010, 64-65)

In response to Durán's question, the old indigenous man tried to explain the life of Topiltzin based on his memory at the beginning, and although he was known as a wise man, he had a hard time orally recalling it. Thus, he needed to consult pictorial books to accurately narrate the life of Topiltzin as a Christian apostle. Durán's report confirms again the close relationship between oral traditions such as huehuetlatolli and their pictorial counterparts. While Tovar informs us that the pictorial books were complemented by the indigenous orations, Durán states that these orations were also complemented by the pictorial books. All these examples demonstrate that the Nahua people before the conquest equally depended on the system of oral traditions and pictorial writing to maintain and preserve their cultural, political, and religious practices because these two indigenous discursive systems could not function well without assisting each other.

Deconstructing the Huehuetlatolli as Indigenous Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy

Frays Olmos and Sahagún, who first collected indigenous oral traditions, presented the huehuetlatolli not only as an indigenous version of European rhetorical orations but also as the symbolic representation of indigenous moral and religious philosophy, which later chroniclers and scholars simply recycled until recently. To initiate and continue such typical characterization of huehuetlatolli, however, they deliberately overlooked or simply ignored the inseparable and interdependent relationship of the two Prehispanic discursive practices, oral traditions and pictorial books. To make the huehuetlatolli conform to their expectations of indigenous rhetorical orations, Las Casas, Torquemada, and Mendieta, who included in their chronicles several speeches collected by Olmos, did not mention any pictorial images. Unlike them, Sahagún included fifty-two pictorial images in Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex*, but he did not mention that they were the original pictorial sources of the orations he collected. In addition, they do not seem to depict the main theme of each chapter properly as they were too simplified. Furthermore, these images mostly reflected a European painting style rather than the Prehispanic indigenous pictorial writing system (Favrot Peterson 2019, 174-180). Not only by separating oral traditions from their pictorial counterparts but also by

stressing the eloquence of the former, the Spanish colonizers were able to identify the huehuetlatolli with European types of rhetorical orations before the conquest.

The mutual dependency between oral traditions and pictorial books also seriously challenges the presentation of huehuetlatolli as the only orations that primarily dealt with moral and religious philosophy. Because the indigenous people used pictorial writing system to record almost all sectors of their society such as economy, history, politics, religion, etc., the orations or oral traditions that were based on the reading of these pictorial books must have been as diverse as the themes of their pictorial counterparts. According to Fray Toribio de Benavente, also known as Motolinia, who came to Mexico City in 1524 as one of the famous twelve Franciscans, the indigenous people in central Mexico maintained various types of pictorial books before the conquest:

Había entre estos naturales cinco libros, como dije de figuras y caracteres: el primero hablaba de los años y tiempos: el segundo de los días y fiestas que tenían en todo el año: el tercero que hablaba de los sueños y de los agüeros, embaimientos y vanidades en que creían: el cuarto era del bautismo y nombres que daban a los niños: el quinto es de los ritos, ceremonias y agüeros que tenían en los matrimonios. Los cuatro de estos libros no los ha de creer vuestra ilustrísima señoría como los Evangelios, porque ni los escribieron Juanes, ni Lucas, ni Marcos, ni Mateos, mas fueron inventados por los demonios. El uno, que es de los años y tiempos, de éste se puede tomar crédito, que es el primero, porque en la verdad aunque bárbaros y sin escrituras de letras, mucha orden y manera tenían de contar los mismos tiempos y años, fiestas y días, como algo de esto parece en la primera parte del tratado y sexto [*sic*] capítulo. Asimismo escribían y figuraban las hazañas e historias de guerra [y también] del subceso de los principales señores, de los temporales y pestilencias, y en qué tiempo y de qué señor acontecían, y todos los que sujetaron principalmente esta tierra e se enseñorearon hasta que los españoles entraron. Todo esto tienen escrito por caracteres e figuras. (1971, 5)

[There were among these natives five types of books, as I said, of figures and characters: the first spoke of the years and times; the second of the days and feasts that the natives had throughout the year; the third spoke of the dreams and the omens, trickery and vanities in which they believed; the fourth was of the baptism and names that they gave to the children; the fifth is of the rites, ceremonies, and omens that they had in their marriages. Your Illustrious Lordship must not believe that the last four of these books are like Gospels, because they were written neither by John, nor Luke, nor Mark, nor Matthew, but were invented by demons. The first one, which is of the years and times, can be given credit because, although the natives were barbarian and without alphabetic writings, they truly had much order and a way of counting the same times and years, feasts and days, as something similar to this appears in the first part of the treaty and sixth [*sic*] chapter. Likewise, they wrote and figured the exploits and histories of war [and also] of the succession of the principal lords, of storms and pestilences, and in what time and under which lord they occurred, and all those who principally subjugated this land and ruled until the Spaniards entered. All this is written in characters and figures.]

The pictorial books that Motolinia classified seem to cover almost all social sectors and private as well as public events in indigenous society. From the official political history and religious festivals

and rites to the domestic ceremonies such as marriage, baptism, and naming a new-born baby were recorded in the pictorial books. He emphasized the importance of the first book that dealt with the Aztec calendar system. With this calendar, the Indians were able to record their historical and religious events by counting the exact date and time of festivals, conquests, seasonal pestilence, royal genealogical successions, etc. As Tovar stated in his chronicle, the orations or speeches based on all these types of books were produced and taught at schools. However, the first collectors of huehuetlatolli, Frays Olmos and Sahagún, included certain orations in their chronicles through selections and exclusions. In Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex*, for instance, Sahagún excluded religious practices such as how to conduct human sacrifice and prepare monthly festivals, which probably formed the most important aspect of indigenous religious ceremonies, while he included the practices of confession and coronation in front of god, which were very similar or acceptable practices to the Europeans. It is obvious that he did not want or was not allowed to include those purely indigenous practices in his collection as they would remind the Indians of Prehispanic idolatry.

As the two main Prehispanic discursive practices, oral tradition and pictorial books, were inherently interdependent and thus inseparable, the huehuetlatolli as an example of such practices could be understood as a hybrid discursive product, in other words, not only as an oral but also as a pictorial discourse. Sahagún seems to confirm this hybrid concept of huehuetlatolli by recording that the old men were in charge of the pictorial books and oral traditions before the conquest: “Según que afirman los viejos, en cuyo poder estaban las pinturas y memorias de las cosas antiguas [. . .].” [According to what the old people confirm, in whose possession were the paintings and memories of ancient things (. . .)] (1997, 447). As the old men (*huehuetque*) oversaw the entirety of the pictorial books and memories or oral traditions, it would be logical to consider any oral and/or pictorial discourse as huehuetlatolli. In fact, some Nahuatl chronicles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries understood the huehuetlatolli exactly as both pictorial and oral discourses that dealt with various social traditions such as tribute records and merchant activities (economy), the state’s major conquests (history), royal elections and successions (politics), sacred festivals and ceremonies (religion), etc.

In his *Crónica mexicayotl* written in Nahuatl, for example, Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc recorded how México-Tenochtitlan developed and became the most powerful city in Prehispanic Mexico by using the discourses of the old men and women, or ancestors. According to him, the *huehuetque* and *ilamatque* documented the history of the foundation and growth of Tenochtitlan in the oral and pictorial discourses:

Hela aquí, que aquí comienza, se verá, está asentada por escrito la bonísima, voracísima relación de su renombre; el relato e historia de origen y fundamento de cómo empezó y principió la gran ciudad de México Tenochtitlan, que esta adentro del agua, en el tular, en el carrizal, y se la llama el tular, el carrizal del ventarrón, la que se construyera en cabecera de todos y cada uno de los poblados de todas partes de esta reciente Nueva España; según lo dijieran y asentaran en su relato [*ynin tlaltol*], y nos lo dibujaran

en sus "pergaminos" [*texamapan*] los que eran viejos [*ynhuebuetque*] y viejas [*yllumatque*], nuestros abuelos y abuelas, bisabuelos y bisabuelas, nuestros tatarabuelos, nuestros antepasados; aconteció que nos dejaron dicha relación admonitiva, nos la legaron a quienes ahora vivimos, a quienes de ellos procedemos, y nunca se perderá ni olvidará lo que hicieron, lo que asentaron en sus escritos y pinturas, su fama, y el renombre y recuerdo que de ellos hay, [. . .]. (1992, 4-5)¹²

[Here it begins, it will be seen, the most beautiful, most truthful account of its (Tenochtitlan) fame recorded in writing begins here, will be seen; the account and history of the origin and foundation of how the great city of Mexico Tenochtitlan began and originated, which is inside the water, in the tular, in the reedbeds, and is called the tular, the reedbed of the strong wind, which was made to be the head of each and every one of the settlements in all parts of this recent New Spain; according to what those who were old men (*ynhuebuetque*) and old women (*yllumatque*), our grandfathers and grandmothers, great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers, our great-great-grandparents, our ancestors said and recorded in their story (*ynin tlatol*), and drew for us in their "parchments" (*texamapan*); it came to pass that they bequeathed to us this admonitory account, they bequeathed it to those of us who now live, to those of us who come from them, and what they did, what they recorded in their writings and painted books, their fame, and their glory and memory will never be lost or forgotten, (. . .).]

Tezozomoc states that his chronicle is the most excellent and truthful account about the foundation and development of Tenochtitlan because it is based on the account (*tlaholl*) of his ancestors, the Tenochca old men (*buebuetque*) and old women (*ilamatque*), which could be clearly understood as huehuetlatolli. According to him, the Tenochca ancestors left their account to their descendants in two ways: they spoke in oral discourse or words (*quitotiaque tlatolli*) and painted in pictorial books (*otechmachiyotiliaque texamapan*). Like the previous chroniclers, such as Frays Olmos and Sahagún, Tezozomoc presents the old men and women as the composers of huehuetlatolli. Unlike those chroniclers who mainly presented the huehuetlatolli as oral speeches, however, Tezozomoc demonstrates a substantially different point of view by presenting as the huehuetlatolli any discursive form, either pictorial books or speeches/words.

In his chronicle, Tezozomoc also demonstrates that the main topic of huehuetlatolli should not necessarily be theological and moral philosophy, as Olmos and Sahagún initially presented. Rather, he seems to argue that any discourse that dealt with any aspect of Prehispanic indigenous society should be considered huehuetlatolli as long as the old men and women created and transmitted it. Thus, he claimed his *Crónica mexicana*, which primarily focused on a political and geological history of Tenochtitlan, was a certified and confirmed ancient account (*buebuetlatolli*) because it was based on the pictorial books as well as oral traditions that the Tenochca old men and women or his ancestors left: "He aquí que con todo esto os convencemos de que ya certificamos y confirmamos su antigua narración (*buebue tlaholl*). Oídla y comprendedla bien, vosotros, los hijos y nietos, los mexicanos, los tenochcas, y todos quienesquiera que de vosotros provengan, quienes nazcan, vivan y sean de vuestro linaje" [Behold, with all this we convince you that we have already certified and confirmed their (the elders) ancient discourse (huehue tlaholl). Hear it and understand

it well, you, the children and grandchildren, the Mexicas, the Tenochcas, and all whoever comes from you, who are born, live and are of your lineage] (1992, 9-10).¹³

Tezozomoc's broad and extensive understanding of huehuetlatolli could be confirmed by another Nahua chronicler of the seventeenth century, Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin. When Chimalpahin introduces the content and topic of his chronicle at the beginning of "Octava Relación," he presents the *huehuetlatolli* as an account of ancient life (*huehuenemiliztenonotzaliztli*) that included all historical aspects of his hometown, Tzacualtitlan Tenanco Chiconcóhuac in Chalco, such as its origin, history, and traditions (1998, 2:271-272). Then, Chimalpahin explained who created the huehuetlatolli and how it was transmitted¹⁴:

Aquí se dirá y se expondrá la antigua relación que se pintó sobre esta vida señorial de los antiguos, porque este ordenamiento no es simple fábula, cuento o invención, sino que todo es verdad y tal como sucedió; así nos dejaron dicho y pintado su huehuetlatolli los ancianos y ancianas (*huehuetque yllamatque*), los tlatoque y principales tzacualtitlantenancas, nuestros abuelos y abuelas, bisabuelos y bisabuelas, nuestros antepasados que acá vinieron a vivir, así es la relación que nos dejaron. Esta relación de la ciudad y de los linajes señoriales, que se pintado y escrito en papeles con tinta negra y roja, nunca se perderá ni se olvidará, se guardará por siempre. (1998, 2:295)¹⁵

[Here will be told and explained the ancient account that was painted about this lordly life of the ancients, because this arrangement is not a mere fable, tale, or invention, but everything is true and just as it happened; This is how the old men and women (*huehuetque* and *ilamatque*), the Tzacualtitlantenanca rulers and nobles, our grandfathers and grandmothers, great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers, our ancestors who came here to live, left us their huehuetlatolli spoken and painted. This is the account they left us. This account of the city and the lordly lineages, which was painted and written on paper in black and red ink, will never be lost or forgotten, it will be kept forever.]

Like the previous colonial chroniclers, such as Olmos and Sahagún, Chimalpahin presents the old men (*huehuetque*) and old women (*ilamatque*) as the composers and/or transmitters of huehuetlatolli. Like Tezozomoc, however, he clearly understood the huehuetlatolli as both oral traditions and painted books by stating that the old men and women, his ancestors in his hometown left their huehuetlatolli in words and painted books ("nos dejaron dicho y pintado su huehuetlatolli los ancianos y ancianas").¹⁶

Chimalpahin also undermines the typical and colonial perception of huehuetlatolli by demonstrating that the huehuetlatolli did not primarily deal with Prehispanic religious and moral philosophy. As he wrote his chronicle to defend his family's cacicazgo (governorship) in his hometown, Tzacualtitlan Tenanco Chiconcóhuac in Chalco, against a lawsuit (1998, 2:309), he focused on its historical and genealogical development along with its neighboring cities in Chalco. In this context, Chimalpahin collected oral traditions and ancient pictorial books among which he focused on *huehualtepetlabtolli* (huehuetlatolli of the city) and *huehuetlatocatlacamecayotlabtolli* (huehuetlatolli of the lordly genealogy) (1998, 2:346-347) for his legal purposes. Thus, the main

topic of his chronicle was “La genealogía y declaración de la descendencia y linaje y generación y origen de sus antepasados del señor don Domingo Hernández Ayopochtzin” [The genealogy and declaration of the descent and lineage and generation and origin of the ancestors of Mr. Domingo Hernandez Ayopochtzin] who was the grandfather of Chimalpahin (1998, 2:270-271). However, he argues that his chronicles should be considered *huehuetlatolli* because he consulted the surviving *huehuetlatolli* of his time, verified them, and wrote his chronicles based on them: “ellos tenían todas las pinturas antiguas que he mencionado y el libro antiguo cuyas fuentes son los llamados originales, y de allí yo extracté el contenido, renovándolo, porque [la relación con] las antiguas genealogías señoriales era su propiedad y de ella saqué yo este huehuetlatolli, que aquí podrá verse” [They had all the ancient paintings that I have mentioned and the old book whose sources are the so-called originals, and from there I extracted the content, renewing it, because (the account about) the ancient lordly genealogies was their property and from it I extracted this huehuetlatolli, which can be seen here] (1998, 2:304-307).¹⁷ For Chimalpahin, the huehuetlatolli could be any oral or pictorial discourse that dealt with any aspect of ancient life and history.

Concluding Remarks:

The indigenous people in central Mexico used two main discursive systems to record their social and cultural systems before the conquest: a pictorial writing system and oral traditions. In the process of converting indigenous pictorial and oral discourses into alphabetic text after the conquest, the Spanish priests had absolute power to determine what generic form those discourses should be recorded or written in. In other words, whether a Prehispanic discourse, either pictorial or oral, would be written in alphabetic text in narrative style, poetic form, or direct oral speech like huehuetlatolli was totally up to the collector of the discourse. Most colonial chroniclers in sixteenth-century New Spain recorded Prehispanic culture and history in a narrative form, principally following European historical writing traditions. Yet many of them included oral traditions in their chronicles in the form of short speeches or dialogues. It is extremely rare, however, to find a chronicle filled solely with oral discourses like Olmos and Sahagún did in their collections of huehuetlatolli. These priests, as the first collectors of huehuetlatolli, commonly selected specific oral discourses that the indigenous people used to advise, suggest, and exhort their younger generations and/or each other, and presented them as not only linguistically similar to European rhetorical orations but also thematically similar to European moral and religious philosophy. The way they presented those selected discourses as huehuetlatolli, however, seriously transformed the Prehispanic discursive practices because the indigenous people before the conquest did not use the huehuetlatolli to refer to a limited number and specific purpose of oral speeches but rather to the entire oral and pictorial discourses of any topic of indigenous society.

Despite the fact that the original forms and practices of huehuetlatolli was transformed by the Spanish priests, it should be noted that this essay does not discredit the entire historical and cultural value of huehuetlatolli. It is needless to say that the speeches currently accepted and presented as

huehuetlatolli surely included important information for the study of Prehispanic Mexico. The numerous speeches in the collection of huehuetlatolli demonstrate how much indigenous people cared about child education at home and the official school system like the Calmecac. In addition, the religious prayers collected in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* also sheds light on the significance of sacrifice and death in the Nahuatl cosmological worldview. Furthermore, the speeches used in the ceremonies of death and inauguration of a king demonstrate the theocratic political and religious system before the conquest. Most current studies of huehuetlatolli tend to focus on these Prehispanic traditions following the interpretation of Spanish priests as a standard perspective and analytical framework while not paying much attention to European influences. Under these circumstances, this essay suggests that the European influence that Spanish chroniclers of the sixteenth century projected into the huehuetlatolli should be taken into consideration as an essential factor in the study of Prehispanic Mexico.

Endnotes:

1. See the studies of Lee (2021, 33-47), and Pollnitz (2017, 126-132) who have examined in detail the European influence on the process of collecting and translating huehuetlatolli. According to Lee, Spanish priests such as Olmos, Sahagún, Las Casas, Mendieta, and Torquemada modified the moral themes and discursive style of huehuetlatolli to make them more similar to those of European moral and rhetorical orations. In doing so, they were able to argue that the Indians were intellectually and morally capable human beings like the Europeans and thus could convert to Christianity. Alternatively, Pollnitz focuses on the roles of indigenous informants. She argues that the similarities between huehuetlatolli and European classical and biblical speeches were primarily created by the indigenous informants who helped the Spanish priest collect the huehuetlatolli in Nahuatl. As they were educated by the Renaissance curriculum at the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco, they were familiar with European classical philosophy and rhetorical orations. In the process of collecting indigenous speeches in Nahuatl, the indigenous informants assimilated these speeches, even before translating them into Spanish, to European rhetorical orations. These two studies are acknowledged as primary sources for the first section of this essay.
2. Fray Olmos's language ability seems to have been extraordinary. He was ordered to examine Prehispanic indigenous traditions in 1533 because he had a better command of Nahuatl than anyone else: "por ser la mejor lengua mexicana que entonces habia en esta tierra" [for being the best speaker of Mexica language in this land at the time] (Mendieta 1971, 75). Along with Nahuatl, he also learned Huastec and Totonac and wrote a grammar book about each of these three languages (Pilling 1895, 50).
3. Regarding the similarities and differences between Olmos's and Sahagún's collections, Garibay hypothesized that Olmos originally prepared two repertoires for the collection of huehuetlatolli. Olmos used one of them for his own collection and later Sahagún took the other for Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex*, imitating and following Olmos's advice (1992, 426-427).
4. Some modern scholars have identified more huehuetlatolli following the ways Olmos and Sahagún selected in the sixteenth century. Including the discourses in Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex*, Sullivan identified a total of eighty-nine huehuetlatolli in Sahagún's corpus (1976, 79-80). Like Sullivan, another scholar, García Quintana also found more huehuetlatolli in Sahagún's two works, *Florentine Codex* and *Historia general*, but she found a total of 100 huehuetlatolli, which included eleven more orations than Sullivan (2000, 136-146). Sullivan and García Quintana's uncritical use of Olmos and Sahagún's collections as their models, however, might overlook possible colonial influence on the indigenous practice of huehuetlatolli before the conquest.

5. “In tinopiltzin, in tinotelpuch: tla xiccaquj intlatolli, tla moiollocaltitlan xictlali, xiqujcujo, in cententli, in cencamatl in concauhteoque in totechiuhcaoan in vevetque, in jlamatque in otlachixque, in otlamavçoque: auh in otlaztlacoque talticpac. Ca izcatqui in techonmacativi, in techonpialtitivi in vevetlatolli in nelpilli, in toptli, in petlacalli: ca conjtotivi ca teuxivtl vel popoca: ca chalchivtl ololivic, acatic, vel icucic momati in chipaoacanemjiztli: can ceio, can hecauhio, vel qujzquj in jniollo, in jnnemjiz in chipaoacanemjiceque: iuh in jniollo, in chalchivtl, in teuxivtl cuecucieiocatica, tonatica, in jxpan tloque, naoaque: iuhquj o, in xopaleoac quetzalli, in patlaoac, in vel iaque, in vitoliuhtoque talticpac, in chiapaoacanemjiceque: in mjtoa qualli iniollo” (*Florentine Codex* 1950-1980, 6:113).
6. Here is Sahagún’s translation in Spanish in the *Historia general* that corresponds to the quoted paragraph in Nahuatl; “Hijo mío muy amado: Nota bien las palabras que quiero decir, y ponlas en tu corazón, porque las dejaron nuestros antepasados viejos y viejas, sabios y avisados, que vivieron en este mundo; es lo que nos dijeron, y lo que nos avisaron y encomendaron que lo guardásemos como en cofre y como oro en paño, porque son piedras preciosas muy resplandecientes y muy pulidas, que son los consejos para bien vivir, en que no hay raza ni mancha, dijéronlas los que perfectamente vivieron en este mundo; son como piedras preciosas que se llaman *chalchibuites* y zafiros, muy resplandecientes delante de nuestro señor, y son como plumas ricas muy finas, y muy anchas y muy esteras que están arqueadas; tales son los que las tienen en costumbre (y) llámense persona de buen corazón” [My beloved son: note well the words I want to say, and put them in your heart, because our ancestors, old men and old women, wise and enlightened, who lived in this world, left them; This is what they told us, and what they warned us and commanded us to keep it as in a chest and as gold in cloth, because they are precious stones very resplendent and very polished, which are the advice for living well, in which there is no class or blemish, those who perfectly lived in this world said them; They are like precious stones that are called precious green stones and sapphires, very splendid before our Lord, and they are like very fine rich feathers, and very wide and very matted that are arched; such are those who have them traditionally (and) are called good-hearted people] (1997, 355-56).
7. “Tecujc, Tetlatol: qujtoznequj: in aqujn amo itlatol qujtoaia, aço vevetlatolli, pillatolli: auh çan maceoalli in qujmotlatoltia, ilhviloia. Cujx motlatol, kujx mocujc in tiqujtoa: ca amo monequj in tiqujtoz” (*Florentine Codex* 1950-1980, 6:250).
8. The following is Sahagún’s translation in Spanish in the *Historia general*: “*Canto ajeno, palabra ajena*. Quiere decir el que no decía palabra suya, sino acaso las palabras de los viejos. Palabras de algún noble, o acaso sencillamente de un pobre, decía. Le dicen: “¿Es acaso tu palabra, acaso tu canto lo que prefieres? No deberías decirlo” [Someone else’s song, someone else’s word. That is to say, he who did not speak his own word, but perhaps the words of the elders. Words of some nobleman, or perhaps simply of a poor man, he said. They say to him, “Is it perhaps your word, perhaps your song that you prefer? You should not say it] (1997, 422).
9. “O nopiltze, notelpuchtze: ca aocmo cenca titototzintli, ca ie timotlachialtia, ca ie timotlacaqujtia: izcatqui in cententli, in cencamatl, in tonequijxtli in tivevetque, in tilamatque: ma xoconmotquijltiuh, maca can tocontlatlaçaz: intla xicvetzca, omotlaveliltic; â tel quexqujchtzan vmpa tilhvloz, vumpa timacoz, ca nezcalilizcali in tiauh; â vmpa ticnepanoz, â vmpa ticnamjctiz in jntlatol vevetque: auh intla avmpa itztiuh ticcaquj, maço tivalvetzczaz. O notlaçopiltze, noxocoiove: maiecuel, ma xonmovica: ma itlan xonmaqujti in ochpanoaztli, in tlenamactli” (*Florentine Codex* 1950-1980, 6:215-216).
10. There existed several types of schools before the conquest, but two schools, Telpochcalli and Calmecac, have been generally represented. The children at Telpochcalli learned religious practices and martial arts such as combat skills, and those at Calmecac learned religious, historical, astrological, and professional traditions by receiving education about gods, the calendar, pictorial writing system, and craftsmanship (Calnek 1988; Díaz Infante 2006, 62-88; Escalante Gonzalbo 2010, 15-19). Whether a child attended the Calmecac or the Telpochcalli, however, many different types of oral discourses/traditions must have been taught at both schools.

