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What is Wrong with Machine Art?
Autonomy, Spirituality, Consciousness, and Human Survival

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Abstract:

There is a well-documented Pre-Reflective Hostility against Machine Art (PRHMA), exemplified by the sentiments of fear and anxiety. How can it be explained? The present paper attempts to find the answer to this question by surveying a considerable amount of research on machine art. It is found that explanations of PRHMA based on the (alleged) fact that machine art lacks an element that is (allegedly) found in human art (for example, autonomy) do not work. Such explanations cannot account for the sentiments of fear and anxiety present in PRHMA, because the art receiver could simply turn to human art for finding the element she is looking for. By contrast, an explanation based on the idea that machine art is "symbolically" a threat to human survival can be successful, since the art receiver's turning from machine art to human art does not eliminate the (alleged) "symbolic" threat machine art poses for human survival. If there is a pre-reflective belief or feeling that machine art *is* such a threat, then it is perfectly understandable why humans exhibit a pre-reflective *hostility* against machine art.

Keywords: robots, machines, art, fear, anxiety, survival, technology, autonomy, spirituality, consciousness

1. Introduction

Coeckelbergh has recently raised an issue which, despite its huge importance, remains marginalized in debates in philosophy of technology:

> Why do we humans insist on being the only artists? *If* machines were artists, would this be a problem and why? [...] Why do we want to colonize and dominate the artistic domain? It is not clear what keeps us from opening it up to [...] machines [...], or what keeps us from recognizing that these are already "invading" the domain. (Coeckelbergh 2017, 296)

Coeckelbergh asks about the reason why humans display a pre-reflective hostility against machine art and thereby exclude it from art's domain. The present paper attempts to answer this question, especially in relation to robotic art. While the literature on the relation between art

and technology increases exponentially each year, authors have hitherto paid minimal attention to that hostility's causes.

"Robot" originally signified a machine that is put to hard work or slavery (*robota* in Czech) and has no ability to escape this destiny; it had precisely this sense in Capek's 1920 play *Rossum's Universal Robots*, where the term was first used (Bar-Cohen et al. 2009, 7; Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 34). In our days the term has another meaning: it signifies a machine that has "the capacity for sensing and self-guided behaviour" (Penny 2016, 49). As Penny notes, "as its quality of self-guidance declines, so does its claim to the moniker 'robot'" (Penny 2016, 49-50). Robots are now "quasi-intelligent machines whose control systems are partially under human control, and partially autonomous" (Penny 2016, 50), and there are signs that they will soon enjoy full autonomy (Bar-Cohen et al. 2009).

Machines are everywhere in human society and are already performing a myriad of tasks (Bar-Cohen et al. 2009, 9, 11, 13), but can they also create art, "one of the most cherished human endeavours" (Poltronieri et al. 2018, 5)? This question is raised more and more frequently in philosophy of technology (Coeckelbergh 2017; Still and d'Inverno 2019).

Since the eighteenth century there have been numerous instances of robots or automata to which the label "artist" has been attached. As noted by Stephens and Heffernan,

> [t]hroughout the 1700s, a series of unsettlingly lifelike mechanical figures had held audiences spellbound by performing astonishing feats of skill and intelligence on the public stage. [...] These automata, like the other mechanical figures that so fascinated eighteenth-century publics, were not only the products of great art and technical skill: *they were themselves highly skilled producers of art*, participating in cultural activities widely understood to be definitively human. (Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 31, my emphasis)

An example of such a mechanical "artist" was Jaquet-Droz's "Musical Lady," an automaton of the eighteenth century that has been described as "one of the world's first programmable robots" (Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 29). The "Musical Lady" is seated before a piano and "when animated, her articulated fingers press down on the individual keys, so that the figure actually plays the music the spectator then hears" (Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 29). Moreover, "her chest rise[s] and fall[s] as she played, making her appear not only alive, but emotional" (Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 30). Jaquet-Droz made also the "Draftsman," an anthropomorphic machine programmed to draw various objects, including a portrait of Marie-Antoinette, and the "Writer," a humanoid automaton programmed to write sentences, including "I think therefore I am" (Bar-Cohen et al. 2009, 9).