11. Acosta acknowledged Tovar's chronicle as one of his main sources for his own writing about the Prehispanic indigenous traditions: "The most diligent and learned men who have penetrated and attained their [Indians] secrets, their ancient style, and their government judge them in a very different way, amazed that there could have been so much order and reason among them. One of these authors is Polo Ondegardo, whom I chiefly follow in things pertaining to Peru, and in matters of Mexico Juan de Tovar, a former prebendary of the Church in Mexico and now a religious in our Society of Jesus; on the orders of the viceroy Don Martín Enríquez, he made a diligent and lengthy study of that nation's old histories" (2002, 330).
12. "Yzcatqui nican humpehua nican mottaz nican ycuillcehtoc yncenca qualli yn cenca nezcalil tlahtolli ynitauhca ynipohualloca ynitlahtollo. yninelhuayo yni tepecho. yniuh peuhtica yniuh tzintitica yn motenehua huey altepetl Ciudad Mexico Tenochtitlan yatlihtic yntultzallan ynacatzallan. yhuan mitohua motenehua tolli ycoyocayan acatl yco yocayan ynan yta itzonteco mochiuhtica ynmochi yxquich yc nohuian altepetl. yn yncuic Nueva España. yniuh quitotiaque. yniuh quitlallitiaque. ynin tlaltol. yhuan otechmachiyotiliaque. texamapan ynhuehuetque yllamatque. catca yn tocihuan yntocolhuan yntachtōhuan yn tomintonhuan yn topiptonhuan yn tochichicahuan yniuhqui nenonotzal mochiuhtih. y noteccahui cahuilitiaque. yn axcan tonnemi yn in techtiquiça auhayc polihuiza yc ylcahuiz. ynoquichihuaco ynoquitlallico yn intlillo yn intlapallo yn intenyō yn imitolloca. yn imilnamicoca" (1992, 4-5)
13. "ocaye yxquich ynic tamechonpehualtilia ynticneltilia yn ticchicahua huehue tlahtolli huel Xiccaquican Xicanacan yn antepilhuan yn anteyxhuihuan. ynan Mexica ynan Tenochca. yhuan ymochintin yn çaçō ac yehuantin. yn amotech quiçatihui yn yollizque. in nemitihui yn amo tlacamecayo huan yezque" (1992, 9-10).
14. The translator of Chimalpahin's chronicles, Rafael Tena, did not translate the term huehuetlatolli in Spanish, but he used it in his translation just like in the Nahuatl text. He did so throughout his translation.
15. Auh ynin huehuetlahtocanemiztli in huehuetlahtocatenonotzalizamoxtlahtolli nica ye mihtoz ye motenehuaz in ye mopohuaz, ca amo çan çaçanilli ca amo çan tlapipictli amo çan tlahtlaquetzalli ynic tlatecpantli, ca mochi neltiliztli ca mochi omochiuh; ca yuh oquitotehuaque cs yuh oquiteneutehuaque yuh otechtlalilitehuaque y inhuehuetlahtol in huehuetque yllamatque, in tlahtoque in pipiltin Tzacualtitlan tenanca, in tocolhuan in tachtonhuan in tomintonhuan in topiptonhuan nican onemico, y iuhqui yn innenonotzal mochiuhtih yn otechcahuiltiaque. Ynin altepenenonotzaliztlahtolli yhuan tlahtocatlacamecayonenonotzaliztlahtolli in tliltica ycuiliuhcō machiyotoc amapan ayc polihuiz ayc ylcahuiz, mochipa pieloz. (1998, 2:284-296)
16. To some extent, Chimalpahin seems to have placed more emphasis on the painted books as he associated the huehuetlatolli much more with painting ("pintado o se pinto"), writing ("escrito"), paper ("papeles"), and black and white colors ("tinta negra y roja") rather than with speaking. Whenever Chimalpahin consulted pictorial books in his chronicle, he presented what he acquired from these books as huehuetlatolli.
17. Ca oconmanilique yehuantzitzin mochi yn onicteneuh huehueamatlacuiloli yhuan huehuelibro yn inan motenehua originales, yn itech onitlacopin yn onicyancuilli ye quimopielia, ca nel ymaxcatzin in huehuetlahtocatlacamecayotl, yn itech oniquixti ynin huehuetlahtolli y ye onmottaz. (2:304-306)

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Literary Fragmentation as a Gnoseological Tool from Modernism to Contemporaneity: *Der Mann Ohne Eigenschaften* by Robert Musil and *Les Années* by Annie Ernaux

Rachele Cinerari

Department of Philology, Literature and Linguistics

University of Pisa

Palazzo Matteucci, Piazza Evangelista Torricelli, 2, 56126 Pisa PI, Italy

E-mail: rachelecinerari@gmail.com

Abstract:

Literature can be regarded as a cognitive mode that transcends binary and oppositional views of rationality and irrationality, sustaining a dialectical tension between precision and possibility. Through the strategic use of fragmentation, the literary form is not dissolved; instead, it invites a rethinking and reshaping. The essence of this paper goes beyond mere experimentalism; it contends that the use of fragments establishes a profound link between form and content, coupled with a meticulous attention to the moment of text production. Drawing examples from two literary works of the early twentieth century – Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and Annie Ernaux's *Les Années* – both shaped as “fragments of fragments”, the paper aims to explore the role of literary fragmentation as a gnoseological path. Moreover, the use of the fragment can be intricately tied to the concept of *Essayism*, understood in its etymological sense of an attempt. The incompleteness of reality becomes constitutive of the literary form, embodying an analysis of alternative possibilities. In contemporary times, the cultural and social landscape resonates with sentiments and reflections reminiscent of the modernist era.

Keywords: Annie Ernaux, Fragmentation, Literature as Knowledge, Robert Musil, Theory of literature

Crisis?

The concept of insufficiency has long served as a crucial interpretive lens for comprehending the literary landscape of the early 20th century. Often associated with a sense of crisis, it underscores the inefficiency of language, traditional literary forms, the capacities of the knowing subject, and the analysis of literary works from that period as manifestations of the disintegration of established forms and the inadequacy of linguistic tools.

However, what was once perceived as a predominantly negative and destructive phenomenon also reveals itself as an exceptionally productive moment in the literary crisis. This transformation becomes an integral part of it, forming its foundation. Many modernist works embody a profound quest, a proactive and cognitive approach, a continual effort to enable literature to endure despite its own chaos and the chaos of the world. The illusion of unity and reality collapses, paving the way

for an increasing subjectification of the narrative, which accommodates the fragmentation of the subject. The grand narratives have proven to be inadequate.

In this article, my objective is to delve into the origins of the fragmented nature evident in the two selected works under examination: Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and Annie Ernaux's *Les Années*. Despite being published nearly a century apart, these texts can be seen as collections of fragments that form provisional units. I believe that the fragmentary nature of these works, particularly in the case of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, is not accidental. These texts embody the idea that literature can serve as a cognitive mode, transcending the binary and oppositional rational/irrational dichotomy. They represent a quest guided by possibility, maintaining an ongoing tension between precision and potential. The conviction here is not simply about experimentation but rather about the essence of a work residing in its structure, where the content emerges as a result of its stylistic processes. There is a deep appreciation for the productive aspect of the artistic process, highlighting the belief that literature is the ideal medium for expressing tensions without the need for reconciliation. This approach preserves the vitality of possibility and allows exploration without imposing a definitive choice.

While a comprehensive exploration of literary fragment theories from Romanticism onward is not possible here, it's noteworthy that the fragment has been a central theme and concern in literary and philosophical reflections since the beginning of the last century. The fragment, considered a privileged vantage point, enables the observation of intricate phenomena, underscoring its pivotal role in understanding the complexities of artistic expression.

Walter Benjamin, for instance, uses the fragment as a cognitive tool to challenge the notion of creative rationality. He argues against the construction of solid, coherent narratives, proposing that thought should become estranged within the object of knowledge. He introduces the concept of "Jetztzeit," fixing knowledge in a fragmentary moment. Through his "Passages" and dialectical images, he advocates for the use of fragments and montage to create a partial and tentative knowledge where fragments combine to form a provisional unity, a field of rubble from which reconstruction is possible. Many other examples highlight the value of the fragmentary approach, from Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk* to Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, Paul Valéry's *Cabiers*, the theories of Aby Warburg, Ernst Bloch, and so on. The avant-garde often employed the fragment as a means of deconstructing traditional forms.

In the contemporary world, creative work emerges in a state of conflict and vulnerability. "The subject is no longer a dominating ego, it is instead what precariously unites the extremes; the happiness of the work that is constructed and takes shape and the fragility that contaminates the subject that carries it out, the world to which it is directed, the work itself that is the extreme fruit of this fragility [...]. We are condemned to live in time and 'time is one of the many names of death'. [...] True art is inconciliatory and irreconcilable. It does not heal the fractures, it does not suture wounds and cracks, it does not even sublimate the materials it drags along with it" (Rella 2014, 82-84), that wreckage of wreckage, waste, *mauvaises pensées*.

The texts we are examining here underscore the significance of this cognitive tool within the

realm of literature. In both of these works, the fragment serves not only as a means to convey trauma or to deconstruct the world and established literary forms but also as a tool for reshaping a form that seeks to be reinvented, reimagined, and adapted to thrive in the modern era.

An essayistic path?

As is commonly recognized, the foundation of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* is what the author refers to as the “Utopia of Essayism,” a concept closely intertwined with the theme of fragmentation. Ulrich, the novel’s main character, who embarks on a year-long sabbatical from life to seek and craft a novel way of living and thinking, embodies this perspective.

There was a quality in Ulrich’s character that operated in a scattered, paralyzing, and disarming way against logical systematization, a singular will, and the definitively directed impulses of ambition; and this trait was also linked to the term he had chosen: “Essayism”. (Musil 1978, 218).

In Musil’s view, Essayismus transcends the boundaries of a mere literary genre; rather, it embodies a profound cognitive approach—an anti-ideological ideology. Musil deliberately avoids categorizing the essay as a specific genre, and in this analysis, the term ‘essay-novel’ (Ercolino 2018) won’t be employed. The early 20th century emerges as a fertile period for contemplating the essay form, where influential theorists such as György Lukacs, Georg Simmel, Max Bense, and Theodor Adorno elevate it beyond a mere literary model to a significant epistemic path.

In the case of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, it surpasses mere inclusion of elements resembling “non-fiction” genres; it presents a challenge. This challenge involves experimentation, research, trial and error, exploration of every conceivable option, and a resistance to fixity and the philosophy of strict concepts. The true challenge of Musil’s novel lies in the harmonization of narrative and thought. Contrary to the common claim that the text is merely peppered with essayistic and speculative fragments, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* intricately weaves various discourse elements—ranging from maximal fiction to maximal speculation. These elements progress together, mutually influencing and contaminating each other, creating a rich and dynamic narrative tapestry. Musil could assert that this could only be achieved “only in the novel, through the medium of events and characters” (Rasch 1967).

This work can be seen as a creative workshop, embracing what Adorno called “the anti-systematic instance” (Adorno 1974, 20). The form isn’t dissolved but rethought and reshaped, even drawing on probabilistic and combinatorial theories. On a formal level, the text is presented in an exceptionally fragmented manner. The fragment serves as a privileged location for shedding light on universal themes, identifying connections, and exploring possibilities.

The utopia of Essayismus serves as the accommodating framework for the tensions that define Musil’s novel. Within this framework, a continuous and irreducible dialectic unfolds between precision and depth, exactness and potential, and the realms of thought categorized as “ratioïd” and

“nicht-ratioöid”. The protagonist, Ulrich, personifies this nuanced and complex attitude, embodying the intricate interplay of these philosophical dichotomies.

Similar to an essay that, through the progression of its sections, explores a subject from various angles without completely capturing it – since a fully apprehended subject suddenly loses its breadth and transforms into a concept – he thought he could perceive and handle the world and his own life most accurately. (Musil 1978, 249).

The text deviates from a linear and progressive structure, minimizing action as it advances through temporal and syntactic jumps. It employs ellipses, suspensions, paratactic language, and analogical connections, embodying a fragmented way of thinking. This deliberate stylistic choice enhances the complexity and non-traditional nature of the narrative structure. Literature, conceived as the more unclosed than any other domain (Bachmann 1982, 83), permits the exploration of irreducible possibilities. The work is akin to a laboratory, an ongoing experiment (Gamper 2007, Herford 2015) of exploration, aiming to bridge the gap between two mental orientations, of which Musil writes: “One [approach] contentedly settles for being precise and adheres to facts; the other is not content with that but always looks at the whole and derives its insights from so-called eternal and grand truths” (Musil 1978, 252).

For Musil, this is the only path to genuine knowledge, that “andere Zustand” (other state) the text grapples with. The continuous pursuit of possibility is evident through the various alterations the text undergoes in the hands of the author and its inherent incompleteness, which leaves it open and constantly evolving. The editorial history of the text exemplifies this, as the volumes published during Musil's lifetime represent only a fraction of his extensive work of writing and reflection. The fragment, with its focus on the particular, becomes an indispensable tool for reshaping the literary form. As Giuseppe Di Giacomo notes, “Musil realizes that one can only represent chaos now because it exists in reality, but he achieves this representation through disintegration... In this way, Musil refuses to succumb to dissolution while representing it” (Di Giacomo 1999, 137).

Living and writing in an essayistic manner, in this sense, involves resisting the claim of reality to present itself as unchangeable and enforce clearly defined values. Literature can only challenge this illusion if it embraces combination, multiplicity, and uncertainty, rejecting any dogmatic stance. This great novel remains a partial, necessarily incomplete, and “provisional solution” (Cetti Marinoni 2014). It is perhaps not coincidental that the book has come down to us in an unfinished form: its fundamental structure resembles a field of debris, yet it serves the purpose of attempting to rebuild.

The cognizant subject is no longer equipped to acquire an overarching view that facilitates the analysis of reality at a glance. Instead, their focus must be directed towards discerning the true essence of things, which manifests itself in the detail, the fragment, the clue, and subjective experience. This recognition highlights the necessity for a more nuanced and attentive engagement with the intricacies of the world.

When examining the structure of this text, one can discern echoes of Adorno's words in *Der*

Essay als Form, which, while specifically addressing the essay form, seem to be applicable, *ex post*, to this work as well: “The common objection against him, that he is fragmentary and random, itself postulates the existence of totality, thereby asserting the identity of subject and object, and behaves as if one were in control of the whole” (Adorno 1958, 24). Wholeness is not inherent, and a text that aims to reflect and narrate reality cannot disregard this absence but must make it the central theme of its discourse, focusing on the transient and building upon it. The essay “denkt in Brüchen, so wie die Realität brüchig ist” (Adorno [1958] 2003, 35); the text thinks in fragments because reality is itself fragmentary.

The utilization of fragments isn't an act of renunciation, destruction, or mere disintegration; rather, it represents a quest to reshape the literary form. Disorder becomes the raw material of literature, serving as the foundational element upon which it is constructed. This intentional incorporation of fragments underscores literature's transformative power and its ability to forge new creative pathways. The fragmentary nature of the world and the impossibility of reduction to a single unity are also embodied in the novel, evident in Ulrich's concept of “active passivity” (Musil 1978, 356) and in the characteristics of other characters in the novel, forming a constellation of individualities. Furthermore, Musil's text doesn't adhere to the rules of causal connections and chronological sequence but establishes a series of networks of links based on the use of analogical connections (*Gleichnis*).

This form allows the work to anchor itself in the fundamental instant that is essential for knowledge and perception. The work dismantles a false sense of totality, presenting itself as a fixed fragment in the moment, denying synthesis even through form. In line with Adorno's perspective, it simultaneously maintains it while disrupting the continuum, rejecting the notion that human history is a steady and progressive flow.

Survival of an attempt

Over the passing decades, the exploration of these ideas has proliferated, giving rise to various approaches and experiments grounded in similar aesthetic and epistemic foundations. The fragmentation of the self has increasingly emerged as a central theme in literature, prompting critical examinations of the experiences stemming from the shocks of the early 20th century. Many of these developments, particularly the fragmentation of the self, find resonance in postmodern literature. The literary fragment assumes a dual role, acting as both the subject and cornerstone of numerous literary works, with authors employing it in diverse ways. This multifaceted use of the literary fragment reflects the richness and complexity of its role in conveying and exploring the complexities of the human experience.

Over the passage of time, narrative works consistently embrace fragmentariness and fallibility, unfolding expansive spaces and times that invite readers to inhabit and explore their meanings. The fragmentation of the subject becomes an increasingly prominent literary focus, and the aftershocks of the early 20th-century disruptions find their continued expression in the fragmented representation

of the self, a characteristic often associated with Postmodern literature. “The transformation inevitably affects the subject: a fragmented world and society corresponds to a fragmented subject. Here too, there is a noteworthy shift: if in the period of modernity the subject was ‘alienated’, now it is, precisely, fragmented” (Ceserani 1997, 84). This observation underlines a significant evolution in the portrayal of the self, where the contemporary literary landscape mirrors a world and society that are themselves characterized by fragmentation, marking a departure from the alienation emphasized during the modernist era.

Taking a leap forward of nearly a hundred years, let's shift our focus to a more recent example: *Les Années* by Annie Ernaux, published in 2008. *Les Années* is a markedly different text, often categorized by critics as autobiography, autofiction, memoir, or novel. In my view, it defies easy classification under any of these labels. Its fragmentary nature is immediately apparent, even at the level of its layout and presentation.

Annie Ernaux's entire body of work reflects her fascination with the intersection of the trajectory of her texts and their form. She addresses this aspect in interviews and in the texts that constitute *L'Atelier noir*. She notes, “What will be comical, if one day this writing journal is published, in fact, as 99% research, is that we will discover to what extent, ultimately, the form has preoccupied me” (Ernaux 2011, 125). This preoccupation runs parallel to her desire to create writing that grapples with the problem of truth (Dugast-Portes 2015).

In a world with a formless, intricate structure that defies reduction to a harmonious description and narrative, literature seeking to engage with the world and contingency must embody this complexity at its core.

Unlike *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, where some semblance of traditional narrative structure persists, *Les Années* is composed of fragments, lists, catalogs, collections of facts, and episodes of life. It functions as an album of existence and memory (Richterová [1981] 2021), resonating with Walter Benjamin's words regarding his journey in creating the *Passagen-Werk*.

Method of this work: literary montage. I have nothing to say. Only to show. I will not adopt clever formulations, steal nothing valuable. But the rags, the waste, the refuse: I do not want to describe them but to exhibit them. (Benjamin 1982, 574)

This montage embodies a provisional and experimental character, “which is inscribed in the verb ‘essayer’” (Pontolillo 2022, 224). Much like what we observed with Musil, the verb “essayer” pertains to the essay as a discursive genre and resides within a semantic field comprising terms like attempt, discard, selection, error, and experiment. However, even in this case, it doesn't entirely adhere to the essay as discourse or genre to remain on a different plane and create an aesthetic form rooted in the fragment, a literary form that can endure in modernity and serve as an “instrument de lutte” (Ernaux 2008, 241), a tool of struggle. In the choice of construction and formal approach in Ernaux's text, a fundamental question arises: can a contemporary novel present a reconciliatory, logical narrative? Must it dissolve literature into abstraction, hermeticism, and inconsistency?

Fragmentation, though conspicuously present and even ostentatious, doesn't necessarily imply disorder and anarchy, nor is it a simple dissolution devoid of meaningful connections and structures. Within this apparent fragmentary non-structure, one must recognize the source of creativity and organization through assembly, an openness to life's potential (Rachwalska von Rejchwald 2009).

This apparent disorder mirrors the subject's experience of the world – a world for which comprehensive and absolute knowledge is utopian and unattainable. It is a world that can only be described through “*autohistoria*... a term I use to describe the genre of writing about one's personal and collective history using fictive elements, a sort of fictionalized autobiography or memoir” (Anzaldúa 2002, 578).

The representation of a world lacking symmetry and order necessitates a deep dive into the fragments and details of life that can be preserved “as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall” within their own order “however disconnected and incoherent in appearance” (Woolf 1993, 9). The blank spaces in the text are integral to its creation, simultaneously representing both presence and absence. They require the reader to actively participate in the process of interpretation, underscoring the need to understand the work's creation and fruition as two interconnected and potentially complementary facets of the same cognitive process.

Ernaux's aim is to speak about the universal through the self, to say what one can see “If we were to attempt to list the events that occurred outside of ourselves” (Ernaux 2008, 225). Yet the self rarely truly materializes. There is a subject aspiring to be historical (Luperini 2018, 120), but it mostly appears in the third person, using “nous” and ‘on’, with little room for ‘je’. It is an autobiography seeking to represent a generation, not an individual self. Ernaux herself expresses her intention to write an “autobiographie impersonnelle” (impersonal autobiography), where she uses “No ‘I’ [...] but ‘one’ and ‘we’” (Ernaux 2008, 240).

However, this endeavor is pursued through subjectivation and an extremely partial point of view. Ernaux's goal, as she asserts in the final part of the book, is to locate collective memory within individual memory, preserving fragments of what she calls “the lived dimension of history” (Ernaux 2008, 239). To achieve this, the text continually returns to the representation of the particular, the detail. A fundamental characteristic of the text is the tension between the specifics of personal memory running parallel to the saved traces of collective memory, and “it is on this polarity that the meaning and challenge of the work are built”. (Pontolillo 2022, 220). Ernaux cannot represent the totality except through particularity. Even if she adopts the filter of autonomy, the self cannot be a universal self of grand historiographies, a “nous” claiming universality. To be a historical subject, the contemporary subject must choose to be a partial and precisely fragmentary subject. Even an autobiographical ‘I’ proceeds by trial and error, assaying possibilities.

The text doesn't present a mere accumulation of the debris of experience but rather a collection of preserved moments of memory, contributing to the construction of a meaningful system suited to the epistemological experience of modernity. This formal operation serves as an interpretation and search for reality and truth, revealing the potential and possibility of vital experience within it.

In *Journal du dehors* Ernaux states: “There is no hierarchy in the experiences we have about the world” (Ernaux 2011, 9). Indeed, among the narrative fragments constituting *Les Années*, there is no hierarchical or qualitative categorization. It is the act of reading that establishes connections, not based on chronological or causal relationships, but through analogical associations, employing absent images that create a network of references and allegorical and analogical links.

As is often the case with fragmentary works, the structure activates multiple reading paths (Rachwalska von Rejchwald 2009). The linear, “traditional” reading, guided by the succession of fragments following one another in the order of the pages, allows for cross-cutting readings. The fragmentary work demands reader participation, making the act of reading a repetition of the creative and cognitive process that is the work itself.

Everything is provisional

Modernity indeed serves as a fertile ground for fragmented approaches, rendering univocal, total, and reconciliatory narratives seemingly unattainable. Literature has evolved to follow paths detached from strict propositional or cause-and-effect structures. Yet, the texts examined in this analysis underscore a profound emphasis on the creative process within the work, attributing significant gnoseological value to it, as well as on the moment of consumption.

This literature endeavors to position itself as a cognitive mode, engaging in the elaboration of pathways that harmonize reality and possibility, soul and precision. It embraces ambivalence, steadfastly refusing to succumb to singularity while maintaining a constant state of openness. The texts, particularly those analyzed here, grapple directly with understanding human beings in the contemporary world and the profound question of truth. They assert that the truth of literature can and should be elusive, hypothetical, partial, and provisional.

Fragmentation in these works extends beyond macroscopic aspects such as *mise-en-page* and page spacing. It is discernible in the configuration of different periods, the paratactic structure of certain passages, the use of ellipses and suspensions, and the high degree of metaphoricity in fragmentary texts. While these aspects couldn't be exhaustively examined here, it is evident that the fragment serves as a cognitive and descriptive tool for a reality that is inherently fragmented.

Fragmentariness embodies evolving attempts and paths, manifesting as details that string together and form provisional constellations. It signifies a rigorous architecture deflagrating, venturing into a universe of possibilities, routes with undefined endpoints, an ongoing journey inclined toward heterodoxy. In the works studied, this doesn't lead to complete deflagration and the abandonment of narrative and literary form; instead, as observed, it results in remodulation and re-composition, even at the formal level. These examined attempts affirm that literature can still function as an instrument and space for interpreting the world, resisting univocality and epistemic and ideological hierarchies, and challenging and subverting norms.

Knowledge is perceived as an ongoing and productive act; there's no static state of facts, but a continuous process. As Bense (1950, 18) aptly puts it, “In reality, there are no technical states [...]”.

There are only technical events, processes, and the so-called results and products belong to this process, are links in it like links in a chain". In the realm of literature, there's no room for a rigid, coherent system. Narrative transcends mere description and the accumulation of borrowed theories or theoretical fragments. Literature asserts its unique mode of comprehension by reshaping fragments of knowledge into hybrid forms and constructing diverse epistemic domains. It wields both creative and destructive power. When literature absorbs scientific imaginaries, its intent is not mere appropriation; rather, it seeks to disorganize, break down, assign new objectives, and reshape both internal and external relations. The texts we've explored closely align with and embody this concept in their conception and construction.

Literary creation transcends mere representation of reality; it entails interpretation and recreation. Through the rewriting of the knowledge it encompasses, literature not only challenges established ideas but also scrutinizes the very literary forms that underpin it. Far from mere repetition or reiteration, literature engages in the deconstruction, selection, and reconstruction of the given material.

Diverging from other epistemological discourses, literature doesn't hinge on the exclusion of the heterogeneous; rather, it flourishes through inclusion and assimilation. It directs its focus towards elements cast aside by the confines of scientific, ethical, or institutional thought-systems, which are often constructed upon the exclusion of the exceptional. Literature absorbs what is commonly deemed as 'leftover', 'waste', or a compromise. It has the power to "To understand things that are different, far apart, contradictory, foreign, or familiar as a unity". (Blumenberg 2020 [1986], 19). Literature authorizes the presence of flashes of pure reality and glimpses of life that defy repetition and conceptualization. It imparts a completely different form of knowledge (Dahan-Gaida, 2016). The productive process, in this context, takes the form of a method carried out using "fragments of reason" (Gadda 1974, 285). It adapts itself according to the subject it's addressing; when representing an unknowable and fragmented world, it adjusts its discourse accordingly.

This productive process doesn't always adhere to complete sentences or linear structures. It can deviate from the formal structure of typical statements, grammatical constructs, and lexical semantics when the issue demands it. This demand arises when the non-propositional nature of the problem is characterized by the simultaneity of elements, a quality that only an image or graphic representation can do justice to. The next systematic step, following spatial composition, is sequencing or temporal organization, which necessarily aligns with the linear nature of the writing system (Gellhaus 2008, 136).

If attention to detail serves as a tool for understanding, and if the fragment is the preferred viewpoint for examining modernity, then the literary text must adjust itself accordingly.

Endnotes:

1. Unless otherwise indicated, the English translations are mine.

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Threats to Patriarchy in the Selected Poetry of T.S. Eliot

Chi Sum Garfield Lau

Department Of Humanities, Language and Translation
Hong Kong Metropolitan University
Block A, 7/F, Main Campus, 30 Good Shepherd Street,
Ho Man Tin, Kowloon, Hong Kong
E-Mail: cslau@hkmu.edu.hk

Abstract:

Through analyzing the selected poetry written by T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), this article explores the linkage between the crisis of men's identity and civilization against the backdrop of surging feminist ideas during the modern period. The works of T.S. Eliot are always connected with the anxiety of men. Attention will be paid on the mentality and response of his male speakers upon witnessing the transformation of modern women.

Modernist writings during the first half of the twentieth century are often marked by the concern over the crisis of identity and civilization. Political and economic stability that struck both Europe and the New World are often viewed as prominent reasons. Women never played a significant role in leading to the crisis mentioned. Conventional feminist criticisms often relate this phenomenon with the repression and oppression faced by women under male chauvinism. Relatively little attention has been paid to men's fear under the "terror" of feminism. Thus, this article studies men's anxiety and reaction in relation to the changing attributes and modern values of the twentieth century.