In the nineteenth century, even though the emphasis is put on machines contributing to mass production, there are reports of a large number of programmed machine artists. In the second quarter of the twentieth century a big change occurred, as in the1940s Grey Walter created two robots that exhibited some autonomy. According to Penny, this marks robotic art's proper beginning (Penny 1989). After the Second World War more and more robots have started having

a non-human appearance and behaving in a more complex way qua artists than before (Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 35). In 1955 Tinguely presented his "Metamatics," non-anthropomorphic machines that created abstract expressionist drawings (Satz and Wood 2009, 145). *Voyager*, constructed between 1986 and 1988, and *Shimon*, constructed in 2017, are robots improvising music (Lewis 1999; Weinberg et al. 2007; Hoffman and Weinberg 2011; Lösel 2018, 199-200). In the first decade of the 2000s Mura presented his "ant-robots," which created abstract art autonomously and even emotionally (Moura 2016). Recently, it has been reported that a machine with a complicated algorithm can transform photographs into paintings exhibiting the style of Van Gogh (Parkinson 2015) and that Patrick Tresset has constructed a robot that can autonomously draw excellent portraits of people sitting before it (Brown 2011).

It is apparent in the literature that human artists, computational researchers, and engineers involved in machine art take it upon themselves to prove that the pre-reflective view that there is something exclusively human about art is wrong, to wit, that machines can also create art. Yet, what I find fascinating is the fact that there is such a pre-reflective view in the first place and that, as it is well-documented, it is accompanied by fear and anxiety, or, if you like, a hostility, towards machine art. It is to this *Pre-Reflective Hostility against Machine Art* (hereafter "PRHMA"), exemplified most strongly by *fear* and *anxiety*, that I turn my attention in the current essay.

PRHMA ranges from milder to stronger expressions. Moura, for example, refers to the claim of "common sense" that "machines can only make something that looks like art because a human builds them, programs them and hits the button. Hence the art made in such a fashion is still essentially human [...]" (Moura 2016, 255). PRHMA takes a much stronger form in Nake's report that the early exhibitions of computer art caused "nervous, hostile, furious" reactions by the public (Poltronieri et al. 2018, 5). Audiences left the exhibitions wondering "[i]f these pictures were done by use of a computer, how could they possibly be art. The idea was ridiculous!" (Poltronieri et al. 2018, 5). As Poltronieri et al. point out, "this tension between technology and art remains [...] even today" (Poltronieri et al. 2018, 9), a diagnosis shared by Shanken and Nunez among numerous others (Shanken 2016; Nunez 2016). That is to say, there is even today, at the pre-reflective level, fear and anxiety, a strong hostility, towards machine art. In an interview, Kidner notes that when he first started exploring computer art, "I took the view that the computer was an unwelcome competitor and I tried to imagine problems that would confound what I then regarded as an inhuman and unwieldy monster" (Kidner 2018, 85). Lovejoy reports that "the Depression of the 1930s brought fear and despair [towards technology], a mood which dominated the art of the Surrealists. For them, the machine represented an intrusion, a menace" (Lovejoy 2004, 48). She also observes that "cultural critics [...] so deeply distrust technology [...] that they often do not want to look at an art that uses it as a means of representation" (Lovejoy 2004, 273). She correctly points out that in cinema technology is often associated with decay, "the process of disintegration," with disaster (Lovejoy 2004, 301). Bar-Cohen et al.

speak of a pre-reflective "fear and dislike" towards and a "strong rejection" of humanlike machines, including anthropomorphic machine *artists* (Bar-Cohen et al. 2009, 6). These are all instances of PRHMA. Rutsky writes that art "has generally been cast as the polar opposite of modern technology" (Rutsky 1999, 3) and that "the conception of technology has been explicitly posed [...] in contrast to art, to the aesthetic sphere" (Rutsky 1999, 4). Davis mentions that pre-reflectively one feels or believes that technology is a "threat" to art (Davis 2004, 3), and Stephens and Heffernan refer to the "cultural tendency to assume that automation (or robots) and affect (art) are opposed" (Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 32). Finally, to make a long list short, Penny writes that the popular view is that "computational technologies [are] undergirded by a worldview which [is] fundamentally in tension with the worldview of artmaking" (Penny 2016, 47).