Keywords: T.S. Eliot, identity crisis, male chauvinism, feminist critique, gender relations

Introduction

Urban cityscape as shown from the works of various poets during the modern period demonstrates the adverse impact of modern life. The works of T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) are always connected with the anxiety and crisis of urban modernity. The image of males with different types of deficiency is not uncommon in his works. Critics such as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar refer to his poetry as works "strewn with and wounded and weakened males such as J. Alfred Prufrock and Gerontion" (qtd. from Brooker 1994, 238). Other than relating the deficiency of males with their incompetence in gender relationships, it is also the aim of this paper to align the crisis of patriarchy with socio-political instability. In other words, the patriarch serves as the metonym of the state. The weakness of the patriarch is thus an indication of socio-political crisis. Against the corresponding historical backdrop, I suggest the fetishism of desire, rather than the rising status of women in society, as the real patriarchal threat that disrupts the long-established convention of male domination.

Materialized Urban Life in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

Conventional patriarchy is characterized by persistent paternal authority through the continuation of male heir. The subordination of women to domesticity supports male domination over economic productions. In “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1917), Eliot demonstrates how the rise of women in the modern world is associated with the crisis of patriarchy under materialized urban lifestyle. Eliot originally entitled the poem as “Prufrock among the women” (Potter 2004, 221). His final decision of naming his poem “The Love Song” demonstrates the ironic aspect of men’s actual status in the modern world. As the content of this “Love Song” provides no romantic association, the title implicitly suggests romance as a way to combat against material relations under the trend of commodity fetish, so as to save conventional patriarchy from its crisis. George Williamson observes how Eliot’s choice of using Dante’s *Inferno* as the epigraph of the poem is a “mixture of levity and seriousness” (Williamson 1996, 57). Though juxtapositioning the light-hearted title with the serious epigraph, it makes clear that Prufrock’s unsuccessful attempts in romance contributes to his hellish conditions on earth.

The speaker of the poem, J. Alfred Prufrock, fails to establish male authority due to the menacing threat of visible materialism that overrides invisible virtue. He has no confidence in the pursuit of women owing to his self-realization that there forms a gap between him and the ideal image of men from a modern perspective. For instance, he suffers from the deterioration of physical charm which further implies the deficiency of his strength as a man. In terms of physical appearance, visible signs of ageing start to appear on him:

With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —
[They will say: “How his hair is growing thin!”]
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
[They will say: “But how his arms and legs are thin!”] (lines 40-44)

Prufrock’s awareness of his physical deficiency reflects how the ideal man is characterized by youthful attractiveness and the possession of wealth from the modern perspective of women. These two qualities are visibly detected. Prufrock’s sensitivity to both his visible sign of ageing and the invisible pressure of women’s gossips illustrates the binary hierarchy of invisibility over visibility. The gossips of the women form an invisible force that generate anxiety in him towards his visible symptoms of ageing. The intuition that his modest skill of tying a tie being ruined by the “simple pin” highlights the glaring flaw of emphasizing visible wealth over invisible virtues. Karl Marx gave a similar suggestion on how the commodification of experience destroys the essence of human virtue:

When Marx began to unravel the contradictions of the system, he did so on the understanding that capitalism negated our human essence and so had to be abolished if the human essence was to be realized. (Carver 1991, 281)

As a man's value is judged upon visible entities, the invisible human essence of Prufrock is degraded. This can be seen from how he aligns his minimal visibility with an insect "pinned and wriggling on the wall" (line 58).

Though Prufrock regards himself as a modest gentleman, he knows well that he is incomparable to great heroes such as John the Baptist or Prince Hamlet. In contrast himself as an invisible being with great heroes of visible fame, he turns himself into figure of ridicule. Still, Williamson suggests the common linkage between Prufrock and the prophet being the bygone of their great moments (Williamson 1996, 64). Besides, Prufrock foresees his death as being caused by woman. For Prufrock, the erosion of gender and social relations as mere material relations results in the crisis of patriarchy. Marx initiates that "[v]alue is a relation between persons" (Marx 1976, 167), which is also a precondition to the death of human civilization.

The final section of the poem shows the ambiguous thought of Prufrock towards modern values that distort established patriarchal authority:

I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me. (lines 120-125)

In admitting ageing as the inevitable fact and considering new looks for himself, Prufrock indicates the inexorable substitution of old values by new trends as the golden rule of modernity. This adjustment of mentality becomes the sole way to combat against the trends of modernity. Instead of resistance, he is willing to evolve with modernity. The choice of interrogation reflects his doubts towards the outcome of making such an adjustment, which is also a response to his previous illustration of how "decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse" (line 48). The final part of the poem reflects his pessimistic stance towards the crisis of men in the modern world. Just like tragic heroes in Greek drama, anagnorisis often comes too late. When modern men become conscious of their collective crisis, they have already been drowned by the inexorable waves of modernity.

Uncertainty and Danger in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night"

Just like J. Alfred Prufrock, the male speaker in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" (1917) is anxious towards the crisis that he faces in the modern world. The use of the dramatic monologue, instead of conversations, helps to illustrate his anxiety driven by loneliness at night. He struggles over the danger of wandering on lonesome sleepless nights. A dilemma occurs when wandering is the only

possible way to kill time in the contextual environment depicted. Besides, the streets are portrayed as landscapes with uncertain danger:

Every street lamp that I pass
Beats like a fatalistic drum,
And through the spaces of the dark
Midnight shakes the memory
As a madman shakes a dead geranium. (lines 8-12)

The speaker's perception over the beating sounds of street lamps resembles his own heart beat as triggered by nervousness. That the drum has been personified as fatalistic is a suggestion of the severe magnitude of danger at night.

Murray McArthur studies the biographical background of Eliot and relates his findings with the speaker's condition of insomnia. McArthur points out that Eliot "wrote [the poem] in Paris in 1911 during his acute-crisis in his twenty-second year" (McArthur 1994, 511). Other than this piece of information, the corresponding historical background helps to explain the portrayal of urban danger in Eliot's works. Written in the wartime era of political unrest, the poem can be viewed as a reflection of social anxiety. However, according to the text, it is discovered that the danger on street is related to women:

The street lamp said, "Regard that woman
Who hesitates towards you in the light of the door
Which opens on her like a grin.
You see the border of her dress
Is torn and stained with sand,
And you see the corner of her eye
Twists like a crooked pin." (lines 16-22)

The symbolic meaning of this prostitute imagery is intensified by the door behind her that looks like a grin, which can be defined as the snare of an animal upon the catching of a prey. In this sense, the woman is associated as an animal with wild instincts while the speaker becomes the potential prey. This reversal of conventional gender norms indicates how the change of power relations affects modern gender roles. Randy Malamud points out that Eliot "struggle[s] against the constraining forms of the past by brashly subverting formal expectations and conventions" (Malamud 1989, 84). The woman seduces the speaker to move from the outdoor domain to her indoor domestic space, which is also conventionally seen as women's sphere. Further subversions are then observed as both the outdoor and indoor domains are now aligned with danger. While the speaker feels insecure and powerless in the outdoor domain, his power is also doubtful in the domestic space governed by such female ownership.

Besides, the speaker's anxiety is related to the pursuit of material-based romance. Facing the temptation of prostitutes, the speaker has chosen the fulfillment of lust at the expense of legitimate procreation. He compares himself with an abandoned component and this highlights his incapability in reinforcing patriarchal values:

A broken spring in a factory yard,
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left
Hard and curl and ready to snap. (lines 30-32)

The helpless and lifeless image of the broken spring in the factory yard shows implies how the speaker's masculine strength is under the threat of deterioration. He is prepared for his burial.

As the poem reaches its final stanza, the speaker shows a change of attitude. The scene describes his return to the apartment room after hours of wandering on the street. From the depiction that he climbs up the stair leading to his room, it is obvious he is reaching his destination with hope:

You have the key,
The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair,
Mount. (lines 73-75)

The lamp upon the stair is a little one that gives out limited amount of illumination. The light that it spreads out forms a ring, which symbolizes hope as darkness is replaced by daylight. Though the unpleasant domestic environment could be the cause that drives the speaker to become a wanderer at night, he eventually associates this place with hope and refuge. The dangerous encounters that he has on the streets enlighten him on the actuality of his domestic life. The domestic milieu also becomes where he "prepare[s] for life" (line 77). The poem ends with "The last twist of the knife" (line 78), which symbolizes his realization that having the chance to return home safely is a precious moment of life that he should cherish.

Temporal Relationship of the Two Sexes in "Sweeney Erect"

"Sweeney Erect" (1919) demonstrates Eliot's continuous engagement with the modern trend of temporal and material-based romance. Doris Sommer observes the linkage between literary romance and national security. She suggests the "metonymic association between romantic love that needs the state's blessing and political legitimacy that needs to be found on love" (Sommer 1991, 41). Based on her observation, I regard temporal romance that built upon sexual and material desire as illegitimate relations, an extension of romantic love without "state's blessing". They are thus relations linked to political illegitimacy being founded upon, in Foucault words, "the banished casual pleasure of sexuality" (qtd. from Sommer 1991, 38). These relationships symbolize moral degradation which is a rival of modern progress and human civilization. The pursuit of illegitimate relations implies temporal relations as a substitution to nuptial vows. Gayle Rubin suggests "Two people may meet in

friendship and exchange gifts and yet quarrel and fight in later times, but intermarriage connects them in a permanent manner” (Rubin 1965, 173). Permanent relations are not considered as desirable in modern life. Still, many women depicted in Eliot’s works are associated with goods for transactions between men.

In the poem, the voice of the omniscient speaker reveals the danger faced by Sweeney in his temporal and intimate relation with the prostitute. Though the female body is placed under male’s gaze, revealing a traditional prey-and-predator relationship between men and women, the object captured is a dangerous one. This arrangement reflects the legacy of Eliot’s gender subversion. Sweeney begins to associate the movement of the woman’s thighs with a sickle, which is a weapon that can harm or even castrate him. The woman is thus presented as a threat to his identity as a man. Another dilemma appears when he deprecates the woman’s manner during their sexual act:

Tests the razor on his leg
Waiting until the shriek subsides.
The epileptic on bed
Curves backward, clutching at her sides. (lines 29-32)

Tony Pinkney suggests that “the text remains coy about the link between the women’s convulsions and Sweeney’s gesture of testing the razor on his leg” (Pinkney 1984, 86). Eliot provides implicit hints to his reader regarding the unusual interactions of the two characters through allusions to Greek mythology. Sweeney and the woman are associated with Polypheme and Nausicaa respectively (line 10). As Sweeney tests the razor, the woman feels scared and screams. This reaction resembles Nausicaa’s frightened state upon seeing the naked Odysseus. As Sweeney is being compared with Polypheme, it makes clear that the woman’s shriek is related to the association of being shaved by the blind man Polypheme.

Meanwhile, the scream of the woman can be interpreted as a result of her over-excitement which annoys Sweeney. He waits for her to calm down by testing the razor on his leg. His annoyed mood and lack of understanding towards woman’s temperament reflects the actuality of sex without love in temporal relations. Potter is for the point of view that the poem is a mockery of “ridiculing a female sense of propriety” (Potter 2004, 225). She suggests that the “convulsive seizure” of the woman is “the result of either epilepsy or the sexual act” (Potter 2004, 225). Her displeasing attitude makes the temporal relationship ends with a stain. Temporal romance has now been turned into a disillusionment of pleasure.

Crisis of Civilization in The Wasted Land

The Waste Land (1922) is one of most important modern poems that demonstrate the crisis of civilization in the modern world. Problematic relationships between modern men and women form one of the prominent notions suggested in The Waste Land. The crisis of gender relations is related to sexual violence, communication failure and doomed relationships.

The imposition of violence upon the opposite sex forms an important notion in the portrayal of men and women relationship in the poem. Brooker observes that this theme is brought out by the use of mythical allusions (Brooker 2004, 130-149). The reference to the myth of Tereus and Philomel suggests the imposition of violence on the opposite sex. Such an imposition runs in two directions, from man to woman and also the other way round. The poem suggests that the relationship between men and women can easily be disrupted by sexual desire, as it can give rise to violence with disastrous consequences. For instance, Tereus's sexual desire is transformed into violence that victimizes Philomel. His desire is destructive to his relationship with his wife, Procne. Procne's subsequent act of violence implies that there is a potential for women to impose violence on men. Such violence can even be more harmful than what men have done to them. Though Philomel is muted by Tereus, her transformation into a nightingale revives her voice. Philomel's voice has metaphorically presented as an illustration of sexual desire and violence:

[T]he link between sexual desire and violence can be seen in the various shadings of "Jug jug" – at once a parody of sounds of sexual intercourse, a slang expression for prostitution, the sound of a mutilated singer, and the dark undersong of the nightingale...." (Brooker 2004, 141)

The cries of the nightingale, as represented by the sound of "Jug Jug", demonstrate a linkage between sexual intercourse, prostitution and rape. As the speaker mentions the world's pursuit of such crying to dirty ears (lines 102-103), it is obvious that sexual desire and violence are unavoidable in the modern world. People who are morally degraded interpret things with sexual associations all the time. Besides the myth of Tereus and Philomela, Eliot mentions the "sylvan scene" which is a reference to the depiction of Eden in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (line 98). This reference reminds readers that the sin of human beings originates from our ancestor. The original sin reflects how Adam's patriarchal authority is threatened by his wife's temptation, and later challenged by the quarrel between his two sons. This shows that the crisis of patriarchy is related to the threat of women and domestic crisis.

The second problem that occurs between men and women is the problem of communication. In "A Game of Chess", the content and style of the dialogues violated the usual etiquette of conversations:

"My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
I never know what you are thinking. Think."
I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones. (lines 111-116)

Eliot's use of multiple speakers creates puzzle to readers in the sense that both the identity and the number of speakers is unknown. Through the quotations, a change of speaker is noticed. The first

speaker asks for a companion but the problem of miscommunication occurs. The series of questions demonstrate that the two speakers do not understand each other, both in speeches and thoughts. From the “reply” made by the second speaker, it is obvious that the “reply” is not a comprehensible response to the questions, a representation of communication crisis in their relationship.

Thirdly, the problematic relationship of the two genders is shown by the crisis in matrimony. For instance, the marriage between Lil and her husband, Albert as depicted in “A Game of Chess” is in crisis. The health of Lil is at risk as a result of taking abortion pills. A dilemma occurs in this action. Patriarchy cannot be continued due to the rise of women’s autonomy. However, Lil still has to satisfy the sexual desire of her husband though her health is under threat, making women a tool for fulfilling men’s desires. The relationship between husband and wife is rather fragile in the sense that physical and sexual attractions are the sole things that connect the relationship. Albert cannot bear to look at Lil as her teeth have been falling out due to the adverse effect of the abortion pills. It seems that to fulfill the need of the husband becomes prior in maintaining the marriage:

He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said. (lines 148-149)

Here, “a good time” for the husband means satisfying his sexual wants. It is considered as the obligation of the wife to obey the husband. That the husband is in thirst for sex is related to his social role as a soldier who has been away from home. This could also be a historical reference that Albert has just returned from the frontier from the First World War that lasted for four years. Her friend told Lil that if she fails to satisfy his husband’s desire, her position will be under threat. It is an irony that Lil knows well that her friend is actually having an affair with her husband. This shows how the modern world is full of suspicions and legitimate marriage becomes a superficial formality.

Conclusion

To conclude, the four selected poems have seemingly revealed the crisis of patriarchy as related to material fetishism, the rising status of women and men’s deficiency in the urban world. However, reading along the love song of single men such as like Alfred Prufrock and Sweeney, towards the tales of Tereus and Albert in *The Waste Land*, it is not difficult to know that the actual crisis of patriarchy comes from men’s desire and their pursuit of gender relations.

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Albee in China: Revisit *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*

Xiongwei Luo

School of Foreign Studies

Nanjing University

Xianlin Campus, No. 163, Xianlin Avenue, 210023

Qixia District, Nanjing City, P. R. China

E-mail: Xiongwei.luo@smail.nju.edu.cn

Abstract:

This article offers a critical examination of Edward Albee's "The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?" in response to Professor Lianqiao Zhang's interpretations. Challenging conventional readings that perceive the play as a manifestation of ethical concerns, it argues these interpretations, especially Zhang's, are anthropocentric and overly simplistic. The play, known for its controversial exploration of human-animal relationships, is reinterpreted here as a platform for discussing broader themes like queer sexualities, marginalization, and societal norms. The article critiques the anthropocentric perspective prevalent in academic discourse, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of the play's symbolic elements, particularly the goat's representation. It aligns with post-humanist perspectives and underscores the play's performative nature, emphasizing its role in challenging and transforming audience perceptions. "The Goat" is presented not just as a moral discourse but as a medium for profound existential and societal reflection, echoing Albee's intent to provoke thought rather than dictate moral judgments. This reevaluation contributes to a deeper appreciation of the play's complexities and its enduring relevance in modern literature and society.

Keywords: Human-Animal Relationships; Anthropocentrism; Queer Sexualities; Post-Humanist Perspectives; Performative Literature

The Goat, or Who is Sylvia (hereinafter referred to as *The Goat*) is written by the American playwright Edward Albee in 2002. The idea of writing such a play can date back to several years before the work's publication as Albee was contriving a play that should test the modernity's limits and tolerance to the behaviors that are socially and morally unconventional, and if individuals are willing to imagine that they be such rule-breakers (2005, 188). The story centrally revolves around the tension between Martin, his new "lover" Sylvia the goat, and his wife. There are many sub-conflicts that render the play surprisingly comprehensive: friendship and selfishness (Martin and Ross), homosexuality (Billy), fornication between father and son (Martin and Billy), fatherly love and youth rebellion (Martin and Billy), marital relationships (Martin and Stevie), anthropocentric assumptions (Stevie and Sylvia), harmony between and bestiality of human and animal (Martin and Sylvia), city and the countryside (urban setting and the farm description), industrial alienation (the couple and

their peers), just to name a few. It can be easily imagined what great controversy the Broadway premier at the John Golden Theatre on March 10, 2002, had brought about. But anyways, *The Goat* gained Albee his second Tony Award for best for best play. Early critics put the work under fire in the name ethical concerns, claiming the work as unethical and disgusting. In 2004, Albee himself had clearly drawn the distinction between ethnic judgement and possible themes of the play:

“[...] the misleading information that the play (*The Goat*) is about bestiality—more con than pro. Well, bestiality is *discussed* during the play (as is flower arranging) but it is a generative matter rather than the ‘subject.’ The play is about is about love, and loss, the limits of our tolerance and who, indeed, we really are” (2005, 190).

Though Albee is always reluctant to give the public his “authoritative or authorial” comments on his play’s central concerns, we can see here he does have his inclinations, of which ethics, especially the human ethics, are not involved. Hence, we may argue that to say *The Goat* particularly “demonstrates its writer’s ethical concerns in order to calls for people’s action to maintain the ethical order between family, society, individual, and animal” is somewhat overinterpretation and forced interpretation (Zhang 2013, 99). Lianqiao Zhang did his doctoral dissertation on Albee’s drama with concentration on identity confusion and ethical choices that are born by the characters, for which Zhang devoted half a chapter to argue that *The Goat* embodies the identity confusion of Martin, to condemn Martin’s “bestiality,” and regards the play as the dirge of human ethics, calling for the maintenance and preservation of human ethical values. Zhang edited the second section of chapter four of his doctoral dissertation and published another article on *The Goat* in 2016, but his main arguments still fell into the delicate trap Albee creates and one of his conclusions, “disorder of human-animal relationship brings people themselves hurts along with brutal slaughter to the animals,” (75) is very anthropocentric. In addition, many of the few Chinese scholars who share interests with *The Goat* mainly or nearly only talk about the ethical challenges that the bestiality the work provides¹. As Gainor says, “we may still be forcefully struck by the number of writers reluctant to confront the awful...truth of Martin’s actions, their meaning, and their consequences” (2005, 205).

This article has no intention to defend bestiality. But I argue that it is important that we put aside the moral lens of examination, by which I mean the conventional mores that society undertakes for all queered practices, for a while to ponder upon the queer sexualities represented by the queer martyr Martin in *The Goat* which should symbolizes and serve as the epitome of the marginalized communities and their sexual practices so as that modern societal tragedies can be prevented from happening. *The Goat* is just like *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocleous, which assumes the device of mother-child incest but consumes not the central concern of the incest. The vital conflict and dramatic movement are initiated by Martin’s human-animal incest, yet it is not what Albee truly wish to discuss therein. By engaging with present literature, I hope to attract more attention from Chinese academia to this splendid yet underestimated play of Albee. Since Professor Lianqiao Zhang is in the field of Albee studies in contemporary Chinese scholarship yet unfortunately his interpretation of

The Goat both in his doctoral dissertation and later publication share the same logical fallacies and misreading and misunderstandings to the script itself, I hope to respond the Zhang's comments on *The Goat* with my reading of the three titles of the play, namely, "The Goat," "Who is Sylvia," and "Notes Toward a Definition of Tragedy" (2005, 200). Therefore, by reading the three titles of the work, the central questions of this essay are the following: How important is the immoral elements in the narrative of *The Goat*? Do they serve better as blasting fuse to bigger themes? If so, what could be the bigger topics that Albee is likely to deal with here? And should issues indeed be so profound, how do they exercise influence on reality instead of being merely meaning referents in the realm of literature?

In western culture, the image of goat is associated with various symbolic meanings. For many from Christian world, the image of goat, black goat in particular, is usually used metaphorically to connect with Satan and devils as the synonym with "guilt" and "sin," ergo many if not most people read the word "goat" in the title as a hint that "something guilty and sinful is narrated in the story" and that Albee has a negative attitude toward Martin's bestiality. Aforementioned presumptions are understandable; however, the English word "goat" also has its etymology in the Germanic word "Geiß" which means "she-goat" and the Latin word "Haedus" meaning "kid" or "young goat." With the meaning of "kid" in its origin, it is reasonable for us to assume that the goat in the title might suggest some kind of purity and innocence. But what or who is pure and innocent in this play? Only the absent and dumb goat Sylvia herself. As a passive subject, Sylvia is absent from all discourses in the play, which throws two main issues under the spotlight: one is the absence and speechlessness of Sylvia and accordingly the way in which Martin treats her, and the other is the anthropocentric manners that humans exercise upon animals that are epitomized by how Ross and Stevie act when they protein the knowledge that Martin is having coitus with a goat and that he constantly refers to the goat as a "she" instead of a "it."

I am appalled to learn that of all citations Zhang quotes "You're the love of my life, the mother of my handsome and worrisome son, my playmate, my cook, my bottlewasher." (Albee 2008, 542) to illustrate that the marriage Martin and Stevie has is a loving and exemplary one (2013, 102). Clearly Zhang fails to notice the sexual reference under the utterance, that is, Martin regards his wife as his subject, if not a "sex toy", and his loyal housemaid. To be more specific, in Martin's subconsciousness, Stevie is or should be beholden to his domination and commands, performing the roles of mother to his child, of wife to him, but not of herself as an independent human being. Therefore, one cannot but wonder what is the moral presumption Zhang assumes here? Is he himself subject to heterosexual male chauvinism? Fortunately, in his 2016 article, Zhang changes his wording, noting "it (Martin's marriage) seems affectionate...Martin's male chauvinism runs deep" (72). But according to this specific script Zhang cited, in point of fact, we observe that the way Martin subconsciously treats his wife aligns with that by which he treats Sylvia. To state it in an alternate manner, the citation precisely exemplifies the male chauvinism that, as previously mentioned, displays various facets: unquestionably, he fulfills the role of a commendable husband as his public persona implies; nonetheless, he as a person living in his paranoia also aligns himself with patriarchal

ideologies, leading him to perceive individuals as entities devoid of independent identities, instead assuming roles intricately tied to the nuclear family structure. If we recognize this as our premise, we should then find it justifiable that Martin should defend his bestiality in such manners that he thought the goat Sylvia loved him and willingly and voluntarily participated in sexual intercourses with him. We may be anthropocentric due to our own limits and feel confident to say that animals have feelings, but we are not sure to state that animals' feelings be so sublime as Martin sees. When Martin first meets Sylvia, he felt Sylvia and the atmosphere were something celestial, "it wasn't like anything I'd felt before; it was...so...amazing, so...extraordinary! There she was, just looking at me, with those *eyes* of hers, and..." (Albee 2008, 567) and "It was as if an alien came out of whatever it was, and it... took with it, and it was... an ecstasy and a purity, and a... love of a... (*Dogmatic*) un-i-mag-in-able kind" (Albee 2008, 598). And as Martin sees Stevie dragging the corpse of Sylvia to home, he exclaims and cries "What did she *do!*? What did she ever *do!*? (*To Stevie*) I ask you: what did she ever *do!*?" (Albee 2008, 622). In her role as a non-verbal creature devoid of the capacity to communicate in comprehensible human language or any form of language, Sylvia's actions effectively amount to a state of inaction and speechlessness. Maintaining her inherent purity and innocence, her sole transgression lies in her inability to take any action, a limitation which can be attributed to her nature. Sylvia remains detached from all conflicts, bereft of the opportunity to defend herself under any circumstances. Her involvement in sexual discourses alongside Martin is *made* voluntary and willing. It is not imperative to reference legal statutes or the principles of international criminal law adhering to human rights in order to assert that sexual activity conducted without the mutual verbal consent of both parties constitutes an instance of sexual assault. With Sylvia's speechlessness, despite the fact that Martin seems to see Sylvia as his soulmate and loves her so much, the undeniable reality is that Martin has been raping Sylvia for the time being. Aligning with his piratical paranoia toward his wife, he deludes that Sylvia's speechlessness is her tacitly consent and that she should be also in love with him. "No. And there she was, looking at me with those eyes [...] No. Yes; yes, it was love, but I didn't know it right then" (Albee 2008, 567) and "I love her... and she loves me, and ..." (Albee 2008, 603).