It is extraordinary that, given all these reports of PRHMA, there is no discussion of its possible causes in philosophy of technology. The bulk of the literature on machine art is interested solely in (a) finding in machine artists properties we ascribe to human artists and (b) explaining how machines have been or can be constructed so as to exhibit such properties. A property that has received tremendous attention is *creativity* (Boden 1994; Boden 2004; Colton and Wiggins 2012; Paul and Kaufman 2014; Besold et al. 2015). Can drawing or dancing or playing music be really creative if undertaken by a robot? The assumption is that if the answer is "yes," the claim for machine art is legitimized (for a challenge of this view see Coeckelbergh 2017, 297-300). Other alleged properties of human artists or artistic action (often subsumed under the label of "creativity") that computational researchers and producers of machine artists have sought to transfer to robots or robotic action are *improvisation* (Lösel 2018; Lewis 2018), *intentionality* (Lewis 1999; Lösel 2018, 189-190; Stelarc 2018, 62), *anticipation* (Endo 2008), *autonomy* (Cohen 2018, 45), *intuition* (Cohen 2018, 48), *aesthetic effects* (Colton and Wiggins 2012), *surprise* (Penny 2016, 53; Moura 2016, 265), *reaction* (Penny 2016, 57), *empathy* (Penny 2016, 58), *novelty* (Moura 2016, 255, 265), and *self-organization* (Moura 2016, 262).

These discussions are informative not only about the theoretical framework of artificial intelligence and practical puzzles concerning the construction of creative, autonomous, improvising, and so on, robots, but also about the nature of art and humanity and their relation to technology. They can also be illuminating regarding the, often confused, meaning we apply to such concepts as creativity, improvisation, novelty, etc. Yet, the question concerning the cause of PRHMA, humanity's "immediate" or "primitive" fear and anxiety towards machine art, is at least equally important, even though it has received barely any attention.

Additionally, I find the question concerning PRHMA, the question "why we fear machine art at all" (Coeckelbergh 2017, 296), much more interesting and philosophically valid than the question whether or not machine art is "really" art. The latter question is in fact unanswerable, for there are so many different and even opposing definitions of art (for an overview see Adajian 2012). Alternatively, according to the currently most influential theory of art, Dickie's "institutional theory of art" (Dickie 1974), there should be no doubt that machine art can

"really" be art. For, as the theory tells us, whether or not a certain object is art is decided absolutely by "the artworld": the artists, the critics, the gallery owners, the art public. If natural objects such as logs and "readymades" such as Duchamp's *Fountain* can be accepted as art (Dickie 1969), then surely works generated by machines can also be art. All that is required in this case is the ascription of art status to them by the artworld. If, for example, a work created by a machine is included in a gallery exhibition, it is immediately given the title of an *art*work. This is recognized by Coeckelbergh, who writes that

> [i]f the only thing that counts is subjective decision or social agreement, then if these are in place, this is all the machine needs [in order to create art]. [...] For instance, if a neural network creates something we (humans) call art, then it is art – end of the matter [...]. (Coeckelbergh 2017, 293)

By contrast, the response to the question *why* humans at the pre-reflective level have fear and anxiety towards machine art and thereby exclude it from the domain of art *remains*, as Coeckelbergh puts it, "not clear" (Coeckelbergh 2017, 296). To take a small step towards the clarification of such a response is the present paper's sole aim.

Some weighty reasons are found in the literature concerning why humanity must invest in machine art: the externalization of human artistic abilities in the machine artist and hence their becoming observable for science (Boden 2004, 185; Edmonds 2018, 54; Colton and Wiggins 2012, 23; Lovejoy 2004, 25; Stephens and Hefffernan 2016, 37; Bar-Cohen et al. 2009, 12), the enhancement of human creativity through the realization of intricate projects that could not be realized without the involvement of computing and robotics (McCormack and d'Inverno 2012, 422; Coeckelbergh 2017, 297-298; Poltronieri et al. 2018, 6-8, 10-13; Edmonds 201851, 54; Kidner 2018; Lovejoy 2004, 69), the disclosure of new dimensions of reality and the subsequent expansion of humanity's knowledge and appreciation of reality, especially given that our world has now acquired an undeniably "technological" character (Coeckelbergh 2017, 300; Poltronieri et al. 2018, 15-17; Willats 2011; Colton and Wiggins 2012, 24; Lovejoy 2004, 8, 271-276; Penny 2016, 63), and the humanization of science (Poltronieri et al. 2018, 7; Lovejoy 2004, 69, 280). Given the reality and importance of these gains, what could cause PRHMA? As noted, there is no reflection on this issue in the literature, only marginalized, sporadic remarks. My survey of the literature has disclosed the following as the most agreed upon reasons for PRHMA: (a) the lack of autonomy in machine art, (b) the lack of spirituality in machine art, (c) the lack of consciousness in machine art, and (d) the threat machine art poses for human survival. I will now discuss each of these in turn.