As the counterpart of Martin, Stevie's attitudes to the animals are quite simple that animals are inferior to human race. I acknowledge that Stevie's fury is caused by Martin's queer bestiality and the fact that she is cheated, but I argue that the main point here is not that Martin cheated there remain great possibility that she should be less irritated if Martin has been sexually active with a woman or even a man given her liberal stance. Stevie cannot accept that Martin should cheat on her with some inferior to her as she interrogates Martin, "How can you love me when you love so much less?" (Albee 2008, 575). The key beneath the phenomenon is Stevie's anthropocentrism. True, Martin's exclamation for equity between animals and humans— "what was wrong with... with... being in love... like that." (Albee 2008, 589)—might be the merely excuse for his non-normative sexual practice. This prompts an examination of the interplay between human and animal dynamics within the context of the play, giving rise to several pertinent inquiries. The first involves the rationale underlying the taboo surrounding interspecies sexual encounters: why do such relationships

between humans and animals evoke societal aversion? Furthermore, the moral underpinnings that validate these taboos warrant investigation. Another facet for exploration pertains to the notion of equivalency between animals and humans, both in terms of personality and inherent “animality.” The play unfolds in a manner that presents two distinct paradigms of coexisting with animals, exhibiting a stark juxtaposition. In this context, the character Martin presents an intriguing perspective when viewed through a temporary suspension of the moral judgments that stem from conventional practices. His approach seemingly offers an equitable and harmonious model for human-animal cohabitation, characterized by an acknowledgment of shared personalities and “animality.” In effect, according to Martin’s confession, he does not have this forbidden coitus with the goat as the consequence of his dark desire and bestiality, he endears this goat—and it actually makes sense—because he hears a calling that is “so...amazing, so...extraordinary!” (Albee 2008, 567) and “pure...and trusting and...and innocent; so...so guileless” (Albee 2008, 597) that it is actually an “epiphany” to him (Albee 2008, 599). This is not simply an action of deifying the goat but of juxtaposing animals to the same place with homo sapiens. In other words, Martin perceives an anti-anthropocentric view and regards the goat, or say animals, not as something that should be rendered subjects to humans; in his perception, animals are human’s company, and they are no different from humans as he asks that “I didn’t understand why they (others with love affairs with animals in the therapy place) were there—why they were all so...unhappy; what was wrong with...with...being in love...like that” (Albee 2008, 589) and “Don’t you see!? Don’t you see the...don’t you see the ‘thing’ that happened to me? Why nobody understands?” (Albee 2008, 598). On the other hand, Stevie, is an epitome of a more traditional practice, which is, however, unfortunately subject to anthropocentrism. Upon careful reading of the play, one should find the presence of Noël Coward repartee throughout the scripts, which attaches great importance to the words’ literary meanings. Therefore, we can see that Ross and Stevie, especially Stevie as a liberal, do not consider animals possess the same position of them as humans:

“Stevie: Stop calling it *her*!

Martin (*Defending*): *That is what she is! It is a she! She is a she!*”

[...]

Martin: I thought I was; I thought we *all* were...animals.

Stevie (*Cold rage*): We stay with our own kind!

(Albee 2008, 585;602)

What Stevie really cannot accept, I argue, is Martin’s juxtaposition her and Sylvia on the same level, or, in Stevie’s terms, is that Martin brings her down to the animal level, which embodies the thinking of Stevie that the status of species other than homo sapiens should be rightfully lower, that she should be equal with a goat. She says, “You have brought me down to *nothing!*” (Albee 2008, 605) and when she faces the question why she kills Sylvia, she simply answers, “She loved you...you say. As much as *I* do” (Albee 2008, 622).

Early critics have done intensive research in the origin of the title “Sylvia,” and it is acknowledged that Albee borrows the name of the heroine of William Shakespeare’s play *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*². The chorus sings of her:

“Who is Silvia, What is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admirèd be.
Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness,
And, being helped, inhabits there.
Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling.
To her let us garlands bring” (Shakespeare 1964, 104, IV, II: 38-52)

Sylvia is so innocent that she “is too fair, too true, too holy To be corrupted with my (Proteus, Valentine’s friend) worthless gifts” (Shakespeare 1964, 102, IV, II: 5-6). This reinforces the point that I propose in the previous paragraph that the goat Sylvia is deliberately depicted by Albee as a pure and innocent creature in sharp contrast with the hypocrisy and viciousness of human race. If we should compare the following quotations which entail the contents of the letter written by Ross to Stevie to reveal Martin’s affair with the goat for Martin’s sake in Albee’s *The Goat* and the reasons why Proteus, a friend of Valentine, betrays his friend for Valentine’s own good in Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Stevie (*Composed; cool; quoting*) “Because I love you, Stevie, as much as I love Martin, because I love you both—respect you, love you—I can’t stay silent at a time of crisis for you both, for Martin’s public image, and your own deeply devoted...” (Albee 2008, 573)

[...]

Stevie (*Back to business; quoting again*) “You will, of course, be shocked and greatly distressed...” No kidding! Uh... “shocked and greatly distressed to know of this, but I felt it my obligation to be the one to bear these tidings...” (Albee 2008, 574)

Proteus “My gracious lord, that which I would discover
The law of friendship bids me to conceal;
But when I call to mind your gracious favors

Done to me, underserving as I am,
My duty pricks me on to utter that
Which else no worldly good should draw from me.
Know, worthy prince, Sir Valentine, my friend,
This night intends to steal away your daughter.
Myself am one made privy to the plot.
I know you have determined to bestow her
On Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates,
And should she thus be stol'n away from you,
It would be much vexation to your age.
Thus, for my duty's sake, I rather chose
To cross my friend in his intended drift
Than, by concealing it, heap on your head
A pack of sorrows which would press you down,
Being unprevented, to your timeless grave" (Shakespeare 1964, 82-83, III, I: 4-21)

According to his own confession, it is evident that Albee must have extensively studied Shakespeare's plays. Albee states, "I was reading plays—Shakespeare, Chekhov—long before I began writing them; indeed, long before I saw my first serious play in performance" (Albee 2005, 185-186). Although Albee does not explicitly confirm the extent to which Shakespeare influenced him or how much Shakespearean content he incorporated, a striking resemblance can be observed in terms of narrative and story framework between the two plays. Should Albee, as the literary ethnicism critics assert, be trying to concern the issue with ethics, I would argue that he is inviting us to contemplate on the matter of loyalty and friendship than the matter of human-animal sexual practices. No matter how righteous and just Ross seems to be, it does not change the nature of Ross's action as being disloyal and traitorous to Martin's trust. Ross's action does not win him auctorial praise. "I *tell* you about it; I shared it with you, the... the... whole... awful thing, because you're... what!?... you're my best friend in the whole world? Because I needed to tell *somebody* [...] I *tell* you, and you fucking turn around and..." (Albee 2008, 618). Rather than saying Ross did this for the sake of Martin's public image, it's more accurate to say he did it for his own career considerations. As Martin's best friend, as long as Martin's public image remains positive, he can leverage his status as a friend to gain advice that is more advantageous for his career as a talk show host. Martin might have found the solution and tackle the situation as he says, but the accident of Ross's writing the letter to Stevie without hesitation and consultation with Martin and the misfortune to the family thus follows adds to the tragedy of the play.

Of course, Albee does not write his tragedies in compliance with Aristotelian doctrines. The style and pattern of his plays is more incline to Nietzsche's definition of tragedy. Nietzsche belauds the Dionysian sprits and asserts that instead of Aristotelian concept, that tragedy originates from chorus, tragedy has its roots in Dionysius, which, however, still is within the Greek mythology framework, suggesting the close relationship tragedy shares with the values of Olympian gods. But

the peculiarity of Nietzschean tragic definition distinguishes itself by its emphasis on Dionysian revelry and hilarity, which tries to transgress the conventionalities of dramatic traditions, and warns us modern readers and audience that “Nothing here reminds us of asceticism (*Askese*), of spirituality and duty; everything here speaks only of over brimming, indeed triumphant existence, where everything that exists has been deified, regardless of whether it is good or evil” (Nietzsche 2007, 22). In his framework, Nietzsche believes that the core of tragedy relies in that whether the play (performance) could successfully lead its readers (audience) into a state of ecstasy wherein “the usual barriers and limits of existence are destroyed” and “all personal experiences from the past are submerged” (2007, 40). If the play should be tragic enough to arise its spectators into such an ecstatic mode, it draws a “gulf of oblivion” that serves as the dividing line between the realms of everyday life and the realm of Dionysiac experience (ibid.). Then once the observers descend from this state back to their everyday consciousness, they reassess it with disgust and revulsion: “the fruit of those states is an ascetic, will-negotiating mood” (ibid.). Yet the tragic heroes or other characters reside in such works, they are “the dithyrambic chorus...who have completely forgotten their civic past and their social position; they have become timeless servants of their god, living outside every social sphere” (2007, 43-44), which renders “Greek tragedy as a Dionysian chorus which discharges itself over and over again in an Apolline world of images” (ibid.). By placing his audience and readers in a performance with bestiality and other queerness, Albee successfully infuses and shocks them with the ecstasy wherein the perceivers experience some kind of catharsis, to use Aristotle’s terms, which constitutes the excellence of *The Goat* as both phenomenal dramatic script and theatrical performance. As Richard Hornby suggests, “[...] because great playwrights usually take it as their responsibility to alter the norms and standards by which audience observe the world, therefore, the playwrights will more aggressively attack those norms” (qtd. in He 2004, 80; Hornby 1986, 32). What then happens or is likely to happen after the attacks toward the norms that have been taken for granted by playreaders and theatregoers? Event emerges. To be more precise, being performative, literature as a conduct and event claims its functionality.

Recently, with Amanda Anderson, Rita Felski, and Toril Moi’s advocacy, literary criticism is undergoing a paradigmatic shift to post-humanism perspectives, with more emphasis on the consumer side, that is, they “are all interested, for example, in how fiction connects to ordinary life and the responses of lay as well as academic audiences” (He 2022, 2). It aligns with the performativity of literature: literary texts as event affect both the textual reality and real reality. In comparison to other literary genres, drama holds a distinctive advantage in fostering literary performativity. When readers engage with a dramatic work, they are acutely aware of its fictional and theatrical nature, even if certain realistic dramas bear resemblance to aspects of reality. Whether witnessed in a live performance in theaters or experienced through reading, the participation in a dramatic or theatrical activity inherently involves the audience in a ritual-like performance given that the play is well-written, or the performance is skillfully executed. In this dramatic or theatrical ritual, readers or audience are stationed in a liminal space wherein their immediate identities and cognitions are

suspended pending to be catharized. To put it differently, literary performativity operates on two dimensions: one that is related to the text and another that has an impact on reality.

The recognized pioneer of literary performativity is J. L. Austin, for whom language can be formative. J. L. Austin criticizes the prevalent philosophy of language that the essence of language is constative, aiming to describe or constate the dichotomy between the true and false (He 2022, 6). He puts forward the notions of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary utterance, proposing that language can be performative. Austin distinguishes the utterance that is felicitous and happy, and utterance that is infelicitous. Should the utterances be felicitous and happy, they can be as functional as the “wedding” and “naming a ship” examples that are widely cited among critics. However, it is important to note the subjects concerned by J. L. Austin are limited to daily language. In other words, language usages from literary and theatrical situations are excluded because they “are parasitic uses of language, which are ‘not serious’, not the ‘full normal use’” (He 2022, 104). In his opinion, Austin acknowledges that literary and theatrical language can be performative, but not serious at the same times, and therefore, his theory cannot be applied to these utterances: literary language is expressed in the textual reality, which is highly contextualized and of course imagined, and performatives in this reality cast no influence on real reality. On the textual level and Austin’s conception of performativity, Andrew Sofer invigorates Albee studies, correctly and insightfully noting that “the play hinges less on Martin’s offstage affair than on the devastating effects of particular speech acts in the theatrical now, which by turns produce and undo a reality they seem only to label” (Sofer 2017, 501) and that the play demonstrates Albee’s “queerly deperformative poetics” (Sofer 2017, 522). However insightful Sofer’s scholarship might be, it has a vital defect in that though the performative utterances in *The Goat* can be deperformative in the sense that they deconstruct the current actuality within the fictional context, they are also on the other hand very performative, to use professor Chengzhou He’s definition of performativity in western dramatology “the core content of performativity is its interactivity, generativity, creativity, interventionality” (2022, 11). In other words, along the process of unmaking the theatrical now, the play intervenes the audience’s immediate conception of marital relationships, love, sexuality, and violence. In his event theory, Gilles Deleuze notes three features of event: uncertainty, immateriality, and neutrality. Event is “a fleeing line” (He 2022, 17), it flows from its fillings, and it is in a liminal state. Event bears infinite possibilities of outcomes because certainty is suspended therein. There is breakage from what is assumed to be common whence an event constitutes. “The surprising emergence of something new (event) which undermines every stable scheme” (He 2022, 15). Chengzhou He suggests that event implies the destruction of normal forms and foretells renovation and turbulent changes. The core is that since breakages in textual discourse can bring about events, these events can influence readers. Namely the mere reading and watching live performance constitutes an event on the aesthetic level. Yet how is it possible for a play to achieve such impacts? The answer seems simple: the theatrical performance which resembles a ritual.

Long before Edward Albee, Eugene O’Neill has proposed his scheme for literary performance, that is, “to align modern drama with the kind of divinity of ancient Greek and Elizabethan dramas...

to make theatres the temples that purifies souls...to make performances rituals” (Hua 1997, 107). To put it bluntly, O’Neill is demanding the pragmatic, or say “utilitarian,” aspects of dramatic literature and its sibling the theatrical performances. In effect, we should regard the process of performances as the legitimization of ritual, which renders literary performances similar to *rites of passages*, to use Victor Turner’s theory, who summarizes and furthers Arnold Van Gennep’s concepts of separation, margin, and aggregation (1991, 94). Liminality is a key concept for understanding the potential effects of theatricality on audiences and performers. Liminality refers to a state of “in-between” where the individual’s identity, psychology, culture, and other signs are not fixed, but can change in any direction. Turner describes liminality as a process of transformation where subjects “are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life” (Turner 1991, 95). Schechner argues that everyday life is also a form of performance that restores previous behaviors and identities. He states that “The habits, rituals, and routines of everyday life are restored behaviors” (Schechner 2020, 10). Therefore, theatricality can be seen as a way of creating liminal spaces and experiences that challenge and change the performer’s and especially the audience’s sense of self and reality since “Performances mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tell stories” (ibid.). *The Goat* is successful in both senses which should be easily proven by the malicious comments on both the play itself and the theatrical performances that follow. If *The Goat* successfully ignited the attacks from some critiques by its contents and raised the alleged literary ethnics research in scholarship, Albee then triumphs in make his readers, audience, and even professionals astonished thus inspecting their reality in different scopes. Nevertheless, certain researchers recognized that the primary concerns addressed by *The Goat* pertain to matters beyond mere moral discourse. As a result, they are able to delve more profoundly into the depths, whereas others are limited to merely scratching the surface of its immorality. Therefore, in the sense of literature as an actant in the network of literature-reader-society, *The Goat* is also highly performative since it enthusiastically invites us to imagine the new limits and boundary of love, sexuality, human-animal relationships, industrial alienation and so forth, permanently changing what we used to believe are the only acceptable behaviors and opinions.

The immoral elements are of vital importance in the narrative of *The Goat*. In fact, they do not only serve as the decorations to the play, but they also constitute the very essence of this tragedy. However, Albee is not inviting us to consider the immoral and unethical matters on the surface, that is, in the case of *The Goat*, the bestiality that Martin pursues. Mores serve merely as the blasting fuse to bigger themes. But if this play is not about ethnical downfalls, what is it about? Albee gives us a Nietzschean solution for modern tragedies, “That play isn’t about goat-fucking. What I wanted people to do is not just sit there being judges of the characters. I wanted people to go to that play, and imagine themselves in the situation, and really think hard about how they would respond if it was happening to them. That’s really what I’m after. Put yourself there. “How the fuck would I react? Why am I making this judgment about those people? Because I probably wouldn’t make it if it was happening to me” (Albee 2005, 205). As Albee himself has already revealed, perhaps there’s no main

issue concerned with the work. The mission of the play is to stir the stagnant pool of accepted mores and daily experience so that people could be in the ecstasy to be “catharized” by reading the play and watching the theatrical performances while the content may not be holy and sublime.

Endnotes:

1. See Lin Zhang and Jide Guo (2009) “Edward Albee’s Ideas of Ecological Ethics in *Seascape* and *The Goat*,” Xiang Yang (2016) “The Boundary of Ethics: Analysis on Ethical Value of *The Goat*,” Shuhua Zhu and Chang Yu (2017) “An Ecological Literary Criticism to Martin’s Identity Crisis in *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*,” Xiaojun Fan (2020) “Seriousness and Irony: Ethical Taboo Narrative Criticism in *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*,” Li Lin (2022) “Ethical Transgression in *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*.” In addition, some of the few M.A. theses on Albee studies discuss the ethical issues of his plays including *The Goat*, about which I will not go into details here.
2. For references to scholarly discussions about the relationship of the two plays on the matter of the name Sylvia, see Jiali Yuan’s doctoral dissertation.

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Intercultural Adaptation in Early Modern Popular Theatre: From Torquato Tasso's *Aminta* (1573/1581) to *Von den Aminta und Silvia in Liebeskampf* (1630)

Caterina Pan

Independent scholar
Salzburg, Austria

E-mail: caterina.pan@outlook.com

ORCID: 0000-0003-0280-7361

Abstract:

The focus of this chapter lies on the contribution of Italian and English travelling troupes on early modern popular theatre in Germany. This will be achieved by reading *Von den Aminta und Silvia* ('About Aminta and Silvia', 1630), a German adaptation attributed to the English Comedians of Torquato Tasso's pastoral play *Aminta*, against the background of adaptation theory.

Given the long history of performance of Tasso's play, which was first performed in 1573 by a Commedia dell'Arte troupe, it is plausible to assume that the original text had already undergone several changes before the German version appeared. Some of these changes were due to Tasso himself; other alterations can be attributed to the Commedia dell'Arte troupes. The many translations published in France and England prior to *Aminta und Silvia* might also have inserted new details, further developed by the English Comedians. Finally, the anonymous editor of the German play may have been responsible for other additions. However, as adaptation theory shows, translations merely make the content comprehensible from a linguistic point of view, whereas adaptations aim at making a text accessible from a socio-cultural viewpoint, even with consistent changes to the source.

Keywords: Wandering troupes, early modern drama, adaptation theory, pastoral, English Comedians, Commedia dell'Arte, German popular theatre

Introduction

Wandering troupes represent a fascinating phenomenon within the Europe-wide boom of theatrical activity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In particular, the repertoire of English and Italian touring companies had a great impact on the professionalisation of theatre in German-speaking countries, although the scarcity of textual documents about their performances is responsible for the little acknowledgement enjoyed by itinerant troupes in literary history.

The discovery of new historical material has led to an international reprisal of scholarly discussion about the English Comedians in Germany, especially in the last 10 years, but the investigation of how the wandering troupes performed and adapted certain plays in such a way that they had a wide-reaching impact on the production of theatre and drama of their recipients is still an uncharted area of research. Both Elizabethan drama with an Italian influence and the plays based on improvisation of Commedia dell'Arte were successfully exported to Germany, where they mingled with pre-existing

dramatic forms like the Shrovetide play to reach a peak of mutual understanding. However, all major studies about the English Comedians' repertoire and their reception (for instance Cohn 1865; Richter 1910; Fredén 1939; and Haekel 2004) have dwelled only marginally on the Italian sources. By reading a sample play attributed to the English Comedians, namely *Von den Aminta und Silvia* ('About Aminta and Silvia', 1630), a German comedy based on the Italian pastoral play *Aminta* by Torquato Tasso (first performed in 1573 by a Commedia dell'Arte troupe), against the background of adaptation theory, the focus of this chapter lies on the contribution of Italian and English travelling troupes to early modern popular theatre in Germany.

Before delving into a comparative analysis of *Aminta* by Tasso and its German rendition, however, a few words should be said about adaptation theory, developed primarily by Julie Sanders, Linda Hutcheon and Gérard Genette.

Adaptation theory in popular theatre

According to Julie Sanders, the term *adaptation* "signals a relationship with an informing source text or original" despite reinterpretations and generic changes, while *appropriation* entails a "more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain" (Sanders 2006, 26). Appropriated texts are not always as clearly acknowledged as in the adaptive process, which for Sanders can assume the form of (a) transpositional practice, for example from one genre to another; (b) an editorial practice such as trimming or pruning a text; and (c) an amplificatory procedure involving adding, expanding and commenting. Similarly, for Linda Hutcheon the difference between adaptation and appropriation depends on the degree of dependence, indebtedness and explicit reference to the original. In her definition, *adaptation* is:

- 1) an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works;
- 2) a creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging;
- 3) an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work.

Therefore, adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing.

(Hutcheon 2006, 8).

The main aim of adaptations is to make a text that is removed in time or space relevant and accessible to new audiences. After all, to adapt, from the Latin *adaptare*, simply means 'to make fit' to new audiences, times, places and cultures. The process of an older text being brought "up to date and closer to its own audience (in temporal, geographic, or social terms)" is called 'proximization' by Gérard Genette (1997, 304).

Compared to Sanders and Hutcheon, in *Palimpsests* Genette gives a more detailed description of his concept of *transtextuality* or the textual transcendence of a text by which he means "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (Genette 1997, 1). Since in his view any text is a hypertext grafting itself onto an earlier hypotext that it imitates or

transforms, adaptation is an omnipresent procedure in literature. One of the five possible types of transtextual relationships is *hypertextuality* or literature "in the second degree", meaning a text derived from a pre-existing text which it either transforms (directly) or imitates (indirectly) with ludic, satiric or serious intent. For Genette, *transposition* is the most important hypertextual practice, which can be subdivided again into many different forms. Translations are the transposition from one language to another, for instance (Genette 1997, 213). Then, there are quantitative transformations which alter the text more than a translation because they either reduce or augment its content.

On the one hand, reduction comprises excision, concisions and condensation. First, 'excision' refers to the suppression or amputation of single words or larger parts of a text. Another form of excision is 'expurgation', a reduction with an edifying function, or in other words a form of censure (Genette 1997, 228-37). Second, 'concision' happens when abridged versions of a text appear without the suppression of any significant part and are formulated in a new way. For this reason, concise versions are works in their own right, while excisions are not. Third, 'condensation' does not operate directly on the hypotext to reduce it but creates an autonomous scaled down version of the model, such as a summary or a digest.

On the other hand, texts can be augmented, either by 'extension' (adding elements to content) or by 'expansion' (a stylistic dilation such as doubling the length of each sentence). Since these two practices often go together, they can be termed 'amplification' (Genette 1997, 254). If addition and suppression are combined, the result is 'substitution', which means that narrative structures, characters, or linguistic extrapolations might be taken from one text and inserted into another.

Although they were probably not aware of it, the itinerant English – and Italian – Comedians made use of adaptational strategies known to them from the Renaissance context and transferred them to the stage, as the adaptation at work in their plays shows. What is fascinating, is that their adaptation went beyond the intertextual sphere and added the aspect of performance, which must be even more sensitive to the recipients than a text given the immediate and sensory nature of theatre.

The English Comedians in Germany and their repertoire – Italian echoes and the pastoral vogue

As to the historical background, a helpful question to start with is: what is known about the troupes which toured Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the traces they left? Commedia dell'Arte companies were the first to tour Italy and Europe from 1568 onwards with their specific form of theatre involving stock characters and masks, which flourished between 1550 and 1750. Being a product of amalgamation of erudite and popular culture to entertain the noble patrons and the commoners in the streets with physicality and improvisation, it was the nature of Commedia dell'Arte to wander and inspire their recipients from Spain, France and England to Germany, Austria and Russia.

Like in Italy, in early modern England, touring companies gained the status of professionals thanks to noble patronage, and this consolidation went hand in hand with an increasing literarisation

and marginalisation of extemporising popular entertainers such as the clown. A major difference compared to Commedia dell'Arte's centrality of the performers in a courtly environment lies in the fact that the bloom of Elizabethan drama is connected to playwrights and public playhouses, which thrived after 1576 and brought about an overabundance of actors. To escape strict regulations and fierce competition, in 1592 English itinerant troupes started exporting their repertoire to Germany. Despite linguistic difficulties, the English Comedians adapted flexibly to the taste of their audiences, still unaccustomed to professional theatre. In a resourceful way, they made their simplified German versions of Kyd, Shakespeare and Marlowe palatable with the help of extemporising clowns like Jan Posset, Hans Stockfish and Pickelhering, who functioned as singers, acrobats and translators of plots, in the manner of Commedia dell'Arte and the autochthonous *Fastnachtspiel*. Part of the English Comedians' repertoire was then fixed in print from 1618 to 1648, when theatre came to a standstill due to the Thirty Years' War, and their staging techniques were later appropriated by German troupes.

Even after the end to the actors' continental activity, their legacy persisted on the Austro-German stage, as the publication of the repertoire associated with the English Comedians proves. First, in 1620 there was the anonymous collection *Engelische Comedien und Tragedien* ('English Comedies and Tragedies'), soon followed by a second edition in 1624 and by a second collection entitled *Liebeskampff oder ander Theil der Engelischen Comedien und Tragoedien* ('Love Conflict / Fight or Another Part of English Comedies and Tragedies') in 1630. In this second collection, the unknown editor put together and revised plays of other authors and companies which were circulating in Germany at the time: *Comoedia und Macht des kleinen Knaben Cupidinis* ('Comedy and power of the little boy named Cupid'); *Comedia von den Aminta und Silvia* ('Comedy of Aminta and Silvia') with songs and musical scores; *Comoedia und Prob getrewer Lieb* ('Comedy and test of truthful love'); *Comoedia von König Mantalors unrechtmessigen Liebe und derselben Straff* ('Comedy of King Mantalor's unlawful love and its punishment'); *Etliche neue Singe-Comoedien, so zur Lust wol agiret werden können* ('Several new musical comedies, to be played ad libitum'); *Tragi Comoedia* (tragicomedy without a proper title); *Tragoedi. Unzeitiger Vorwitz* ('Tragedy of inopportune impertinence' after Cervantes's novella 'El curioso impertinente' with musical scores).

Compared to the first collection, which I analysed in my study *Popular Theatre in Early Modern England, Germany and Italy (1570-1640): A Study in Intercultural Theatricality with an Analysis of 'Engelische Comedien und Tragedien' (1620)*, *Liebeskampff* witnesses a change of taste towards the Spanish and Italian 'rivals' of the English Comedians, noticeable in a preference for plots of novelistic intrigue in fantastic and pastoral settings, with comic subplots involving the clown. A particularly fascinating example is the *Comodia, Von den Aminta und Silvia*, which has its foundation in a pastoral play by Torquato Tasso, *Aminta*, first presented at the court of Ferrara under duke Alfonso II d'Este by the famous Commedia dell'Arte company of the Comici Gelosi on 31 July 1573. One noticeable fact is that this erudite play was performed at court by a Commedia dell'Arte company and thus became part of the repertoire of wandering troupes which travelled to France, England and Germany. Moreover, the play was presented several times in Italy before it was

printed in 1581 and reappears in altered form almost 50 years later in *Liebeskampff*, the second part of the collection of plays attributed to the English Comedians. It might therefore be assumed that both the Italian original, mediated on stage by the Commedia dell'Arte, and the influence of the English actors on the German stage are retraceable in this adaptation more than in any other of the numerous previous translations. Indeed, the German rendition follows the original closely, including scenes translated verbatim from Tasso, but renounces the pastoral setting and instead adds a clownish servant to make the content palatable to the audience. Conversely, there is another comedy in *Liebeskampff*, called *Macht des kleinen Knabens Cupidinis* ('Power of the little boy named Cupid'), which makes use of strands from Tasso's play, especially the pastoral elements.

It is important to keep in mind that the sixteenth-century European vogue around the pastoral had a considerable impact on popular theatre, which started to draw from this imagery and create new hybrids, especially in tragicomedy. Pastoral poetry and novels from Greco Roman literature like the novel *Daphnis and Chloe* by Longus (II century AD) were re-vitalised in the Renaissance's international vogue for idyllic settings detached from socio-political issues. Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (1504) set the standard for the novel, soon followed by Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (1524), Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1580) and Honoré D'Ufré's *L'Astrée* (1607–1625). In drama, Angelo Poliziano's *Fabula d'Orfeo* (1480) paved the way to erudite comedies in Arcadian settings like Torquato Tasso's *Aminta* (1573/1581) and Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Pastor fido* (1590). The pastiche of magicians, spirits, or fairies mixed with mythological figures of the pastoral like shepherds, satyrs and gods in Arcadian settings can be observed both in later Commedia dell'Arte *scenari* (i.e. skeletal plots), and in Shakespeare's mature plays *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*.

In the German context, the pastoral tardily found its way into poetry and the most favoured dramatic form of the Baroque period: the *Haupt- und Staatsaktion* or 'main and state action'. As the term implies, the main action was devoted to serious topics (politics, religion, history, mythology) with intrigues of noble characters in exotic places, abounding in magniloquent rhetoric after the model of Italian and French drama and opera. By contrast, the subplot was the domain of clown figures like the Anglo-German Pickelhering with semi-improvised sketches to entertain the audience after the manner of the Commedia dell'Arte.

This combination of 'high' and 'low' can be seen in the comedy of *Aminta und Silvia* and some scenes of *Macht des kleinen Knabens Cupidinis*. They shall now be analysed with the help of Genette's terminology revolving around intertextuality to see what intercultural adaptation entails in the early modern period. Hereby my focus lies not as much on a detailed comparison but rather on the major changes in the context of adaptation theory.

Tasso's *Aminta* and its traces in *Liebeskampff* – a comparison

The Italian poet and playwright Torquato Tasso (1544–1595) is more renowned for his epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* than for his juvenile play *Aminta*, although it is to this original attempt

at pastoral poetry in drama that he owed much of his success in his day. In fact, after the first courtly performance at the Este court in Ferrara in 1573, of which little is known apart from the fact that Tasso himself led the well-received production, several representations followed: in Pesaro (1574), in Verona (1581), in Ferrara and Garfagnana (1583) and on the occasion of the Medici-Farnese wedding in Parma (1627–28), for which some encomiastic *intermedi* ('interludes') were also composed (see Sozzi 1954, 12). In addition, the play became a *pièce de résistance* of some of the major travelling Commedia dell'Arte troupes like the Confidenti between 1609 and 1623 (see Galli Stampino 2015, 18). Since it was published more than seven years after the first performance, it is very probable that various manuscript versions were already in circulation, with the addition of the chorus, the epilogue and successive *intermedi* not present in the first performance in 1573 (see the introduction to *Aminta* by Mario Fubini 2001, 34).

Adaptation was thus at work well before *Aminta und Silvia* was printed, and some themes, like the corruption of the court opposed to an idyllic country life, as well as verbatim quotations can be detected, for instance, in Shakespeare's self-consciously pastoral play *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598) and *As You Like It* (1599), as Roger Prior asserts (Prior 2004, 269). Moreover, the great success of this pastoral play is witnessed by the numerous free translations which began to appear throughout Europe, especially after its publication in 1581. For instance, Prior mentions a Latin love-epic about Amyntas published in 1587 by Thomas Watson and translated along with Tasso's *Aminta* for *The Countesse of Pembroke's Yvychurch* in 1591 by Abraham Fraunce, who wrote a second epic entitled *Amintae Gaudia* in 1592 (Prior 2004, 270). A later translation of Tasso into English by John Dancer followed in 1660. However, a crucial difference between translations and adaptations is that translations merely make the content comprehensible from a linguistic point of view, whereas adaptations aim at making a text accessible and palatable also from a socio-cultural viewpoint, even if this means consistently changing the source.

Since Tasso's *Aminta* was much in vogue in England in late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it is not surprising that the English Comedians inserted this play into their repertoire on tour, inspired either by translations of the original or similar plays circulating in Europe thanks to the Commedia dell'Arte troupes. Due to the itinerant and text-independent nature of itinerant troupes there are scarce records of the play's performance by either Commedia dell'Arte companies or the English Comedians. However, the inclusion of *Von den Aminta und Silvia* in *Liebeskampff* (1630) speaks for the notoriety of the play in the context of popular theatre. This is interesting, because it was initially written for an elite audience with numerous references not only to ancient literature and mythology but also to members of the Este court, including Tasso himself, who according to most critics portrayed himself in the character of the wise Tirsi. Clearly, these hints targeted at a specific audience were altered or substituted by other elements in the adaptation process.

Comparing the plots of *Aminta* and *Von den Aminta und Silvia*, the salient points are very similar but interestingly some strands of the Italian pastoral were also inserted in the play preceding *Von den Aminta* in *Liebeskampff* (1630), namely *Macht des kleinen Knaben Cupidinis* (abbreviated

as *Cupidinis* in the following). This shorter comedy reworks themes and even scenes from *Aminta* but inserts them into a wholly new plot, as shall be argued.

In Tasso's Prologue, the god of Love reveals that he has taken up the dress of a simple shepherd to hide from his mother Venus, who wants to use his powers according to her will. His aim is to soften Silvia's cold heart towards the heartbroken Aminta. Elements of this prologue occur both in *Aminta und Silvia*, which translates Tasso's words faithfully after a long introduction of the character of Cupid, and in *Cupidinis*, when Cupid says he ran away from his mother to prove his power not only to the rich but also among the middle and lower social classes. In *Cupidinis*, he therefore pierces the hearts of two youths who are more partial to Minerva and Jupiter than to him, namely the chaste Jucunda and the martial Floretto.

The scenes of Tasso's act 1 mirror each other, as in the first scene Silvia counters her friend Dafne's reasons for giving in to Aminta's love on the grounds that she prefers hunting and serving the goddess Diana, and in the second scene Aminta tells his good friend Tirsi why his heart is so burdened that he wishes to die. In fact, he has fallen in love with Silvia and even stole a kiss from her, pretending that he was stung by a bee so that she would murmur a magic spell against the pain on the wounded spot, incidentally his lips. However, since revealing his feelings to her, she has been scorning him, so he sees no other solution than to die. Even though Tirsi is called Floretto in *Aminta und Silvia* – interestingly the same name as the male protagonist of *Cupidinis* – the first act of the German play follows Tasso closely and translates large parts verbatim. An intriguing change is the fact that Silvia declines Aminta's love not because she prefers to hunt, as in *Aminta*, but instead declares her fondness for sewing.

SILVIA

Altri segua i dilette de l'amore,
se pure v'è ne l'amor alcun diletto:
me questa vita giova, e 'l mio trastullo
è la cura dell'arco e de gli strali;
seguir le fere fugaci, e le forti
atterrar combattendo; e se non mancano
siette a la faretra o fere al bosco,
non tem'io che a me manchino diporti.
(*Aminta* 1.1.100-7)

Translation:

Let others follow loves delights for me,
If that in love any delight there be.
This life me pleases best; Nor do I know
Ought I take pleasure in, but in my bow;
This is my chiefest comfort, for to follow

SILVIA

Ein ander mag der Lust der Liebe folgen / do
anderst einige lust und frewde darinnen ist / mir
beliebet diß Leben / und ist dis meine höchste
Frewde / das ich mich um das Nehpult und
spinrad bekümmere und so fern mir es nicht an
Neh- und Sticknadeln / Zwirn / Garn / Seiden /
und allerley subtiler Leindwandt gebrechen thut /
besorge ich mich auch nicht / daß mir an
Kurtzweil und Freuwde im geringsten etwas
mangeln werden.

(*Spieltexte der Wanderbühne*, 1975, vol. 2, 97)

Translation:

Let others follow love's delights / if there be any
delight in love / this life pleases me best / and this is
my greatest joy / to care for the needlework and the
spinning wheel and as long as I am not in want of
needles for sewing and embroidery / thread / yarn /

<p>The wild beasts in the chase, hear huntsmen hollow: Nor do I fear such sports will wanting be. (English translation by Dancer 1660, 6)</p>	<p>silk / and all kinds of fine linen / I do not fear in the least I shall miss sports and happiness. (My translation)</p>
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As the quotes show, the German text corresponds to the Italian original but changes Silvia's favourite activity from hunting to feminine needlework. The general attenuation of the pastoral and pagan elements in *Aminta und Silvia* is clearly visible not only in this example but also in another change worthy of notice: the addition of the foolish servant Alex Schrämgen. This clown character in service to Aminta parodies his master's love torment by narrating his own sexual adventures and revealing the aggressive and cruel nature of his superior. As the clown was a central element of the English Comedians' success, it is not surprising that he is given a major role in the subplot. His humorous wordplays, sexual innuendos, references to his physical urges and appetites as well as comic pranks are more in line with the *Commedia dell'Arte* and other international clowning traditions of popular theatre than with the erudite pastoral. Similarly, *Cupidinis* features the clown-servant Hans Wurst/Stockfisch, who is even involved in scenes that reoccur in *Aminta und Silvia* and were evidently recycled for their effectiveness by the English Comedians. For instance, the way the clown introduces himself in the two German plays by giving silly answers to his interlocutors coincides (cf. the playtexts contained in the edition by Brauneck 1975, 2:20 and 2:105), as does the practical joke of the servant accidentally smashing a glass of his master's urine on the way to the doctor and replacing it with his own (cf. Brauneck 1975, 2:72 and 2:179).

While in Tasso's act 2 Aminta suffers in silence and remains passive, another rejected suitor plans to take revenge on spiteful Silvia. In fact, the evil Satyr declares he will rape her at the well where she usually takes a bath after the hunt. In the following, Dafne advises Tirsi to help his unhappy friend by sending him to that same well and trying to seduce Silvia. Although Aminta is too shy, he finally accepts Tirsi's advice, hoping to win the girl's heart. Thanks to this happy coincidence, Aminta saves Silvia from the Satyr just in time.

As Tirsi recounts in act 3, Aminta drives the Satyr away and gently frees the naked Silvia tied to a tree with her own hair. Instead of thanking him, she runs away in scorn and embarrassment, which leaves Aminta so desperate that he declares to Dafne that he will commit suicide. This wish is enforced by Nerina's account of Silvia's death in the woods while hunting, killed by wolves. The only thing that remains is a blood-stained veil, which drives Aminta crazy with despair. The motif of the lover's wish to die after finding a blood-stained veil, derived from Ovid's tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, is taken up again in the German adaptation. Like in Tasso, these dramatic episodes are only narrated, as they would have been very complicated to stage. However, *Aminta und Silvia* adds to the theatrical liveliness by inserting funny intermezzi with the clown, for example when Schrämgen complains to his master about his lover's death and is given the advice to look for a new one in church (see Brauneck 1975, 2:127). In this parody of the protagonist's love there is also an instance of the peculiar mixture of Christian elements in an otherwise pagan world.

Apart from that, up to act 3 of the German play large parts of the scenes are translated, which leads to the assumption that the actors or the editor had either the Italian original or a very faithful translation at their disposal. According to Manfred Brauneck, the source was not the Italian play but French translations of Tasso by Pierre de Brach (1584), Guillaume Belliard (1603) and Catherin le Doux (1618) (Brauneck 1975, 6:59). Still, even the use of different translations does not explain some major changes in the adaptation of the play. Indeed, the German play is more than a mere translation as it alters the plot and adds considerable changes, such as the fact that Aminta never speaks of committing suicide after hearing that Silvia was killed during a walk in the woods (not a hunting party like in Tasso) but rather attributes his wish to die to a love-sick heart. Moreover, the Satyr does not appear on stage but is only described by shepherds, thus replacing a long monologue with a more vivid dialogue. The figure of the mean seducer occurs again in altered form in *Cupidinis* in the character of Balandus, who tries to rape Jucunda in the woods after she turns him down (see Brauneck 1975, 2:79).

From the end of act 3, not just the comic subplot but also the main plot of *Aminta und Silvia* becomes more independent from the Italian pastoral. First, there is a new scene between Cupid and Aminta, in which the god disguised as a shepherd reveals his identity to the desperate lover by magically making some dancing satyrs appear (see Brauneck 1975, 2:149). This ‘proof’ of Cupid’s divine power is employed in *Cupidinis* too, where Cupid performs the same artifice with Jucunda (see Brauneck 1975, 2:17). Secondly, the god of Love comforts Aminta and tells him that his feigned death will favourably change Silvia’s feelings towards him. All he must do is hide and wait in the city of Dolona while the news of his death (not suicide) is spread. Dolona is also the city where *Cupidinis* is set, a coincidence or an instance of recycling which makes the latter play appear as an offshoot of *Aminta und Silvia*.

The revelation of the happy ending at the end of act 3 in the German version might seem a little odd, as it considerably diminishes the dramatic effect of the original, in which Silvia repents her harshness towards Aminta upon hearing from a shepherd that the distressed lover plunged to his death. As Cupid had preannounced in the Prologue, pity melts her cold heart and makes her realise her love for Aminta, even though it seems too late and all she can do is search for his body to bury it. In the last act, the wise Elpino tells Tirsi that Aminta’s suicide was prevented by a soft landing on trees and that he was happily reunited with his beloved Silvia at last. The fact that the audience would have believed the news of Silvia’s death first and then of Aminta’s suicide would have kept a high level of suspense until the end.

By contrast, the German play announces the outcome more than once before the last act. Apart from Cupid’s revelation to Aminta, Floretto is also informed about Silvia and Aminta’s future wedding by the ‘holy’ Elpino in act 4 of *Aminta und Silvia*. The wise hermit performs a sort of religious ritual for the goddess of the underworld Hecate to inform the repentant Silvia that her allegedly dead lover is only love-sick and waiting for her in Dolona. The translated passages in the last acts of the German play are quite rare and instead leave space to major departures from Tasso’s

text, such as the numerous comic scenes involving Schrängen, who in the meantime finds his former master Aminta. At first, the servant does not recognise Aminta and then performs all sorts of slapstick pranks (e.g., the already mentioned broken urinal). Moreover, when Silvia comes looking for Aminta, the clown believes his motionless master has died and lies about a testament which would leave a new dress to him. In the end, Silvia's kiss wakes Aminta from a death-like sleep, Schrängen reluctantly returns his master's clothes and announces the wedding between the lovers with his usual scatological humour.

A variation on the same theme can be found in *Cupidinis* as well, in which Balandus' failed attempt at raping Jucunda brings about Florettus' love and their final reunion after he kisses the sleeping girl. The long search for the beloved person after a tragic event (believed death and rape) is preceded by an echo scene in the woods in both plays, in the end of *Cupidinis* (see Brauneck 1975, 2:82) and in the first act of *Aminta und Silvia* (Brauneck 1975, 2:109).

Despite this very different ending compared to Tasso, the plot of *Aminta und Silvia* is basically the same and the addition of five songs with musical scores meant to be sung as a prelude and after each act recalls the function of the chorus in the Italian play, though with different form and content. In fact, in *Aminta* there is no mention of music or dancing, but since the English Comedians were famous abroad for their musical and acrobatic skills, they probably inserted the dance of the satyrs and musical entre-acts into their adaptation.

Having outlined the content and structure of the plays in question, Genette's terminology helps to pinpoint the process involved in intercultural adaptation compared with translation.

Beyond translation – intercultural adaptation in popular theatre

Being a felicitous mixture of tragedy, comedy, satire and encomiastic poem in an idyllic, mythological setting, *Aminta* is in itself a creative hybrid well apt to initiate a European vogue. As Eugenio Donadoni argues, the tragic theme of suicide due to unrequited love is attenuated by celebrations of the court and comic scenes, bordering satire (Donadoni 1967, 122). While Tasso's elegant idyll mingles the genres of pastoral play and poetry with a perfect balance of structure, its characters are quite flat, almost similar to types, and the most important scenes – and also the most improbable ones – are only narrated instead of performed, to the point that the two lovers never meet on stage. These aspects became standard features of pastoral plays and reoccur in slightly altered form in the German versions of Tasso's *Aminta*.

Although the character constellation and general structure of *Aminta und Silvia* are similar to the original and many scenes are translated verbatim, there are some consistent changes that go beyond a translation and point to adaptation in all three senses mentioned by Sanders: transpositional, editorial and amplificatory. Given that these changes are sensitive to the context of performance and the audiences connected to it, it might be appropriate to speak of intercultural adaptation, which combines Genette's 'proximization' with other qualitative transpositions. Firstly,

the eulogy of the Este court and the hints at its courtiers would not have made sense to a German-speaking public and were therefore 'excised'. Despite the European vogue around the pastoral, *Aminta und Silvia* surprisingly renounces this setting and reduces the mythological references present in Tasso. Instead, they are inserted ('substitution') into another play, namely *Cupidinis*, which can be considered a 'condensation' of *Aminta* because it transfers the central theme of unrequited love, the main characters and even translated lines from the Italian pastoral into the context of a wholly new play.

Secondly, many new parts were added in *Aminta und Silvia* to meet the taste of the viewers ('extension'). Making use of the most successful features of itinerant popular theatre, the English Comedians augmented the elements of comedy and satire already present in Tasso by underlining the type-like features of the characters and inserting the comic figure of Schrämggen into the subplot. These changes owe much to the model set by Commedia dell'Arte with its stock characters, such as the sly servant caricaturing his master, and the frequent device of echo scenes. In addition, they are also reminiscent of the English clowning tradition and the German Shrovetide plays, proving a mutual influence on these forms of theatre. Similarly, the chorus of *Aminta* was replaced by songs to entertain the viewers in-between acts with similar themes, but through a different mode of deliverance compared to the Italian play.

The most interesting changes to the plot concern the 'excision' or even 'expurgation' of pagan aspects such as a hunting woman and a suicidal lover in favour of Christian values probably closer to the audience or more in line with the requests of the censoring authorities. Thus, the hedonistic search for pleasure in the pastoral world is replaced by courteous love in the main plot and amplified in down-to-earth tones in the comic subplot, while the amoral suicide is attenuated as love sickness. These transformations are not only the most evident but also the most context-sensitive adaptations rendered necessary in the process of transposition from one culture into another, almost 60 years after the first performance of the original.

Given the long history of performance of Tasso's play and its numerous translations, it is plausible to assume that the original text had already undergone several changes before the German version appeared. Some of these changes to the plot were due to Tasso himself, for instance the addition of *intermedi*; other alterations can probably be attributed to the Commedia dell'Arte troupes who inserted the play into their repertoire on tour. However, the questions whether and how these actors reshaped the content cannot be answered without a written text. The many translations and variations on the theme which had been published in France and England prior to *Liebeskampff* (1630) might also have expanded Tasso's plot and inserted new details, further developed by the English Comedians in their rendition. Finally, the anonymous editor of the collection *Liebeskampff* may have been responsible for other additions which go beyond the translations used as a source text.

Being the result of an international collaboration not only on the page but also on the stage, it is virtually impossible to state the exact contribution of each participant in this network without a

textual reference. What appears undeniable is that the peculiar mixture of translation, ‘excision’ and ‘proximization’ in *Aminta und Silvia* and of ‘substitution’ and ‘condensation’ in *Cupidnis* shows the clever adaptation at work in early modern popular theatre in German-speaking countries thanks to the mediators of theatrical culture beyond bookish culture – the wandering troupes from Italy and England.

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Artificial Intensities: The Question of Reality and Immersion in Tom McCarthy's *Remainder*

Codrin Aniculăese

Faculty of Letters

"Babeş-Bolyai" University

31 Horea Street, RO-400202, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

E-mail: codrinanic@yahoo.com

Abstract:

This paper aims to analyze the methods through which reality may be attained in Tom McCarthy's *Remainder*. Through a post-structuralist, chiefly Deleuzian lens, I argue that *Remainder* presents the reader with a return to the postmodern conception of the 'real', while also affirming the necessity, both subjective and objective, of moving beyond it. Such a stance is, I argue, only apparently paradoxical, absurd. In *Remainder*, this article proposes, reality is achieved through artificiality, and not around it, by accelerating a process of performative immersion which facilitates what Deleuze and Guattari consider to be a fundamental property of artificiality: its tendency to self-destruct.

Keywords: post-structuralism, intensity, post-postmodernism, performativity, representation, reality, immersion

1. Introduction

Tom McCarthy's fiction occupies a distinct position within the space of contemporary fiction. A self-declared absolute post-structuralist¹, McCarthy nevertheless writes in a contemporary, post-postmodern vein, primarily through engaging with recent trends in literary and philosophical theory: posthumanism, New Materialisms, Speculative Realism, and so on. This engagement is easily noticeable when surveying the common themes and motifs in his novels. In all his work, Tom McCarthy writes, I argue, to answer a simple yet infinitely complex question: how can one gain access to reality? Both from the perspective of a subject tormented by their own artificiality and from the perspective of a posthuman desire to do justice to materiality, McCarthy's novels describe the contemporary ontological status of both the human and the inhuman, with a particular emphasis on the interaction between the two. Crucially, however, McCarthy assumes this materialist stance which seems to be prevalent in contemporary art without abandoning the post-structuralist distancing from reality and affirmation of artificiality. Unlike other works emerging from the contemporary literary scene, McCarthy's not only allow for post-structuralist readings, but virtually demand them, while also being open to more recent concerns emerging in the wake of postmodernism. It is to this peculiar, yet, as I will strive to show, surprisingly productive mix of post-

structuralism and a contemporary scene oriented precisely against it, that I will dedicate the inquiries of this article. More specifically, this article aims to highlight the ways in which, in McCarthy's fiction, reality is paradoxically a product and a property of representations. In order to show this, I will be closely analyzing McCarthy's debut and breakthrough novel, *Remainder* (2005), where, I propose, the much-desired real emerges when artificiality is accelerated, intensified, to the point that the human merges not with the real, but with the fake, producing a nonhuman intensity that allows the real to resurface uninhibitedly. Initially, I will provide a brief summary of *Remainder* (section 2), to then emphasize the protagonist's postmodernist condition (section 3.1), and, subsequently, to describe his process of re-immersion (sections 3.2 and 3.3). Informed by the post-structuralist works of Deleuze and Guattari, I will argue that such an immersion is, once again, the product of embracing the artificial, rather than attempting to bypass it.

2. Summary

McCarthy's both debut and breakthrough novel, *Remainder* tells of an unnamed narrator protagonist's attempt to recover from an incident which leaves him incapable of performing any human action naturally. Having been hit in the head by a falling object – a mysterious event which is never discussed in detail yet which nevertheless permeates the plot of the novel – the protagonist (whom I will hence be referring to as X) finds himself unable to move, act, think and so on, without first understanding mechanically each step involved in it. For all intents and purposes, he has become a machine, a robot. This condition appears, we are told, immediately after X emerges from a deep comatose state in which the accident has placed him. The action itself starts with the concretization of the Settlement, an agreement by which X agrees never to mention the accident to anybody in exchange for eight and a half million pounds in compensation from the responsible parties. The absurdity and obscurity of this Settlement is augmented by the fact that X could never have mentioned the event in the first place, since he has lost all memory of his life before the accident. Regardless, X's lawyer Daubenay sees the affair finished, leaving X in a fascinating situation – an incredibly rich robot. Of the narrator's past life, the reader is only afforded with minimal information which is made available through two of X's friends: Greg and Catherine. Towards both of them, X feels distant and indifferent, especially when they try to help X decide what to do with his money. X then employs a stock-broker, Younger, with whom he decides to invest a great amount in the domains of technology and telecommunications.

The plot picks up in intensity when X, while at a house party, notices a crack in the wall of the bathroom which causes him to remember (though the factualness of this remembrance is questionable) a moment from his past. In this key moment, X is in his apartment, doing nothing extraordinary but nevertheless feeling real, immersed in life. The protagonist then decides to re-enact this precise moment, by staging it as faithfully as possible. With the help of a facilitator, Naz, and the money from the Settlement, a suitable building is bought, re-enactors are employed and everything is designed perfectly down to the most minute of details. X will then repeat certain movements –

going down the stairs, opening the fridge door, etc. - specific moments, to the point of perfection, when he feels most real. Throughout the rest of the novel, several such other moments are re-enacted: replacing a tire at a garage, a drive-by shooting, leading up to a final re-enactment, a bank heist. During all of these re-enactments, X experiences moments of intensity which not only cause him to feel real, but also plunge him into momentary lapses of consciousness which mirror his initial comatose state.

While in one of such trance-like moments, X realizes that his re-enactments are imperfect because they isolate specific events from reality, instead of merging them with it. Thus, X decides that his last re-enactment, the bank heist, should be conducted at the real bank. Naz, who designed and arranged all of the previous stagings, organizes this one as well, devising escape plans for X and several other re-enactors, while planning to kill the less important ones after the event. The re-enactment itself goes horribly wrong when one of the re-enactors trips and shoots another one. Regardless, X is jubilant, having finally managed to become immersed in life. The novel ends with X, Naz and a couple of other re-enactors on a plane, running from the scene. When authorities demand that the plane land, X hijacks it and has the pilot turn the plane continuously, in a figure eight pattern. Suspended, stuck, repeating the same artificial motion again and again, X nevertheless feels real.