2. Autonomy

Coeckelbergh suggests that PRHMA is due to the assumption that machine artists are "merely programmed" (Coeckelbergh 2017, 286), and Nake reports that the public's reaction to

early computer artworks was that "even randomness [in computer art] [...] was not really random but only *calculated* pseudo-randomness, the type of randomness possible on a digital computer. A fake, from start to end, christened as art!" (Poltronieri et al. 2018, 5, my emphasis). Stelarc also remarks that "there has always been a fear of the involuntary and the automated" (Stelarc 2018, 59). The suggestion is that PRHMA is caused by a sense of lack of autonomy in machine art: the machine artwork is simply the result of the pushing of a button by the machine's autonomous human creator. The machine has not made any autonomous decisions during the process of artistic creation, precisely because it is unable to do so.

One can find hints of three responses to such a view in the literature. First, it is argued that even if machine art resulted solely from a programmed activity, it cannot be excluded from art's domain. As noted, there is no universally accepted definition of "art" and, moreover, Dickie's "institutional theory of art" would allow the incorporation of machine products into the domain of art, even if these resulted from a programmed activity (Coeckelbergh 2017, 286). In other words, it is not universally accepted that not-being-programmed or exhibiting autonomy is a necessary condition of art.

Second, it is argued that the view under discussion assumes that human art is free from programming, that humans, in general, and human artists, in particular, have free will. This, however, is a philosophical puzzle that has not yet been resolved to universal satisfaction. Yet, this does not prevent one from referring to human *art* and human *artists*. Humans have themselves been created, in one way or another, and their physiological, biological, chemical, and so on, structure has its own "fixed" characteristics, its own "programming" or "simple rules." If there is no free will, art results from this fixed structure. In this case we would *not* say there is no art because the human artist has been created and has a fixed structure. Art seems independent of these considerations. In the same way, there does not seem to be any ground for claiming that machine art is not really art because the machine is programmed. If the programmed *human* structure does not prevent us from accepting *human* art, the programmed *machine* structure should not prevent us from accepting *machine* art. As Coeckelbergh notes, if we accept "the idea that human beings are created but then in turn themselves become creators," we have to accept that although a machine's algorithm or code is created by humans, that machine can be a creator (Coeckelbergh 2017, 286).

Third, it is argued that it is false to claim that machine artists are "merely programmed," that they exhibit no autonomy. Robots equipped with sensors can collect information which they subsequently use in order to change their behaviour during the artistic process, showing thereby that the artwork does not result merely from the programming/code. Mura makes a strong case for such an argument. He writes that

> we may [...] recognize a certain degree of autonomy in creative machines. They can do things that are not programmed and/or result from an internal information gathering device. (Moura 2016, 255)

The gathering of information enables the robot "to generate novelty," escaping thereby any predetermined trajectory (Moura 2016, 255). There still are, of course, simple rules – as there are in all beings, including humans – but the combination of these with collected information and emergent behaviour enables robots to "create pictorial compositions that are not predetermined" (Moura 2016, 255).

Moura put this in practice in 2003 with ArtSBot (Art Swarm Robots), a group of robots able to interact with one another at a certain setting (the canvas) via their sensors, controller, and actuators. The sensors receive signals from the environment (the painted trails left behind by the robots), which are then processed by the microcontroller, commanding thereby the actuators. The robots avoid each other by means of the proximity sensors and establish communication only through the painted trail left on the canvas by a previous movement. They work through what Grassé called "stigmergy," an agent's behaviour resulting from the effects appearing in a setting due to the action of other agents (Grassé 1959). Based on preexisting trails and the collected information, the robots create – collectively – exquisite paintings of abstract art. The whole process is stopped by the viewer when she feels that "the painting is 'just right'" (Moura 2016, 265).

In 2006 Moura created RAP (Robotic Action Painter), "an individual robot artist [...] able to determine, by its own means, the moment in which the painting is finished" (Moura 2016, 265). RAP decides to finish the painting when the chaos of its painted brushes gives place to a form that feels right to it. Before this, the algorithm determining RAP's microcontroller leads (a) to a random behaviour that follows the encounter of white and (b) to a structured feedback behaviour when a colour other than white is met. The combination of these two behaviours leads to the emergence of a discrete pattern, recognized by the robot as a well-defined composition. Moura gives us his own evaluation of the project:

> RAP creates artworks based on its own assessment of the world. At any given moment the robot 'knows' its situation and acts accordingly. It scans constantly the canvas for data retrieving. It uses its relative position in the space as a real random generator. It builds gradually a composition based on emergent properties. It decides what to do and when to do it. It finishes the process using its particular 'sense of rightness'. Although the human contribution in building the machine and feeding it with some basic rules is still significant, the essential aspects of RAP's creativity stems from the information that the robot gathers by its own means from the environment. In this sense RAP's art must be seen as a unique creation independent of the human artist that was at the origin of the process. (Moura 2016, 267)

And he concludes, polemically, thus:

> My painting robots were created to paint. Not my paintings but their own paintings. The essential of their creations stems from the machine's own interpretation of the world and not from its human description. No previous plan, fitness, aesthetic taste or artistic model is induced. These robots are machines dedicated to their art. (Moura 2016, 267)

If there is robotic artistic action driven not only by simple rules but also by collection of information and emergent behaviour, it is, I think, impossible to argue that this action does not involve some autonomy.

Note, however, that the above three responses are objections pertaining to a thesis about the art status of machine art ("machine art is not really art"), while the thesis under discussion is a thesis pertaining to the *hostility against machine art* ("there is a pre-reflective fear of machine art"). That is to say, all objections, which dominate the literature regarding the issue of machine art's autonomy, responded to the view that there is no autonomy in machine art in such a way as to undermine the claim that machine art is not really art. Yet, what we were expecting is an illumination of the suggestion that the absence of autonomy in machine art causes PRHMA. None of the three responses we discussed offers such an illumination because they focus on the art status of machine art instead of on PRHMA.

Could, then, the lack of autonomy in machine art, if it existed, function as the cause of PRHMA? In my view, it could not, because the absence of autonomy in machine art would not obstruct the art receiver's obtaining or experiencing the desideratum of autonomy in art if she chose to abandon machine art and turn to human art instead. In simpler words, that there is lack of autonomy in machine art cannot cause fear in a human's heart, for that human can experience autonomy in art by simply moving to human art. S fears X because of Y only if there is no obvious way for S to avoid Y. The appeal to lack of autonomy (Y) does not provide such a scenario: one can quite simply ignore machine art and pursue only human art, finding therein the autonomy one desires. Thus, PRHMA could not be caused or explained by the belief that there is no autonomy in machine art.

3. Spirituality

Another reason for PRHMA frequently mentioned in the literature is that machine art lacks spirituality. Spirituality is a sense of belonging to a whole, to eternity or divinity, to something more meaningful than everydayness's hustle and bustle. Spirituality is often associated with mystery and "mysticism" or "magic" and the feeling of being in contact with the fundamental – often occult – forces permeating the cosmos. The idea here is that machine art has a character – caused by the "technological" element in it – that prevents or hinders its human receivers from acquiring or participating in spirituality and that this is the reason why there is PRHMA. Machine art is conceived of as an obstacle to a human being's connecting with the eternal, divine, and holistic aspects of her environment.

There have been reactions to the idea that machine art or "the technological" in general is an obstacle to spirituality. It has been suggested that technology is, essentially, an expression mediated by numbers and geometrical forms, which, since antiquity, are considered by many as the most appropriate symbols of wholeness and eternity. The Pythagoreans and some schools of Platonism, for example, regarded numbers and geometrical forms as the ultimate components of reality and truth.

Since these elements are fundamentally involved in technology, the latter necessarily has a spiritual dimension.

Rutsky expresses this well:

> [Contemporary] aesthetics attempts to reconcile the aesthetic with the technological. To this end, it often connects the spiritual and the technological, attempting to impart a sense of wholeness and the eternal to technological forms. Thus, mathematical and abstract geometric forms are figured as having spiritual attributes, as reflecting eternal forms and values. Often, as in Bruno Taut's *Glass Pavilion*, these aestheticized technological forms were explicitly designed as a kind of spiritual edifice, a symbol of unity for the fragmented modern city. Through this aestheticized technology, not only is the aura of the artwork maintained, but there is often an attempt to extend it to society in general, as a means of reinvesting modern society with a sense of spirituality and wholeness. (Rutsky 1999, 9)

Rutsky proceeds by noting that the emphasis given in contemporary aesthetics to the association of the technological with spirituality is a reaction to the basic tenet of artistic modernism, in particular, and modernity, in general, to assume an unbridgeable gap between spirituality, on the one hand, and reason, science, and technology, on the other hand. Modernity understood spirituality as "magical," "mythical," and "irrational," and placed it wholly in the pre-modern world. It conceived of itself as the force that "liberates" the world from "spirit" and establishes the kingdom of reason, exemplified by science and technology (Rutsky 1999, 10).