3.1 The Condition

The beginning of McCarthy's *Remainder* is obscure to say the least. "Technology, parts, bits" (McCarthy 2005, 10) have had their say, and the protagonist is irreparably damaged, traumatized. He now has to understand everything – it is his absolute imperative: "I've learnt to do things slowly since the accident, understanding every move, each part of what I'm doing. I didn't choose to do things like this: It's the only way I can do them" (14). Precisely because he must think before he acts, he is separated from reality. It is therefore not necessarily the machinic behavior which X employs that is problematic, but rather that the behavior itself is only available through understanding; nothing is automatic, nothing is natural. Worse, than a machine, the narrator is "a low-quality machine" (38). Worse than artificial, he is self-consciously and self-reflexively artificial. One may liken this condition to the post-structuralist or postmodern one: "the novel begins with the recognizable postmodern lamentation of mediated existence" Irmtraud and Seita concur in their study on *Remainder* (262). Immediate access to reality is prohibited by the conscious interference of the subject, causing an insufferable alienation. What is important to note here is that X is not somehow rendered inhuman by the accident. Although several critics² have argued that McCarthy's protagonist is traumatically altered - rendered less human - by the accident, I would argue that, far from this, the human condition since the advent of modernity has been precisely that of absolute self-reflexiveness. In other words, X's desire to merge with his surroundings, his longing for an authentic way of being should not be associated with a desire to be human, but rather with a desire to transcend subjectivity and humanity. The protagonist, in Greg's words in the novel, is simply "more usual than everyone else" (59). Therefore, the accident ought not to be interpreted as a

disruptive event, as something which radically alters the subject's way of being. Rather, what the accident constitutes is precisely the birth of the subject itself. Out of the void of a comatose, preconscious state, X has negotiated his own existence, an existence which leaves him inert, indifferent, secluded. Let us now reconsider, then, both the accident and the Settlement itself. Nothing causes X to behave differently. Instead, the event with which the novel opens creates life as one knows it. Considered from this perspective, thus, the Settlement cannot be seen as a compensation for existing. Rather, I would propose that the absurd amount of money X receives is paradoxically part of the event. Money alienates, abstractifies reality. Further yet, perhaps the accident is nothing but the Settlement: a contract, one which provides the subject with the means to represent reality (currency), but one which simultaneously prohibits one from attempting to make sense of it. We are now, I argue, in an initial context of post-structuralist conditioning: alienated, separated. How do we approach what is real? Is there such a thing at all?

In recovering from such a frustratingly human condition, X is told to concentrate his efforts on understanding: "Understanding ... cuts circuits through your brain that will eventually allow you to perform the act itself. That's the idea" (48). There are dozens of steps involved in performing even the most basic of actions, such as walking, or holding a carrot, and the narrator is encouraged to visualize all of them, combine them; at some point, he is told, things will come naturally. Conceptualization, thinking, both constitute the condition of our protagonist, yet at the same time, they are held to be the solution to it as well. In theoretical terms, this is as if to say that the answer to a post-structuralist condition which gravitates around the real but never touches it, through endless linguistic chains of deferral and repetitive, complex abstraction is to delve deeper yet into this cognitive process; that somehow understanding will undo itself, revealing reality in its entirety. Yet this inevitably fails, because there will always be something left out, something which resists understanding or which when understood is misrepresented – namely, matter. Matter which is "dirty and irregular ... and you know, as soon as you see it, ... that it's not going to work" (49). Throughout the novel, X will repeatedly encounter things, objects, which disrupt his efforts of immersion; and as he himself remarks, "my undoing [is] matter" (43). If, then, understanding is our protagonist's condition, matter and materiality constitutes his absolute failure.

Nevertheless, the narrative indulges in speculating on the possibility of such conscious appropriation of reality. In a programmatically post-structuralist section of the novel, X misleads the reader by constructing an episode in which he observes and later approaches a beggar on the street. This latter individual seems to the protagonist to be in tune with matter, to be one and the same with it. X offers to buy the beggar a meal, to then ask him about his condition, in hopes of discovering, of understanding some deeper secret with regards to reality. Yet, as we progress, the narrative starts to gradually break down. If the waiter was first described as an old lady, they then become an Italian young woman; further yet, the white wine they order inexplicably becomes red when it is spilled. All of this leads to a final rejection of the story itself, when X confesses that all of this had been made up. He never approached the beggar in the first place, because he too, like all the other people X observes

while drinking coffee, was fake, artificial. Their every aspect was constructed, and even though they seemed to be immersed, it was all just a representation, a simulation: “and their swaggering, their arrogance: a cover. Usurpers. Frauds ... I didn’t go and talk to him. I didn’t want to, didn’t have a thing to learn from him” (148) There is nothing that understanding can do for X. McCarthy’s own conclusion here completely rejects efforts of rational speculation, of pure cognitive understanding. If one is to break representation, to transcend, understanding reality is not the way to go. X at least understands this.

3.2 Representations and Intensity

While at the movies with Greg, the protagonist can’t help but admire the actor’s performance. X is in awe at “how perfect De Niro was. Every move he made, each gesture was perfect, seamless” (57). Counterintuitively, it is the artificial reality, the filmed, staged one, which X can appreciate more than the real people on the real street. As opposed to De Niro’s performance, X’s interactions with Greg seem off: “It felt strange – the whole exchange. I felt we hadn’t done it right” (77). Additionally, another moment in which the protagonist feels an intensity which approximates a real state of being is when begging for money in the subway station. This, shortly after having been made a multi-millionaire, comes across as ridiculous – a man pretending to beg, even though he has more than enough. Despite the absurdity of it all, he feels real: “It made me feel so ... intense that I felt almost real” (109). What is common to both of the previously mentioned instances is their artificiality. In both performances, there is that which one would immediately call fake. Both X and De Niro go through motions, perform acts which are controlled, unnatural, and still they manage to project a degree of intensity which cannot be ignored. How is this possible? It is essential that this question be answered, because these are not isolated cases; at this early point in the novel, these two instances constitute merely intimations of what is to come and what is to dominate the rest of the narrative – the re-enactments.

The episode which prompts X to launch into his re-enacting mania calls for a close analysis. While at the house party, X wanders aimlessly through the apartment, his movement resembling that of a figure eight – which is a recurring motif in the novel. He is “bored – by people, ideas, the world: everything” (151), until he discovers a break in the pattern he had been tracing – a spare bathroom, outside the figure eight pattern of the apartment. Having entered, he notices the crack in the wall which will prove quintessential to the economy of the novel. Both the crack and the bathroom itself entail an outsideness of sorts. They are beyond structured patterns, beyond unifying, standardizing conceptualization. While the bathroom may be seen as a remainder, a residual which resists understanding, the crack itself – which is more important – is a complete negation of representation; it is an absence, a void. Strangely, however, it is out of this crack that the memories of a lost reality quite literally overflow in X’s mind. Already, then, one is presented with a hint as to the nature of this reality; namely, this memory appears out of thin air, with no solid, ‘real’ foundation. It is the product of the void, just like X himself. This is doubly confirmed by X’s adamant decision

which he makes in that bathroom: “I’d been real [in his memory] ... Right then I knew exactly what I wanted to do with my money. I wanted to reconstruct that space [the apartment] and enter it so that I could feel real again” (164). Two things are essential to notice here. Firstly, it is not by chance that the narrator specifies that it is “with [his] money” that the re-enactments will have been made possible. On the contrary, money proves to be the driving motor behind the creation and recreation of all the ensuing re-enactments. This speaks volumes as to the nature of those future representations. Specifically, these representations appear by virtue of the power of an abstraction, of an alienating force: money. They appear out of the ‘crack’ that economics is for reality (a negation of the latter). Secondly, in the same sentence that X mentions the idea of ‘reconstructing’ something, he also affirms that he will definitely “feel real again”. The underlying affirmation here, is that reality pertains to the representational, to the constructed, to the structured. Contrary to what multiple critics have pointed out³, reality for McCarthy is not that remainder which resists representation; rather, it is representation and nothing else. X, who by virtue of his condition is forced to question and ponder everything, does not stop, even for a second, to ask himself if reality might be other than constructed. Reality, then, pertains to performance, to spectacle; it can be designed, minutely calculated, and then felt. To this extraordinary effort, whose assumptions and implications previously described he does not comprehend, X nevertheless spends all his time, money and energy; he builds life.

It is essential to differentiate between the former two modes of constructing representation. On the one hand, there is the representing of reality through understanding. As previously mentioned, this is not a feasible option for X, nor is it for anyone. Understanding alienates. On the other hand, there is the type of representation which appears to X in that bathroom: “I couldn’t quite make it out exactly, but I got the general sense of it, the way it flowed. I let my mind flow over it, floating above it – sinking into it too, being absorbed by it” (176). What is prefigured here is intensity in its purest form. When X represents, he has no rationality based on which he makes his decisions; instead, the represented must feel right. Romantic as this may sound, this notion of intensity is in fact much closer to the Deleuzian one, a pre-personal intensity which not only resists conceptualization, but is also oriented directly against the subject. To this notion of intensity, as well as to the Deleuzian undertones it carries, I will return later, when dealing with the re-enactments themselves.

Before turning to the first re-enactment, however, one more scene calls for attention. When designing the re-enactments, X employs Naz to coordinate the logistics of it all. Several people are employed to scour London for an adequate building to purchase in order to stage X’s recovered memory. However, the protagonist is fully aware that only he can find the correct building. Still, he has Naz keep his people looking, and this is “because I liked the process, liked the sense of pattern” (237). Naz’ role, essentially, is that of arranging and organizing matter into the desired form for X. From a materialist perspective, then, this entire process is worse than artificial; it is transcendental – the subject’s tyranny over the object. And yet X likes the process, not only because of the ecstasy afforded by tyranny, but also – and perhaps more importantly - because he feels in it the same type

of intensity he experienced in the recovered memory. Consequently, not only is reality nothing but a representation, but the act of representing itself creates an intensity which immerses one in life. Accordingly, when, in the following paragraphs, I will be analyzing the re-enactments, the emphasis will not be placed on the extent to which X and Naz succeed in rendering them mimetic, realistic, but on the extent to which these re-enactments will have managed to perform fluently, if artificially, in order to channel intensity through representations.

The process of staging a re-enactment is tedious, to say the least. Everything has to match the memory X had, and so not only do many objects need to be carefully modified – the floor sanded to seem older, the stairway littered, windows smudged just the right way, the fridge’s door modified to open in a certain manner – but the re-enactors themselves have to comply to rather odd requirements. One of the neighbors must cook an exact amount of liver in a precise way to create a smell which is to waft up to X’s own apartment. Another, a pianist, has to make mistakes exactly how the memory dictated, while yet another neighbor is to continuously work on his motorbike, revving the engine to annoy the pianist at times. X himself has to practice brushing past the windowsill in just the right way, to create the sensation he had previously recalled. In a word, matter is controlled as much as possible. When it is all perfected, the narrator will “move throughout the space ... as I see fit. We’ll concentrate on different bits at different times. Different locations, different moments ... The combinations are endless” (220). Already, then, we move away from mere mimesis. X is in the ‘wrong’ places at the ‘wrong’ time; he does not aim to behave as if the re-enactment were real. Instead, he wants to take as much intensity in as possible. What the protagonist is working towards, in other words, is a more intensive type of representation; he refines, he crafts a specific image, “stripping away surplus matter” (229) allowing specific intensities to pass through.

Naturally, he fails. For the most part – and all of this is valid for all re-enactments – matter creeps in, ruining the ‘correct’ experience. Be it a smell of cordite, the cats on the opposite building’s roof falling too often, or the neighbor taking the trash out incorrectly, the re-enactment is more often than not inadequate. Yet, in a few but crucial moments, it all works, and matter behaves. Intensity then flows, and the narrator is real: “For a few seconds I felt weightless ... light but dense at the same time. My body seemed to glide fluently and effortlessly through the atmosphere around it – gracefully, slowly, like a dancer through water. It felt very good” (354). X then obsessively repeats the sequence which worked, feeling the same vertigo again and again, reminding us that this is not a unique, Romantic experience, but a carefully crafted product: “Again I felt the sense of gliding, of light density. The moment I was in seemed to expand and become a pool – a still clear pool that swallowed everything up in its calm contentedness” (363). Repetition is crucial here, since it shows that performativity in McCarthy’s vision is never transcendental: “The realness I was after wasn’t something you could just “do” and then have “got”: it was a state, a mode – one that I needed to return to again and again and again” (586-587). In other words, the experience of representation and intensity through performance is not simply a matter of doing the correct movements, but rather a matter of continuous, repetitive motion. Assuredly, the quality of the re-enactment matter extremely; yet at least

as important is their mind-numbing, trance-inducing repetition. Moreover, it is noticeable that the moment “swallows everything up”; in one sense, when intensity flows properly, the matter which had previously been constrained, modelled in specific ways, now becomes free – free of representation, and free of conceptualization. This idea is further reinforced through the narration itself. Overwhelmingly, the re-enactment episodes are dominated by long, strenuous descriptions of materiality; pages on pages of matter seem to pour on the reader, making conspicuous the amount of matter being controlled. However, in those moments of pure intensity, neither the narrator nor the reader is in contact with materiality. It has suddenly vanished, and what is left is the energy of the performance. Consequently, when intensity is achieved, a negative representation of matter emerges. This is when objects are freed, and when matter matters.

Of such moments as the latter, criticism has tended to provide two opposite interpretations. On the one hand, Violi's reading provides a perfect example of a transcendentalist reading when she argues that repetitions have “the capacity to penetrate the texture of material life” (Violi 2018, 106). Violi's transcendentalism here has to do with a decided affirmation of the possibility of interacting with materiality in and of itself – through repetition, Violi thus argues, one bypasses phenomenology, achieving a noumenal relationship with the object. Though I tend to agree that this is indeed the result of re-enacting repetitively, I nevertheless disagree that there is any sort of ‘penetration’ occurring in such scenes. Instead of the latter, what happens is an intensification of representation alone; there is no contact with materiality itself, only with phenomena which are accelerated in their performance to the point of meltdown. There is no transcendence going on; the subject is simply immersed in a trance, in a powerful vertigo, while, around him, matter flows freely, unobserved, untouched. On the other hand, criticism such as Irmtraud and Seita's argues that, during such moments of intensity, “matter is distilled into aesthetic form” (Irmtraud, Seita 2012, 267); that re-enactments, in other words, further degenerate the already tyrannized condition of materiality. This cannot be the case in a post-structuralist, horizontalized world, where whenever there is a subject, an interdiction of direct access is placed. One cannot treat matter ‘better’ or ‘worse’; when engaging with materiality, an absolute tyranny is already established. Thus, re-enactments cannot “distill” matter; it is already as distilled as it can get. Nevertheless, as I argue here, reality can be appropriated in a negative form, by intensifying representation (“aesthetic form” in the latter author's terms), thus having it – representation - break down, open up. It is, as I will now attempt to show, all very Deleuzian.

The re-enactment is a representation – a specific moment in life, isolated and refined. This representation is not mistaken for reality. Instead, it is treated as a representation, as artificial. And yet, when intensity emerges, when the performance flows seamlessly, the representation opens up, turning on itself and ‘revealing’ matter, raw matter which cannot be observed at all. What we are presented with, I argue, is Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in *Anti-Oedipus*. Specifically, I refer here to the notion that desiring-machines (or simply representations) function so that they may break down. There is an ontologically ‘real’ intensity which permeates representations, and, for Deleuze, this intensity is attained not by avoiding, or by dismissing representation, but by further

affirming it, accelerating its performativity to the point that it becomes deterritorialized, or schizophrenized: “Desiring machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down” (Deleuze, Guattari 2000, 31), Deleuze and Guattari argue, thus equating the notion of intensification with that of destruction, of dissolution. This equating lies at the theoretical core of this paper. In *Remainder* too, we have advanced, with the advent of re-enactments in the novel, from a desire to access reality, to a desire to experience one set of representations until their machinery falls apart, with a view to feeling intensity. The very notion of a re-enactment then, is synonymous with that of a desiring-machine. And, similarly to capitalism’s appropriation of desiring-machines, when one re-enactment has been intensified to its maximum capacity, our protagonist will move on to bigger, more complex ones, including more and more intensity, indefinitely. Admittedly, X is not an absolute schizophrenic in Deleuze’s conception, as that would imply the disappearance of representations; far from it, he is the exact opposite, a neurotic, bound to repeat everything, every re-enactment, again and again. Yet a schizoid world has never been a real possibility for Deleuze in the first place. His Body-without-Organs is an absolute, or a limit. What one can actually do with representations, Deleuze would have it, is precisely what X does in McCarthy’s novel – treat them as structures, as machines, and intensify artificiality, so that the process of deterritorialization may occur. Thus, despite the artificiality of it all, X feels realer and realer. In short, *Remainder*’s claim here is the very same that Deleuze and Guattari put forth when arguing that one has “to go further, to accelerate the process” (260). In order to become real, X further affirms the artificial. Such is the paradox which sustains the narrator’s longing for immersion, and as *Anti-Oedipus* tells us, “No one has ever died from contradictions. And the more it [a desiring-machine] breaks down, the more it schizophrenizes, the better it works, the American way.” (171)

The ensuing couple of re-enactments follow the same pattern, all leading to some key moments of experienced intensity. However, a number of particularities from each should be considered individually. To begin with, the premise of the second re-enactment is an accident which occurs at a car garage. X has his windshield liquid refilled, but when looking at the reservoir, he notices it has disappeared. This satisfies him, since it is matter – his nemesis - which has vanished: “matter – these two liters of liquid – becoming un-matter – not surplus matter, mess or clutter, but pure, bodiless blueness. Transubstantiated. I looked up at the sky: it was blue and endless” (McCarthy 2005, 420). After starting the engine, though, “a torrent of blue liquid burst out of the dashboard and cascaded down” (421). This is an episode of a failed transcendence, a moment of disappointment for a neurotic who longs for perfection. Nevertheless, X stages this precise moment – which begs the question: why? If previously the re-enacted moment had been one of immersion, this one is one of failure to do so. On a surface level, it would seem that this is the protagonist’s way of making peace with matter – including it in his re-enactments. This is what Miller argues in their essay, “Intentional Fallacies”⁴. Yet represented matter will always cease to be matter in and of itself. There is no way to include the remainder, the accidental, in a re-enactment; they are complete opposites. As an alternative to this interpretation, I would argue this re-enactment shows that the object of representation is irrelevant.

It does not matter whether one represents transcendence or the failure thereof; both types of representation have the same potential for intensity. One can feel real even when failing to transcend; perhaps one is even more real when this is the case. However decided X had been in the beginning to re-enact certain events, he now becomes gradually more aware that everything is a suitable candidate for his staging efforts. What the protagonist chooses to re-enact as the narrative develops becomes less and less important; X will take up and then abandon projects as he discovers others who captivate him more – it is as if his eyes have opened to the potentiality around him. What is happening here is a horizontalization of representations; there are no profound and superficial moments, there is no Romantic spot of time which demands attention. Instead – everything, everywhere, whenever; what matters is refining, getting all the details ‘right’, despite – or, as I previously argued, precisely because of – the superficiality of such a ‘rightness’.

Another important shift occurring as the re-enactments progress is that of an increasingly diminished self-awareness both on the part of the protagonist and of the other re-enactors. Initially, the relationship between X and the re-enactment he creates is that of a god and his subjects: complete control, absolute authority. In opposition to that, the latter re-enactments seem to possess X’s agency, to the extent that he no longer controls any performance: “our actions [were] passive. We weren’t doing them: they were being done” (527). The re-enactors move “mechanically, like zombies or robots” (433) while the movements themselves are “monotonous, hypnotic, endlessly repeating” (443). All of which peaks beginning with the drive-by murder re-enactment when X starts having frequent blackouts, lapsing in and out of comatose trances, especially when experiencing those moments of intensity when reality flows. And this is by no means an undesired consequence for X. Drag writes about this loss of agency as stemming from a trauma which entails “the subject’s lack of awareness of their repetitive behavior” (Drag 2015, 387). But this is obviously not the case, seeing as though X actively designs the re-enactments to be repeated exhaustively; he wants repetition to the point of annihilation not only unconsciously (if there even is such a notion in *Remainder*) but consciously, cerebrally, intellectually too. When he plays the role of the victim, who was fatally shot after falling from a bicycle, he declares that “for me, this man had become a symbol of perfection. It may have been clumsy to fall from his bike, but in dying beside the bollards on the tarmac, he’s done what I wanted to do: merged with the space around him, sunk and flowed into it until there was no distance between it and him” (484). It would seem, then, that the entire affirmed, intentional purpose of the re-enactment is to create a death of sorts – a death of consciousness. In other words, the intensification of representation not only schizophrenizes (destroys) representation itself, freeing materiality, but it also simultaneously neutralizes the human subject: “I felt myself beginning to drift into them, these surfaces – and to drift once more close to the edges of a trance” (551). Thus, in death, within a space of dying, the subject-object merger is temporarily complete.

The reappearance of comatose states sends one back to the beginning of the novel. It is the accident, along with the Settlement, which creates the protagonist’s condition. Yet now we see that an important part of the re-enactments entails reaching the very same trance-like state. Such a desire –

conscious or unconscious – to return to the origin of one’s suffering can be suggestive of the psychology of the traumatic. However, as Vermeulen extensively shows in his article on the novel⁵, McCarthy’s preoccupation is set precisely against the grain of traditional humanistic views of trauma. Instead, then, it could be argued that the annihilation of the subject as it is traditionally known may actually lead to a greater amount of intensity being channeled. Consider this initial scene, where X describes his earliest memories after the accident: “I lay abject, supine, tractioned and trussed up, all sorts of tubes and wires pumping one thing into my body and sucking another out, electronic metronomes and bellows making this speed up and that slow down, their beeping and rasping playing me, running through my useless flesh and organs like sea water through a sponge” (11). Here, we are presented not with a subject, not with an ‘I’, but with a series of material objects, all “tractioned and trussed up”, being connected to an elaborate machine meant to keep intensity flowing through the body. I would argue that it is at this point in the novel and nowhere else that X is most immersed. His every atom is part of the machine, part of materiality – he has become a conductor for intensity. In consequence, the more X loses consciousness during re-enactments, the closer he gets to his initial state, the more successful his endeavor is. The whole novel is a journey – an attempt to reappropriate not a lost life, but a lost death. An increasingly post-humanist note begins to appear here, and this should not come as a surprise, given that McCarthy himself is fully dedicated to an anti-humanist cause in literature. The author decries the persistence of a literature which is still centered around the human subject, specifically when it comes to realism as the expression of human affect⁶. Yet, perhaps even more than a simple rejection of traditional literary creation, the post-humanism presented to us in *Remainder* further stresses the importance of a disfigured, dehumanized subject. Not only should art stop emphasizing humanity, but the latter itself should be radically altered in its engagement and relation to materiality. Connected to the many intensities and flows of representations we ourselves create, we, no longer individuals but ‘dividuals’, gradually melt, becoming the very matter we had hoped to set free: “No beauty without violence, without death”, declares X (469). A typically Deleuzian future is envisioned here one in which the deterritorializations of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* are only properly developed in the absence of the human. In the case of *Remainder*, however, the ending of the novel forces things to take a different turn.

3.3 The Solution

The protagonist had started his process of immersion by carefully selecting a moment of importance – the apartment memory -, which he then even more carefully re-enacted. Next came a moment not from a questionable past when X was realer, but an accident from his present. Following this were a series of events which X had not even witnessed when he made the decision to re-enact them. As previously mentioned, this is essentially the description of a process of horizontalizing representation: from quintessential moments to virtually anything, which is partly what Deleuze argued in his own work. Intertwined with this process is another of dehumanization,

previously analyzed, which mirrors post-humanist veins of thought. Promising as this combination may seem, it is not enough for the main character. Quite suggestively, both this acknowledgement of failure and the solution to it stem from one of the many moments in which X loses consciousness, entering a dehumanized, machinic state of being. During such an episode, the protagonist encounters the mysterious figure of a “councilor”, who bluntly interrogates him with regard to his entire project: “So when, recently, has he felt most real?” (586), the councilor asks X, referring to his interlocutor through the use of 3rd person, as if to suggest that this entire conversation is not only an interior monologue, but one in which self-reflexiveness has led to a complete disassociation from the self, the ‘I’ (a subtle post-humanist touch). This episode sets in motion a series of realizations and assessments which culminate with X deciding to move his final re-enactment – the bank heist - to the real world: “Yes, lifting the re-enactment out of its demarcated zone and slotting it back into the world, into an actual bank whose staff didn’t know it was a re-enactment: that would return my motions and my gestures to ground zero and hour zero, to the point at which the re-enactment merged with the event” (643). What occurs here is the destruction of the final barrier which distinguished between reality and representation, or re-enactment. Until this point, X had dedicated his efforts on isolating moments from reality, wresting them from the larger system of life itself, to then concentrate on performing within those secluded cross-sections. Now, an essential realization is arrived at – namely, that “cutting the detour that sweeps around what’s fundamental to events” (642) also implies performing not in isolation, but within the global system of representations. As multiple critics have quickly noticed⁷, this idea of transferring an artificial event into real life, in fact the idea of applying this to a bank robbery itself, is borrowed from Baudrillard’s *Simulations and Simulacra*⁸, where the latter author attempts to prove a point – that the real and the fake have been overlapped and intertwined to the extent that either term no longer carries any meaning. Instead of real/fake, Baudrillard famously argues, we have both and neither; we have the hyperreal, a concept which X quite literally describes as he observes the world around him on the day of the heist:

The other re-enactors in my car looked through the windows fascinated, watching shoppers, businessmen, mothers with push-chairs, and traffic wardens walking up and down the pavement, entering and leaving shops, crossing the road, milling around at bus stops ... I watched too, with the same fascination ... They were all doing it just right: standing, moving, everything – and this without even knowing they were doing it ... I knew that the re-enactment zone was non-existent, or that it was infinite, which amounted in this case to the same thing. (688-689)

An infinite re-enactment – the entirety of the world has become for the protagonist a playground for representation and intensity. All borders have collapsed, and there is no longer any isolation. As the characters glance around, taking in the complexity of everything as if for the first time, they notice the intensity, the perfection in each and every movement, each and every performance. In other words, instead of attempting to alter representations in a neurotic manner, with hopes of allowing for as much intensity to pass through as possible, what X does now is to affirm the infinite potential for intensity in

every single representation out there. There is nothing to refine here, nothing to work on; all performance is perfect performance, a conclusion which immediately sends one to Deleuze's ideal BwO – intensity liberated, flowing freely, schizophrenically. This passage, from a post-structuralist inertia to a Deleuzian vitalism, I consider to be fundamental to McCarthy's *Remainder*. It is at this point that X can finally rest his case, cease his effort for improvement. Once affirmed, the world as one big, hyperreal representation which is always, already perfect opens up to X, embraces him completely.

One final aspect needs to be considered here. What about matter? The very reason X had felt it necessary to remove his re-enactments from the influence of the world was the negative effect of “surplus matter”, which worked to ruin representations. Has something changed? Yes, it has. For the greater part of the novel, the protagonist had waged his war against matter in all its forms: “We had to treat information as matter: stop it spilling, seeping, trickling, dribbling; getting in the wrong place and becoming mess” (644). No mess was allowed. Unexpectedly, however, a gradual acceptance of this ubiquitous mess emerges. Slowly, almost unperceivably, X learns to work with representation even when it does not conform to his dictates. First it was an oil stain made by the bike enthusiast during the first re-enactment; then it was the windshield fluid bursting through the dashboard; later on it was another stain on the tarmac during the rehearsals for the bank heist. The accidental, the unaccounted for, the mistaken and erroneous, they all become gradually accepted as part of the re-enactment, contributing to its intensity channeling, as opposed to being regarded as inhibiting elements. However, it is important to clarify the status of the accidental within the novel. As previously mentioned, some criticism has seen this working with instead of against the accidental as a sign of the emergence of a new type of literature, one which stops trying to control its subject and object, one which stops being artificial by embracing the random and the absurd as part of a movement towards realism. Yet McCarthy is an avowed anti-realist; his purpose has never been to complete the modernist endeavor for authenticity, but rather to do precisely the opposite. The accidental, for him, must never be appropriated, it must remain that which arrests the subject driven by transcendental dreams. Other voices⁹ have associated the radical other, the unaccounted for, with matter itself, making of *Remainder* a novel in which matter and materiality erupts, encroaching on X's feeble attempts of control. This is a more plausible approach, yet it too falls short in assuming that materiality can erupt, facing the human head-on, and vice-versa. In truth, one never encounters the material in and of itself; the noumena are forever inaccessible. Instead, I would argue that the protagonist embraces matter not as matter, but as representation. His discovery is that, wherever and whenever he looks, he can find a complex system capable of funneling intensity, and this includes matter. By the end of the novel, X is capable of taking the accidental, the surplus, the remainder, and inscribe it into a system of re-enactments, or representations, which can produce energy. When, as X realizes, the whole world is an infinite re-enactment, there is no real remainder. Evidently, this is a totalizing view, one which affirms the subject's tyranny over the object. Yet, as I have attempted to argue, what can undo this totalizing representation is precisely its intensification. The protagonist will indulge in his infinite re-enactment to the point of annihilation; then and only then will matter have been freed.

Which is precisely what happens. Of the final re-enactment, X tells us succinctly that he knows “two things: one, it was a fuck-up; two, it was beautiful” (687). Though repeated and rehearsed obsessively, the heist goes poorly – one of the re-actors trips and accidentally shoots another; this is matter resisting totalization once more. Before this moment, X had begun to feel real: “I’d reached an intimate cell, a chamber far beneath the surface of the movements and positions. I was right inside the pattern, merging, part of it ... an started to become real” (698). Then the accident happened, and one would expect this moment of failed transcendence to interrupt the intensity flowing through X, given that this precise moment of interruption had appeared in each and every re-enactment so far. Yet what happens is the exact opposite: “Beautiful!” X declares when the re-actor drops dead – “The tingling really burst its banks now; it flowed onwards from my spine’s base and flowed all around my body ... The intensity augmented until all my senses were going off at once” (715). No need to stop the re-enactment; however ‘poorly’ it may go, intensity will find its way to X, who now affirms its full extent. Later on, when making his escape from the scene, X will board a plane headed to an unspecified destination. When commanded to land, the protagonist instead will have the plane endlessly turn in the air, drawing a figure eight on the sky. Why? Because while turning his “coffee cup slid to the side of the table top; coffee sloshed over the edge onto its surface. We righted again. The coffee trickled back into the middle of the table top, towards my sleeve. I didn’t move my hand out of the way; *I wanted it to stain it.*” (745, my italics). The novel ends like this, with an apparent inconclusiveness which leaves things quite literally in the air. Still, the conclusion here is more than decisive - it is enthusiastic. Everything is just a re-enactment, but it is always a perfect one.

Remainder is ultimately a novel about matter, about the possibility of co-existing with as well as controlling it: “... matter’s what makes us alive – the bitty flow, the scar tissue, signature of the world’s very first disaster and promissory note guaranteeing its last. Try to iron it out at your peril” (743). As seen here, in one of the only deeply intimate remarks of its protagonist, it is also a novel about the impossibility of negating matter by creating perfect representations of it. Yet, perhaps most importantly, McCarthy’s *Remainder* tells not of transcending this representational stage in its protagonist’s life, but rather of intensifying its capacity to the point that all matter is included in it. Through that intensity, matter matters, even though – or perhaps precisely because – the protagonist has no interest in such an ethics of materiality. In the theoretical terms which I have employed so far, this novel describes the passage from a post-structuralist inertia accompanied by post-poststructuralist speculative optimisms to a Deleuzian discovery of intensity, affirming representation and its energy in any given form, including the dreaded “surplus”, whose negative connotations dissolve as intensity flows. Through such a passage, a negative immersion is achieved, and abstraction, alienation is removed. If there is one thing to take from *Remainder*, thus, it is that there is no remainder - nothing needs to be eliminated, nothing needs to be assimilated - or that everything is a remainder, which really amounts to the same thing.

Endnotes:

1. Matthew Hart, Aaron Jaffe, Jonathan Eburne. "An Interview with Tom McCarthy." *Contemporary Literature* 54. 4 (Winter 2013): 657-682.
2. Wojciech Drag. "Compulsion to Re-enact: Trauma and Nostalgia in Tom McCarthy's "Remainder"." *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)* 21. 2 (2015): 377-392; Sydney Miller. "Intentional Fallacies: (Re)enacting the Accidental in Tom McCarthy's "Remainder"." *Contemporary Literature* 56. 4 (2015): 634-659; Pieter Vermeulen. "The Critique of Trauma and The Afterlife of The Novel in Tom Mccarthy's "Remainder"." *Modern Fiction Studies* 58. 3, New British Fiction (2012): 549-568.
3. Sydney Miller. "Intentional Fallacies: (Re)enacting the Accidental in Tom McCarthy's "Remainder""; Alessandra Violi. "Re-run and Re-read Tom McCarthy's Remainder as an Archeology of the Present." *English Literature* 5 (2018): 91-110.
4. Sydney Miller. "Intentional Fallacies: (Re)enacting the Accidental in Tom McCarthy's "Remainder"".
5. Pieter Vermeulen. "The Critique of Trauma and The Afterlife of The Novel in Tom Mccarthy's "Remainder"".
6. See Matthew Hart, Aaron Jaffe, Jonathan Eburne. "An Interview with Tom McCarthy". p. 676.
7. Alessandra Violi. "Re-run and Re-read Tom McCarthy's Remainder as an Archeology of the Present"; Wojciech Drag. "Compulsion to Re-enact: Trauma and Nostalgia in Tom McCarthy's "Remainder""; Sophie Seita, Irmtraud Huber. "Authentic Simulacra or The Aura of Repetition: Experiencing Authenticity in Tom McCarthy's Remainder." *The Aesthetics of Authenticity: Medial Constructions of the Real*, Ed. by Wolfgang Funk, Florian Groß and Irmtraud Huber. Transcript Press: Bielefeld, 2012.
8. See the first chapter, "The Precession of Simulacra", in Baudrillard's *Simulation and Simulacra*.
9. Sophie Seita, Irmtraud Huber. "Authentic Simulacra or The Aura of Repetition: Experiencing Authenticity in Tom McCarthy's Remainder".

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Attribution Accuracy Verification by Comparing Stylometric Conclusions Against Patterns in the Publishing Credits

Anna Faktorovich

Anaphora Literary Press

1108 W 3rd Street, Quanah TX 79252, USA

E-mail: director@anaphoraliterary.com

Abstract:

The analysis of bibliographic textual information must be an essential step in any stylometric authorship attribution study. This article describes patterns among the credits given on 18th and 19th century British title-pages to printers and booksellers. These patterns are contrasted against the stylometric findings of a new method that was applied to 634 texts from these centuries. The biographies of these printers and booksellers are explored for relevant evidence. And the history of publishing is summarized to explain the significance of the findings.

Keywords: bibliography, stylometry, computational-linguistics, attribution, authorship, publishing, printing, bookselling

Across the different computational-linguistics attribution studies, such as Hugh Craig's,¹ none go beyond listing the tested currently accepted bylines and book titles. And in larger corpuses, such as Zhao and Zobel's,² even the titles might not be included, as it is assumed that readers can figure out what 42 texts have been assigned to a byline such as "Shakespeare". This absence can be blamed on the disconnection between the computer scientists designing and applying programs to test stylometric features to reach quantifiable attribution conclusions, and the linguists and literature scholars who later write introductions to canonical books using these bylines. The recording and analysis of bibliographic data, together with the history of how bylines first came to be assigned to texts must be a required step in any authorship attribution methodology. Both the "Christopher Marlowe" and the "Jane Austen" bylines were first-assigned by publishers without any linguistic evidence to previously anonymous texts, after their deaths, centuries apart, in 1593 and 1817. Such profiteering posthumous or ghostly byline assignments are not exceptions, but rather engulf more than these percentages of the tested corpuses (not counting initialed or otherwise cryptically-bylined texts): 24% of the Renaissance, 14% of the 18th century, and 11% of the 19th century. None of these previously posthumously or post-first-publication assigned bylines can be counted as "undisputed", since a dispute of these texts' anonymity first added their bylines. Some bylines have been changed several times over the centuries. For example, poems that carried the "*Ignoto*" anonymous byline in "Francis Davison's" *Poetical Rhapsody* (1611), and *English Helicon* (1600), were also published in the Renaissance under

the “Christopher Marlowe”-byline, and then in the 19th century they were re-assigned to “Sir Walter Raleigh” in Egerton Brydges’ *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh: Now First Collected* (1814).

The history of authorship in Britain cannot be separated from the history of publishing and the profiteering tactics of publishers, stage managers and other beneficiaries from this trade in words. British publishers or their editors have made most of the first byline assignments to anonymous texts, including adding the “Austen” byline posthumously. Since the publishers were forming contracts with authors or their ghostwriters, they are indeed the business entity most capable of explaining authorial trends. This article is a fragment out of the first volume, *Introduction to Stylometry for Attribution*, out of a new series that re-attributes texts from the 18th and 19th centuries. Previously, I published the 20-volume British Renaissance Re-Attribution and Modernization series (BRRAM).³ In both studies I use a new stylometric attribution method that combines 23-27 different types of linguistic tests for punctuation, parts-of-speech and lexical elements to cluster texts by their linguistic-signatures. BRRAM’s analysis of the Renaissance corpus concluded that 2 out of the 6 ghostwriters also held publishing monopolies: William Byrd in music books in Britain, and Richard Verstegan in exiles’ Catholic books. When European governments granted legal publishing monopolies to individuals, they invited them to restrict access to the press, and to manipulate these markets to their financial benefit. The small ghostwriting workshops I uncovered in my attribution studies of Britain between the Renaissance and 1899 are intricately linked to the publishers of these works. Thus, my quantitative linguistic attributions are strengthened when they agree with the conclusions that can be drawn from patterns in their bibliographic information.

To unify the quantitative attributions to this bibliographic information, this is a fragment out of the section that analyzes the patterns in the “Publication Data” tab of the spreadsheets of 18th and 19th century corpuses. The columns of greatest interest are the publishers or printers, the booksellers, the theaters, and the history of byline assignments. This section only addresses patterns among the printers and booksellers listed on title-pages.

The patterns of highest interest are those that show exclusivity between a linguistic-group or a ghostwriter and one of these bibliographic elements. One such revealing pattern is that all dramas in the 18th century corpus fall into the linguistic B-group. The B-group must have been correctly grouped for there to be such generic sorting precision. After a pattern of this type is observed in this bibliographic summary, the documentary evidence that explain its deeper significance will be explored in later biographical and historical sections of this study.

Printers, Booksellers and Publishers

In the 18th and 19th centuries, some of the best-known “authors” were also credited as their own publishers. These author-publishers include “Samuel Richardson”, “Charles Dickens”, “Walter Scott” and “William Blake”; they printed, sold, advertised, registered, and sponsored the releases of their own works, and these self-publications and self-promotions achieved greater fame for them than for the majority of authors who used otherwise-bylined publishers. The line between authors

and publishers was also blurred when publishers, such as “Charles Gildon” and “Edmund Curlll”, assigned their bylines to prefaces, letters and other content. Some of the same publishers who first assigned puffed bylines, such as “Austen”, were also advertising themselves as authors. Given these overlaps, it would be absurd to research authorship attributions without considering the likelihood that at least some of the profitable publishers were themselves the underlying ghostwriters behind linguistically-matching texts from multiple different bylines.

A few term definitions are necessary before exploring the bibliographic patterns in publishing credits. The title-page of 18th and 19th century books typically listed two different entity types, in place of a modern *publisher*. The bookseller was the owner of a bookshop where books were “sold at...” The printer was the owner of a printshop that books were “printed by...” Stationer was a more general term for employees in the book and periodical design and production industries, including not only the pressing of printed books, but also the papermaking, packaging, and design. There were licenses that booksellers and printers had to obtain to operate, but those listed as booksellers and printers were likely to have apprentices or employees who performed the manual labor. The Licensing Act lapsed in 1695, and this lifted previous limits on the number of presses that could operate in England, and the number of apprentices one master could sponsor.⁴ The Stationers’ Company held a pre-publication monopoly over the publishing industry in Britain until its grip was loosened by the Copyright Act of 1710; this Act was assisted by a propaganda campaign, attributed mostly to “Daniel Defoe”, in books such as the initially-anonymous and printer/bookseller-lacking *An Essay on the Regulation of the Press* (1704). *Essay* argued that licensors had held power to bar a publication license to an “author” whose political beliefs they disliked; it recommended that the credited “author” in the byline should be held responsible as the “seller” post-publication for the contents of the book, unless the names of the “Printer or Bookseller” is also “affixed to the book”. Thus, “no book can be published, but there will be somebody to answer for it. Whoever puts a false name, to forfeit... etc.”⁵ The last phrase specifies the trick the anonymous author of this *Essay* was anticipating to avoid blame for books’ content: the utilization of “false” or fictitious authorial, bookselling and printing bylines, or using “strawmen” or “fronts” to credit unknowing parties to protect the underlying ghostwriters and ghost-publishers profiting from the larger market-monopolization. Before this Act, stationers were the main licensors who could refuse publication rights; while after the Act, publishers merely had to continue paying them to register copyright claims, while the censorship role shifted more firmly to post-publication oversight by the Attorney-General, Parliament and the courts, who could raise objections over issues such as sedition and libel. The term publisher generally referred to a book’s sponsor, who paid for the printing and the copyright registration, or had invested in owning a share of a publishing business. If there was a plagiarism, byline, or copyright dispute, it was typically the publisher who took the matter to court. The publisher’s name typically appears in the Stationers’ Register of new books, as the publisher would have paid the publication fee.

“James Lackington’s” (1746-1815) *Memoirs* offer a helpful introduction to these terms and the

tricks of the publishing industry. “Lackington” describes himself as a “present Bookseller in Chiswell-Street, Moorfields, London”. A similar publishing credit is given in the tested G-group “Thomas King”-bylined *Check on Uncharitableness* (1791), which is also described as “Printed for the Author” and “sold” at, among other places, “Chiswell-Street”. “Lackington” was born too late to have been the ghostwriter behind the G-group, but otherwise he seems to be a great candidate as a potential ghostwriter-publisher behind this group. “Lackington” writes in a letter addressed to potential authors: “A gentleman a few years since showed a manuscript to a publisher, which he refused to purchase, but offered to be the publisher if the gentleman would print it, etc. at his own expense, which he readily agreed to do.” The author is said to have asked to sponsor the printing of as many books as there are people in Great Britain, but the publisher talked him down to 1,250, of which only 100 copies happened to have sold. Most of the books were “consigned to oblivion, through the... mismanagement of publishers”. In this context, the “publisher” is merely an agent who connects an author to various other entities in the publishing business; this publisher takes money from the self-sponsoring author, keeps some of these funds, and uses the rest to pay fees to the book’s printer, for the license to the registration office, and to a periodical to run a small advertisement for the book. This industrious publisher makes a large profit from performing these few administrative tasks because the author would either be rejected if he attempted to purchase these services themselves, or the author is misled into believing there is something special the publisher can do to generate sales. The trick to the publishers’ profitability is to find “authors” willing to sponsor as many printed copies as possible, so that the publisher, printer, and all other collaborating parties maximize their profits. A publisher or a printer can even “purchase” 100 copies themselves, if this convinces the author a publication at least gave them some public visibility or fame. Labeling 100 out of 1,250 copies as “sold” would only discount by a small percentage the author’s enormous publication bill. “Lackington” exemplifies how he and other British publishers puffed or sold this publishing process, while hiding its underhanded corruption. Booksellers unanimously refused to contract directly with authors. “Authors who become their own publishers” are said to “seldom or never answer” because a self-publisher cannot sell their books through booksellers or bookstores, and must instead sell them in their own private house, to which the public is unwilling to go. Booksellers are said to avoid self-published authors because such publications “abridge” their “usual profits”, when contrasted with them not needing to give a share to the author when the author sells the copyright to the book to them; this sale of the copyright to a party other than the author seems to have been the main function of a publisher. “The more liberality authors exercise towards the trade, the greater will be their profits in the end.”⁶ In other words, only authors who entirely sponsor their publication, and do not contract for a percentage from the sale are welcomed by this publishing enterprise. In contrast, all professional-authors who hope to make a living from writing, or selling their writerly labor to publishers would be rejected from direct publication in this system. “Lackington’s” testimony clarifies the barriers to entry to self-published authors from selling directly to booksellers, and to professional-authors from selling either directly to buyers, or to non-profit-driven publishers who

paid for pre-publication writerly-output. These barriers forced professional authors, who relied on a wage for their writerly labor, to instead sell ghostwriting services to those who wanted to pay for authorial fame through undeserved authorship bylines.

There was a steep decline in the percentage of British books' title-pages that listed printers between the Renaissance's 256 out of 303 texts (85%), to the 18th century's 77 out of 311 texts (25%). Then, this rate of printer-listings remained steady at 26% in the 19th century corpus, with 83 out of 323 texts. This rapid change in printer-listing preferences must have been tied to the end of the Stationers' monopoly and the Copyright Act of 1710. If Stationers no longer held a monopoly, they were no longer able to endorse unlimited quantities of fictitious or "false" printer bylines. When Parliament and other governing bodies gained oversight over printers, it became more advantageous to leave out the printer's name all together. A few printers could continue to monopolize the market, but now mostly under the guise of anonymity, instead of relying on false or strawman printer bylines. The growth of the power of the publisher as an intermediary between the printer and "author" also minimized the need for printers to advertise their individual services in their books. The subterfuge around printer bylines was not merely to protect individual printers from libel, sedition, and plagiarism charges, but also to protect the illusion of competition in an industry that was in fact controlled by very few players.

Another shift between the Renaissance and 18th century's printer credits was the spread of openly fictitious business names (known as trade or doing-business-as names), such as Apollo Press (Edinburgh printer listed in 1782), Literary Press (mostly a self-publishing effort of "Rev. Dr. John Trusler" at "No. 62, Wardour-Street, Soho", 1780s-1800), and Logographic Press (1784-1813). Though back in the Renaissance, there were also a few examples of trade printer credits to Eliot's Court Press, Oxford University Press and Printers to the University of Cambridge. The standard personal bylines of the stationers or licensed printers remained as the most popular type of printer-credit across the 18th and 19th centuries. The underhanded multi-byline printing monopolization of these early centuries appears to have been brought into the open during the 20-21st century mergers among publishers that resulted in only the fictitiously-named Big Five publishers monopolizing the world's book trade. In the US, monopolization statistics were cited in a failed 2021-3 lawsuit filed by book buyers against Amazon (in control of 50% of all books sold) and the Big Five publishers (controlling over 80% of the trade book market and over 40% of the overall publishing).⁷ This shift to open corporate monopolization across most industries took place by the end of the 19th century, when it was noticed that John D. Rockefeller's fictitiously-named Standard Oil Company controlled 90-95% of U.S. oil refineries.⁸ One of the reasons Rockefeller managed to gain such a large market share before this monopoly was broken up was because he used a corporate name, and not his own name, despite his controlling ownership of this entity. Thus, markets can be controlled merely by manipulating the names of printers; for example, the illusion of market-diversity can be generated by calling a single monopolizing publisher's output not by its solitary corporate name, but instead by the distinct names of dozens of its "imprints".

Out of the 77 texts with listed printer bylines in the 18th century corpus, only 6 printers released 2 texts, while the other 65 printers only published 1 of these canonical texts. It is hardly believable that any printer could have maintained a printing career by only publishing a single major publication. Either most of these printers were also publishing the books that did not list any printers, or a smaller group of printers were using some of the other pseudonymous bylines. Meanwhile, only 1 of these 6 same-printer pairs has 2 texts that both fall in the same linguistic group. Both texts in this pair are dramatic comedies from the B-group that were printed by “J. [John] Almon” (1737-1805) and sold at “No. 183, Fleet-Street”; they include: “Leonard MacNally’s” *Robin Hood; Or, Sherwood Forest: A Comic Opera* (Covent Garden Theatre, 1784) and “Frederick Pilon’s” *The Fair American: A Comic Opera* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane, 1785, 1782). While 2 publications are hardly genre-defining, this slight pattern deserves some speculation regarding this printer’s potential implication in ghostwriting. Though these questions are truncated by the simple fact that John Almon was born too late to have ghostwritten the B-group. Despite this setback, further research into Almon is warranted, as he is best-known as the bookseller who was convicted of seditious libel for publishing the *Letters of Junius* (1772); this was a set of anonymous letters critical of King George III’s administration. No punishment, such as a jail term, was recorded for Almon, so he might have volunteered to only publish the government’s propaganda going forward in exchange for this leniency. While this pair of “Almon”-printed plays was staged at 2 different “Theatre-Royals”, there is a clear pattern between these two and one more B-group play with a unique printer-credit. Only this one, earlier, 18th century play, “Moses Mendez’s” *Robin Hood: A New Musical Entertainment* (1751), is credited as printed by the “Theatre-Royal” itself. This indicates that it is likely that the Theatre-Royal initially experimented with crediting itself as the self-printer, before turning to sponsoring the publications of their plays under the credits of other printers, such as “Almon”. This pattern is a strong indicator that the monopolization of the B-group by a single ghostwriter was interlinked to the British monarchy’s monopolization of the theatrical industry through strict licensing laws. With as few as two theaters licensed to stage plays in London across the 18th century, and both being described as propagandistic branches of the monarchy (“Theatre-Royal”), it was far easier to fully control the theatrical output by only hiring one ghostwriter to deliver the desired messages. Only 16 dramas were tested in the 19th century corpus, and these were split between 2 linguistic groups: A2 and C2. These groups are labeled as A and C in the 19th century spreadsheet, but they (and the other groups) are labeled as A2 and C2 here to distinguish them from the 18th century’s A and C groups. A2 includes “Charles Millward’s” *The Grand Annual Comic Christmas Pantomime Entitled, Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross* (1874); this play happened to be printed by “Theatre Royal Printing Works”. Most of the other 19th dramas do not list any printer. Thus, this restatement that even a 19th century play’s publication was sponsored by the “Theatre Royal” confirms the monopoly this entity continued to hold over Britain’s dramatic output until at least the end of the 19th century.

In the 19th century corpus, there are significantly more printer names credited with more than

1 of these canonical publications. This also means that there are fewer unique printer bylines. Out of the 85 texts with named printers, there are only 51 different printer names (including both individual bylines and business names). There was blatant consolidation of the printing industry as it shrunk from 71 named canonical printers in the 18th century to only 51 in the 19th century. In contrast with the 2-book maximum from printers in the 18th corpus, the 19th century credits most printers with *at least* 2 releases. And a few 19th century printers were especially industrious. The most productive 19th century printers are Ballantyne & Co. (called by a few variants of this name across the century) and Spottiswoode & Co. 5 out of 7 titles that Ballantyne published in London and Edinburgh are poetry collections from the B2-group.

Some of these printing credits are misleading, as different company names can refer to the same printing-business owner. An important example that deserves scrutiny is the two titles (in the G2 and J2 groups) that are credited as printed by Sir Walter Scott's Press. Walter Scott (1771-1832) was one of the founding investors in both the press that carried his byline, and in Ballantyne & Co. Scott could not have been the underlying ghostwriter of any of the 3 linguistic groups that matched books assigned to his byline because he died too early for these groups' publishing timelines. And Ballantyne & Co.'s name came from its other two initiators, James (1772-1833) and John Ballantyne (1774-1821). Both brothers were born early enough to have written the texts in the C2-group (that includes "Scott's" other *Waverley* novel, *Rob Roy*), but they died too early to have played this ghostwriting role. And they are chronologically entirely unlikely to have been ghostwriters behind either the B2 or K2 groups. James had started his career as a licensed-printer of "Scott's" early works, while John acted as the manager of the Ballantyne & Co. entity that Scott formed in 1808. One of the great publishing mysteries of this period is how the *Waverley* series could have had record-breaking sales, and yet John Ballantyne managed to have continuous financial troubles, before he died as a bankrupt. The idea that this series was a bestseller was puffed by J. G. Lockhart's potentially entirely fictitious posthumous *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1837), which reported that James Ballantyne had first preemptively printed the first *Waverley* novel, and then convinced Archibald Constable, the "publisher", to pay £700 for the copyright to it (a flat advance fee, to be enlarged with half of the profits, if they ended up being higher than this amount), before this novel went on to sell the entire first 1,000-copy print-run in 5 weeks, and then the second and third editions of 3,000 copies in the next 4 months.⁹ If these sales statistics had been accurate and similar success was seen in the following *Waverley* novels; then, the 1825 banking crisis should not have triggered Ballantyne and Scott's bankruptcy, as they should not have needed loans, if sales exceeded expenses. It is perhaps more likely that Scott had been taking out personal loans beyond his means through this publishing business, and this debt was heightened by the crisis, and the pressure of repayment was the reason Scott agreed to allow his byline to be added to the *Waverley* novels for the first time in the 1829 edition, rightly hoping that his aristocratic and judicial status would help generate new sales. Previously, "Scott" had only sponsored a poetic byline credit on *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). The changes between the different versions of the Ballantyne & Co., Ballantyne Press:

Ballantyne, Hanson and Co., Ballantyne, Hansom & Co. and other name variants, and the alternative use of Sir Walter Scott's Press might have been indicators of these undercurrents of financial fraud tied to these businesses. A successful publishing company, without such underlying problems and in cases where new partners have not been added, would have naturally wanted to retain the same name, as it gained recognition across that century.

There is a wider stylistic diversity among Spottiswoode's 7 London printings: 3 C2-group novels, 2 rhetorical texts from I2, 1 poetry book from B2, and 1 philosophy release from J2. Spottiswoode is less commonly discussed in modern scholarship, but this printer had the more distinguished role of serving as the King's Printer, starting in 1739, when it was founded by William Strahan (-1785). Strahan was listed as the printer of one of those mentioned rare pairs of texts in the 18th century corpus that were created by the same printer; these are two poetry collection from the E and I groups: "Christopher Smart's" *Poems on Several Occasions* (1752) and "John" and "Charles Wesley's" *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739). The company's name changed to Spottiswoode when descendants of the original owners took over the business in 1819, who had married into this "Spottiswoode" surname. The two especially popular printing enterprises detailed here were so intertwined that they were once called Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Such collaboration is not likely to have been accidental, but rather coincided with their shared owners' or patrons' hidden manipulation of the greater publishing industry.

Just as in the 18th century, in the 19th century, there is only a single pair of texts from the same printer that falls into the same linguistic-group, in the I2-group's "Henry Alford's" *Biblical Revision* (1870) and "Robert Williams Buchanan's" *Flesbly School of Poetry* (1872) that were printed by "Virtue and Co. City Road". The presence of only a single book pair per canonical century-long corpus that matches in both their ghostwriter and printer hints that the ghostwriting workshops might have deliberately avoided such specialization to obfuscate administrative efforts to identify them. Meanwhile, Virtue and Co. was founded in the 1820s in London by George Virtue (1794-1868), then it operated under James Sprent Virtue (1829-1892) from 1855, and later offshoots of it were started, including Virtue Brothers & Company, and Arthur Hall, Virtue & Co. The printing exclusivity between Virtue and Co. and the I2-group is somewhat interrupted by the listing of a slightly differently spelled, Virtue & Co., as the bookseller of the A2-group's "Anthony Trollope's" *Phineas Finn* (1869). All three of the tested Virtue titles were printed during James Sprent Virtue's control of this company; he was a licensed stationer, who had opened new American branches even prior to taking the helm. James sold their *St Paul's Magazine* in 1869, so it appears this business was short on funds between 1869-72. Other significant events in these years including Samuel Jones Spalding (1820-1892; preacher) joining the partnership in their "City Road" office in 1871, and they published the "Charles Knight"-edited *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakespeare* (1870). In summary, it appears that James Virtue contracted to publish an A2-group novel when the firm was desperate for funds, and as a preacher called Samuel Spalding joined the firm, he seems to have invited the I2-ghostwriter to publish differently-bylined theological non-fiction texts with them.

There are many printers in both 18th and 19th century corpuses that have the same surnames

(such as Ballantyne or Virtue), but different first names, as family members took over family-run printing businesses. For example, there were several Scotts operating as booksellers and printers over the centuries. Back in the 17th century, “William Saywell’s” *Evangelical and Catholic Unity* (1682) is described as “Printed for Robert Scott”, referring to a bookseller with a shop in Little Britain. Then, in the 19th century, “Henry James Byron’s” *Cinderella* (1860?) from the A2-group is described as printed by “Thomas Scott, Warwick Court, Holborn” in London. Families who owned multiple different types of printing, bookselling and publishing businesses could have had significant power over a market, without being regulated as a market-dominating single unit.

When the entire 18th century corpus’ cities and signatures are compared, there are no obvious positive correlations between any ghostwriter’s preference for only single city or the reverse. When one considers only same-byline pairs, many of them are split between both linguistic groups and cities, especially London versus Dublin. There seems to have been a negative correlation in a conscious or subconscious effort to avoid clustering any given ghostwriter’s output in any specific city. It might have been easier to implicate a specific ghostwriter in byline-identity or publishing fraud if all their texts were published in a single jurisdiction. This pattern is most pronounced between the three tested “Henry Fielding”-bylined texts, as the two dramas are in the B-group and were sold in London, while the third novel is in the F-group and was sold in Dublin. Another example is that “George Berkeley’s” C-group text was sold in London, while his G-group text was sold in Dublin. Additionally, “Elizabeth Inchbald’s” novel is in the D-group and was sold in Dublin, while her drama is in the B-group and was sold in London. This pattern is not entirely consistent, as there is also an example of a same-byline, same-group, and different-city combination is the two “Miles Peter Andrew”-bylined B-group dramas, one of which was sold in Dublin in 1780 and the other in London in 1795. This data does point to the pattern that the B-ghostwriter strongly preferred selling books in London, with at least one same-byline exception. This is a logical conclusion as the B-ghostwriter was responsible for nearly all of 18th century’s dramatic output, with many of his plays published or sponsored by the Theatre Royal in London; thus, he would have had to be stationed in London and would have had connections to publishers there.

These geographic patterns are missing in the 19th century corpus because printers had formed regular relationships with international booksellers; for example, “Charles James Lever’s” two novels both fall into the same G2-group, though one was only sold in London and the other in London and Dublin; alternatively, “James Clarence Mangan’s” two texts fall into two different groups, and both were sold both in London and Dublin.

The location and ownership of a bookshop was essential for buyers to find these establishments. Thus, there were significantly more booksellers than printers listed in books’ title-pages. Booksellers were listed in 274 tested texts in the 18th century, and 309 in the 19th century. In both centuries, most of the booksellers sold multiple titles out of these canonical corpuses. 160 different bookseller bylines (counting different first names separately) appeared in the 18th century, and 145 in the 19th century. Between these two centuries, there was an increase in the percentage of texts listing

booksellers, but a decrease in the number of different bookseller bylines. There was consolidation among booksellers, as some shops grew and spread to new locations, while others went out of business.

The booksellers with the most different titles on sale dominated the marketplace, and thus are likely to have had an impact on the ghostwriting workshops. The booksellers with several titles from the 19th century corpus include Richard Bentley and Son, Blackwood and Sons, Chapman and Hall, Harper & Brothers, Longman (with Longman's varied co-booksellers), Macmillan and Co., John Murray, and Elder Smith and Co. In the 18th century, the booksellers with the most titles are T. Cadell, J./R. Dodsley, J. Johnson, and A. Millar.

As "James Lackington" explained, authors had a choice between selling their book themselves at their private residence, or employing a bookseller. There was a significant drop in the percentage of titles that listed the author as the bookseller between the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 18th century, 32 titles described themselves as printed "for the author" on title-pages, while in the 19th century this phrase only appeared in 3 titles. These are cases where the author acts as the bookseller, or sells the title at their own private residence, or at a specified business where the author might or might not plan to be present. One telling description of who is selling the book is in the G-group's "Thomas Woolston's" *Third Discourse on the Miracles of Our Savior* (1728): "Printed for the Author, and Sold by him next Door below the Star in Aldermanbury, and by the Booksellers of London and Westminster". This description signifies that the author has sponsored the printing and copyrighting of this book, and is both selling it himself at a named address, and has also commissioned booksellers in two cities to sell it for him. Commonly, books printed "for the author" name a bookseller who is selling these copies, such as S. Colbert or A. Millar. An example of a rare title that invites buyers to go to the author's house include the C-group's "William Hogarth's" *Analysis of Beauty* (1753): "printed by J. Reeves for the author, and sold by him at his house in Leicester-Fields". 3 of these "printed for the author" titles are especially cryptic, as they do not name an address either for a bookseller or the author. Such titles could only have been sold in private directly to consumers, as buyers could not otherwise locate them. These titles without purchasing locations include: C-group's "Henry Bourne's" *Antiquitates Vulgares* (1725), D-group's "Henry Brooke's" *Fool of Quality* (1765-70), and E-group's "Stephen Duck's" *Poems on Several Occasions* (1736). The motive for these titles' lack of confessed selling locations is obvious from their titles, as they refer to vulgarities and fools. The contents of these titles risked offending obscenity or libel laws, and thus they threatened with incriminating anybody who openly sold them.

In addition to not listing a bookseller, "Duck's" text also did not list a printer; but these omissions are not due to any censorable content, but rather exemplify a private printing; this collection was sold to a predetermined list of subscribers, including Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, and the Prince of Wales. This private printing is worthy of a digression to consider the type of "author" who could negotiate such self-advertising. With only a primary education, and without a firm birth-year, an "agricultural laborer" called "Stephen Duck" (1705?-1756) is claimed, by the *Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900*, to have educated himself in the poetic genre by

purchasing books, such as *Paradise Lost*. In the 18th century, a two-volume edition of *The Works of Andrew Marvel* (1772) cost 6s., “Zachary Grey’s two-volume edition of Bulter’s *Hudibras* (1744) 15s, Thomas Newton’s *Paradise Regained* of 1750 10s. in sheets. Theobald’s 1733 Shakespeare cost his subscribers 2 guineas [£2 2s.] apiece”.¹⁰ Duck’s weekly salary as a laborer was 4s. 6d. (£11 14s annually), so purchasing a two-volume set would have cost more than a week’s labor. There were no libraries where he might have accessed these books for free. Supposedly, some clergy encouraged him to write and publish *Poems on Several Subjects* (1730), which saw 10 editions in its first year, and was rebutted with a parody called *The Thresher’s Miscellany* (1730) under the pseudonym “Arthur Duck”. Seemingly bolstered by this sudden fame, “Duck” read this work on September 11, 1730 before Queen Caroline. After a delay of three years, in April 1733, Caroline “allowed him” an annual salary of £30 as the “yeoman of the guard”. Then, without any clerical training, he was ordained as a priest in 1746, and then became the preacher at Kew Chapel in 1751, and at the rectory of Byfleet, Surrey in 1752, before ending it all by committing suicide.¹¹ There is a logical progression between Duck’s labor in the fields and Queen Anne’s award of a “yeoman” title. On the other hand, “Duck’s” authorship of poetry is just as unlikely as his sudden appointment to a priesthood. The publication of the “Arthur Duck”-bylined *Thresher’s* parody simultaneously with the “serious” “Stephen Duck”-bylined *Poems* explains that both were designed to ridicule the absurdity of the common practice in this period of assigning bylines to absurdly unlikely pseudonyms or strawmen, who might have been either extremely impoverished and uneducated, as with “Sarah Bulter”, or overly-titled, as with “Isaac Bickerstaff Esquire”. This farce about the misuse of pseudonyms must have been especially influential for the sponsor of *Poems*’ 1736 edition to refrain from listing both a printer and a bookseller, and only distributing it privately to the Workshop’s insiders, like “Swift” and “Pope”, who were implicating in satirizing and puffing “Duck”. “Duck”-bylined verse was clearly a ghostwriting-career-shaping text for the 18th century Workshop, and this significance was only revealed by noticing its unusual publishing credit. The commonality of such discoveries during this process is why all attribution studies must scrutinize bibliographic patterns in tandem with selecting a corpus, and then before reaching final attribution conclusions.

Bookselling Mysteries of the 18th Century G-Group

In both the 18th and 19th centuries, there was only a single printer whose pair of published books fell into the same linguistic-group. In contrast, just in the 18th century corpus, there are 9 booksellers with a pair or more titles that all match a single linguistic-group. Still more significantly, 5 of these booksellers’ books all matched the G-group. In this section, researching these booksellers and publications explains the motives or causes for this pattern, and helps to establish Samuel Richardson as the most likely ghostwriter of the G-group. Richardson was extremely productive as a printer, bookseller, and author under his own byline, and this review indicates that he covered the potentially-censorable or otherwise overflowing output that he could not release under his own byline by engaging in pseudonymous publishing and authorship. This section does not dive far enough into the archives

to determine with certainty that these booksellers' bylines were pseudonyms, but it reveals enough to conclude this is likely because of the relative absence of biographical materials about them.

All 3 of Richardson's tested novels had some matches to the G-group, but 1 of them, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), was a closer match to the D-group. Richardson listed himself as the printer for all 3 novels, as he self-printed his publications. However, he only listed himself additionally as their bookseller on only the two firm G-group matches, *Pamela* (1742) and *Clarissa* (1748). No booksellers are listed on the title-page of *Grandison*, which is also divergent because it was released in Dublin (instead of London).

During the initial chronological comparison between the publication and authors' birth and death dates within each linguistic-group, Richardson's lifespan (1689-1761) excluded him as a likely ghostwriter because the first release in the G-group is technically the "1700" publication of "Mary Astell's" *Some Reflections*. Noticing the G-group pattern among booksellers led me to reconsider this automatic rejection. If merely this one "1700" release was backdated (or falsely assigned to an earlier date to forge a book's antique status), the group's remaining earliest publication would have been the 1704 anonymous and erroneously "Defoe"-assigned *Regulation of the Press*, which advanced a case for the use of disguised authorial and publishing bylines. After an exclusion of the "1700" publication and of bylines without firmly documented birth years (such as "George Psalmanazar" (1679?-1763)), only Samuel Richardson and Walter Lynn (1677-1763) remain as the likeliest ghostwriters of the G-group. In 1704, Richardson was 15. When Richardson's nephew, Thomas Verren Richardson, first apprenticed into his uncle's business in 1732, he was 15; this is a documented fact because Richardson described it in *The Apprentice's Vade Mecum: Or, Young Man's Pocket Companion* (1734).¹² Thus, there is a strange 2-year gap between when Richardson came into the proper age to have started an apprenticeship in 1704, and when he first registered as starting an apprenticeship in 1706. Biographies of Richardson do not mention his attendance of a college, but perhaps he spent these 2 years studying in college under another name, or spent it in an unregistered ghostwriting apprenticeship, when he might have ghostwritten personal and governmental correspondences alongside with starting to publish texts such as *Regulation*. Returning to the second most likely ghostwriter of the G-group, Walter Lynn, presents a possible attribution solution. Lynn had received a BA from Cambridge in 1698, and an MB in 1704. He was elected as a "member of the Gentleman's Society at Spalding" in 1712, and then published a few medical and satirical books between 1714-26. He stopped publishing under his own byline after printing a claim to the invention of the steam-engine, in *The Case of Walter Lynn, M.B., in Relation to Diverse Undertakings of His, Particularly for the Improvement of an Engine to Raise Water by Fire, etc.*, which he says he submitted to "Sir Isaac Newton" and other scientists, but the credit for creating a functioning engine is typically granted to Thomas Newcomen in 1712. The missing detail regarding Richardson's higher schooling is neatly filled with Lynn's advanced degrees. Lynn's completion of his BA in 1698 also means that the 1700 text could have been written by him, without a need for backdating. And his completion of the MB by 1704 would explain the burst of

philosophical publications in the G-group in this year. One possibility is that Lynn decided to apprentice to a printer under the “Richardson” pseudonym in 1706, when he decided to become a professional publisher and “author” (as the Gentleman’s Society described him).¹³ Lynn might have decided not to use his own byline, even when he was publishing, because of the temporary imprisonment and other legal obstacles his pseudonyms, such as “Daniel Defoe”, encountered early in his ghostwriting career. Even if Lynn was the authentic byline of the G-ghostwriter, far more is known about the biography of Richardson than about Lynn; assuming an intersection between these bylines in a single real individual, it is this documented information regarding Richardson’s self-confessed publishing and writing activities that best helps to explain the history of British ghostwriting.

Richardson is a rare example of a printer-author from Britain’s 18th century. As a documented practitioner of both trades, it is more likely that Richardson could monopolize a segment of the publishing industry as opposed to rivals who are known either as merely authors or printers or booksellers. Aside for self-printing his own novels, Richardson is credited with printing around 500 other texts. Richardson’s father was implicated in the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685. Richardson attended the Christ’s Hospital grammar school in London. Then, Richardson contracted under master John Wilde, a printer specializing in almanacs, into a 7-year apprenticeship between 1706-13; and it was extended for some reason through 1719. There is no accessible biography of a printer called “John Wilde”. There was a John Wilde Esq, Serjeant at Law, serving in Parliament in 1640. And there was a John Wilde of Pembroke, who completed an MA on July 9, 1670 from the University of Oxford. There is a biography reported in the *Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers* for Allington Wilde, John Wilde’s son, who printed at Aldersgate Street in London between 1722-31. In 1721, Richardson’s first wife became Allington Wilde’s daughter, Martha.¹⁴ Richardson’s tasks as an apprentice included compositing and proofreading for John’s press. At the end of the initial 7-year apprenticeship term, in 1713, Richardson claims that he became an “Overseer and Corrector of a Printing-Office”, but he does not disclose this office’s location.¹⁵ This omission and the lack of documentation supporting this employment introduces the likelihood that Richardson began working as a ghost-printer, or using multiple printing pseudonyms. Richardson’s first known printing location and home was at Blue Ball Court and Dorset Street. Richardson took on several apprentices starting in 1722, but none of these apprentices’ names appear as master printers or booksellers in the 18th century corpus. This might suggest that they all took on pseudonyms under Richardson’s instructions, as they set up presses after ending apprenticeships, or Richardson might have failed to find apprentices who were skillful enough to become independent printers. Richardson’s first experiment with a major printing contract was in 1723, from Philip Wharton, 1st Duke of Wharton, for printing *The True Briton*. This Jacobite periodical was immediately censored for “common libels”. Obviously, Richardson had to have had a long-standing ghostwriting and printing record prior to this newspaper to have been awarded this politically and socially valuable contract in 1723. Richardson was not personally prosecuted for the libel because he was only credited as the printer, and not as the author. Scholars such as John Carroll have speculated that Richardson probably ghostwrote some of

the *Briton*.¹⁶ This near-imprisonment would have been yet another firm motive for Richardson to have primarily used pseudonyms for his questionable writing, printing, and bookselling.

While the lack of a birth year and of a documented origin-story largely chronologically disqualifies George Psalmanazar as the G-ghostwriter, the myriad of identity frauds he was discovered committing fits most logically with the false-byline frauds the underlying ghostwriter was committing. While Psalmanazar falsely claimed to be from *Formosa* (i.e., Taiwan, the subject of his tested 1704 “autobiography”), he might have been using pseudonyms because his authentic Jewish identity was still outlawed across Europe (just like the Renaissance Workshop’s Josuah Sylvester, who was exiled in 1613 over his Judaism).¹⁷ The only reason modern scholars generally refer to Psalmanazar as a fraudster is because he confessed to the falsity of his preceding “autobiography” in the posthumous *Memoirs of****. Commonly known by the name of George Psalmanazar; a Reputed Native of Formosa* (1764). Such a confession is very unusual for this period, as more typically false “autobiographies” were later reclaimed as fictions (as was the case with *Robinson Crusoe*). Given the seemingly mixed biographical details that were necessary to make a professional ghostwriter between Richardson and Lynn, the confessions in “Psalmanazar’s” posthumous *Memoirs* might be read as genuine posthumous confessions of byline-fraud from the G-ghostwriter (Richardson and Lynn died in 1761 and 1763, or at around the same time as Psalmanazar).

If a bookseller was the G-ghostwriter, instead of one of the signed “authors”; then, among the booksellers who were exclusive to the G-group, an especially likely candidate is Daniel Browne II. The largest same-group cluster for an 18th century bookseller are the 4 G-group texts published by variants of the Brown(e) bookseller surname. “Dan. Brown, G. Strahan, W. Davis, Fran. Coggan, Bernard Lintott” sold “George Psalmanazar’s” travel narrative *Formosa* (1704). “D. Browne, J. Taylor, R. Smith, F. Coggan, T. Browne” are listed as the booksellers for “John Beaumont’s” theological *Treatise of Spirits* (1705). “Browne jun., S. Chapman” sold “Eliza Haywood’s” novel *Fantomina* (1725). And Browne jun. and Chapman had previously worked in collaboration with “W. D. Chetwood” on selling “Haywood’s” *Idalia* (1723). All, except the “Beaumont” title, were described as sold at “the Black Swan without Temple-Bar”; thus, these variant names are referring to the same booksellers, Daniel Browne I (flourished: 1662-1729; dying in 1729) and his son, Daniel Browne II (started working for the shop in 1704, took over the shop in 1729, and died in 1762). Browne I died too early to have ghostwritten the G-group. On the other hand, Browne II’s lifetime is a great fit for the G-group. Given that Browne II died in 1762, it is reasonable to assume he started working in the publishing business a few years before 1704, or early enough to have ghostwritten the 1700 release in the G-group. The appearance of “Dan. Brown’s” name as the bookseller of “Psalmanazar’s” *Formosa* in 1704 could have been a semi-confession of Browne II’s authorship of this fictitious “autobiography”. A bookseller could sell his own books without appealing to an intermediary for access to the public. Scrutiny of Browne II’s documented biography might help to uncover if there is any substance to these suspicions of his potential ghostwriting. These suspicions cannot be linguistically verified, since Browne did not publish any texts with his name in the authorial byline.

There is also a smaller same G-group cluster in the two titles J. or John Baker (active between 1680-1717, and residing at the work-office of Black Boy in 1710) sold “at the Black Boy in Pater-Noster-Row”; both are currently assigned to “Daniel Defoe”. Though only one of them initially had “Defoe’s” byline on it, *Appeal to Honor and Justice* (1715), while the previously released *What If the Queen Should Die?* (1713) was anonymous (due to its seditious content). Baker sold several untested political pamphlets during his active years, such as *The Rights of Succession to the Empire of Germany* and *A Plot Discovered; Or the Protestant Succession in Danger*. Given the similar genres between these other early 18th century titles and the 2 tested titles, it is likely that if more of these were tested, they would also fall into the G-group. The first tested publication in the G-group is from 1700, so it is likely this ghostwriter began to be an active ghostwriter of untested texts prior to 1700. The most likely ghostwriters for the G-group were born between 1677-89. However, Baker probably became active as a bookseller too early to have ghostwritten this entire group; exceptions would include absurd scenarios such as that his first 1680-95 publications were backdated, and he remained active after 1717 under a different pseudonym. Researching “John Baker’s” biography is challenging because the earliest book assigned to this byline (or the “J.B.” initials) was published in 1581, while the last was published in 1783. Obviously, these bylines cannot be referring to the same person. This same byline also appears between 1657 and 1716 as a publisher, as a printer between 1685-1800, and as a bookseller between 1708-16. J. Baker’s earliest active year, of 1680, is set by his advertisement of *The Political State of Great Britain in the Post Man*; he first advertised in the *Term Catalogues* in 1709, on entering *A Vindication of the Church and Clergy of England from Some Late Reproaches*. These re-appearances signify that the British workshops reused this pseudonym across the centuries. On the other hand, it could have simply been a popular name, if families of bakers adopted it. There was also a J. Baker, the senior warden of the Company of Stationers between 1686-7, and John Baker, another London bookseller, but at Mercers’ Chapel in Cheapside between 1703-25 and other places. Amidst this biographical chaos, it is impossible to confirm any facts to prove or disprove Baker’s status as a potential ghostwriter.

Similarly to “Baker”, the “Parker” surname appeared as a bookseller with two different first initials on rhetorical publications in the G-group: “R. Parker” “at the Unicorn under the Royal Exchange” for “Daniel Turner’s” *Remarkable Case in Surgery* (1709), and decades later “W. Parker” “at the Kings-Head in St. Paul’s-Church-Yard” for “John Latham’s” *Attending Those Who Enter into Holy Orders* (1736). Richard Parker was active as a bookseller and publisher of dramas and rhetoric in London from 1692 (when he first registered a book in the *Term Catalogue*) to 1742. “Richard Parker” has been claimed to be the author of at least one theological text, *An Essay on the Usefulness of Oriental Learning* (1739), which was initially anonymous, with a dedication signed with the pseudonym, “Philoglottus”. The identity of “W. Parker” is more mysterious, as *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1668 to 1725* lists several first names for this surname, including Andrew, Edmund, Edward, G., and Peter, but none start with a W.¹⁸ “W. Parker”, at the same address and in the same year, was also credited with selling *A*

Collection of Anthems, As the same are now performed in his Majesty's Chapels Royal, &c. Published by the direction of the Reverend the sub-Dean of his Majesty's said Chapels Royal (1736). Given the number of Parkers operating bookshops, and these few appearances of the W. initial without a matching biography, it is likely that "W. Parker" was a pseudonym, which might have been designed to be confused with William Parks, a printer who moved between Ludlow, Hereford and Reading, and who specialized in theological books between 1719-23. Peter Parker senior had a relatively successful bookselling business in the second half of the 17th century. Peter Parker junior attempted to sell books without a license from the Company of Stationers briefly in 1707, before Peter was forced to close this business. The rest of the Parkers were only listed on a few isolated titles. Peter junior's prosecution by the Stationers explains that it is likely that a differently-named bookseller (such as Richardson) might have been using these various Parker pseudonyms to escape paying official fees to the Stationers for selling books. It is also possible that Richard Parker was the underlying ghostwriter of the G-group, who convinced members of his extended family to use their names as booksellers to keep suspicion away from himself. The most likely scenario is that one of these players (Richardson, Browne II, Parker or Baker) was an authentic individual, who was using the other bookselling pseudonyms to evade fees, prosecutions and other unfavorable outcomes. Though it is also possible that all of these were simply laborers who manually pressed books, while the design, editing and ghostwriting was the element that was monopolized between them by the G-ghostwriter (perhaps Lynn). The absence of biographical information about the Parkers or texts with their byline(s) on their title-pages prevents a firm discrediting. On the other hand, this absence alone is sufficient proof to make it unlikely that any bookseller without any writerly credits could have been the G-ghostwriter.

This has been a brief review of the linguistic patterns among 18th and 19th century printers and booksellers, and how these patterns are useful in confirming or rejecting attribution hypotheses. A purely quantitative attribution that is based on linguistics and chronology will always miss cluster-defining biographical elements, such as the presence of confessed identity-forgers such as "Psalmazar". And a review of the initial bylines and how eventual bylines came to be assigned is an essential step in the attribution process, to determine if a computational-linguist can place any trust in current bylines. Hopefully some of the revelations discussed in this fragment will help future attribution scholars with noticing similar publishing trickery in any corpus.

Endnotes:

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2. Ying Zhao, and Justin Zobel, "Searching with Style: Authorship Attribution in Classic Literature", *Proceedings of the 30th Australasian Computer Science Conference* (New York: ACM Press, 2007), 59-68.
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CONTRIBUTORS:

FERDINAND TABLAN

BARRY DAVID

CATHRINE V. FELIX

JOSÉ LUIS FERNÁNDEZ

PAULO VITORINO FONTES

NOAH FRIEDMAN-BIGLIN

JONGSOO LEE

RACHELE CINERARI

CHI SUM GARFIELD LAU

XIONGWEI LUO

CATERINA PAN

CODRIN ANICULĂESE

ANNA FAKTOROVICH