Rutsky links contemporary aesthetics' attempt to re-spiritualize technology with "high tech," which, as his detailed analyses show, is driven more by aesthetic rather than by functional concerns and features. The aestheticism of high tech is explicitly associated with primordial, magical, mythical, and spiritual structures by such movements and discourses as techno-paganism, "new-edge" science, cyber-shamanism, and rave culture. As Rutsky observes, "techno-pagans, for example, see the techno-cultural world as magical, as inhabited by unseen forces, spirits, gods" (Rutsky 1999, 18).

A similar approach can be found in Davis, who argues that the spirituality of old did not vanish with the advent of modern science and technology; it rather clandestinely infiltrated scientific-technological discourse, determining thereby the fundamental structures of science and technology. Here is a passage that encapsulates Davis's thesis:

> [C]ommon sense tells us that mysticism has [nothing] in common with technology [...]. Historians and sociologists inform us that the West's mystical heritage of occult dreamings, spiritual transformations, and apocalyptic visions crashed on the scientific shores of the modern age. According to this narrative, technology has helped disenchant the world, forcing the ancestral symbolic networks of old to give way to the crisp, secular game plans of economic development, skeptical inquiry, and material progress. But the old phantasms and metaphysical longings did not exactly disappear. In many cases, they disguised themselves and went underground, worming their way into the cultural, psychological, and mythological motivations that form the foundations of the modern world. [...] [M]ystical impulses sometimes body-snatched the very technologies that supposedly helped yank them from the stage in the first place. (Davis 2004, 5)

Yet another similar position is Couliano's, who writes that

> [h]istorians have been wrong in concluding that magic disappeared with the advent of "quantitative science." The latter has simply substituted itself for a part of magic while extending its dreams and its goals by means of technology. Electricity, rapid transport, radio and television, the airplane, and the computer have merely carried into effect the promises first formulated by magic, resulting from the supernatural processes of the magician: to produce light, to move instantaneously from one point in space to an other, to communicate with faraway regions of space, to fly through the air, and to have an infallible memory at one's disposal. (Couliano 1987, 104)

I do not have the space here to describe in detail Rutsky's, Davis's, and Culiano's excellent analyses of how the spirituality of old has infiltrated and manifests itself in the fundamental structure of modern technology (for similar positions see Yates 1966, 224; Dery 1996; Penczak 2001; Kaldera and Schwartzstein 2002; Vedro 2007). What is significant for my purposes is only that there exists contemporary research undermining the idea that technology, and hence machine art, is devoid of spirituality. This means that PRHMA, *if* it is caused by that idea, can be challenged: there is nothing in principle obstructing an art receiver from finding spirituality in machine art, and, therefore, humans should not be hostile towards machine art.

Yet, this argument works only if PRHMA is indeed caused by the belief that there is lack of spirituality in machine art. The positions we discussed do not *argue* for or against *this* causal thesis. They rather accept it and attempt to show that it is unjustified, believing that if they are successful, the hostility against technology and machine art will disappear or be reduced. In this way, however, the very phenomenon of such hostility remains *unexplained*.

Thus, the question is whether or not PRHMA could be caused by the belief that machine art lacks spirituality. In my view, it could not. The argument for this assertion has the same form as the one provided against the view that PRHMA is caused by the belief that machine art lacks autonomy: if the receivers of machine art believed or felt that machine art lacks spirituality, they could easily turn to human art, where they could find the spirituality they were looking for. The easiness with which an art receiver could move from machine art to human art and thereby obtain spirituality excludes the possibility that machine art could generate fear and anxiety in the receiver because of lack of spirituality. The most one would encounter here is *indifference* towards machine art. The crucial point is that the desideratum, spirituality, is acquired by one's simply abandoning or ignoring machine art. One's realizing that one can fully satisfy one's desire for Y by easily moving from X to Z is a condition that excludes the possibility that one is strongly hostile towards X because of lack of Y in X.

4. Consciousness

Yet another reason for PRHMA mentioned in the literature is that machine artists are not conscious of their creations, that, in general, machines lack consciousness. Sometimes this lack of

consciousness is associated with lack of uniqueness, to wit, with the understanding of machines as facilitators of mass production (Lovejoy 2004, 2). This, however, is certainly a false assumption, for the machine artists of the twentieth century are producers of unique artworks. As Stephen and Heffernan put it, twentieth-century machine artworks

> seemed highly civilized and benigh, and far removed from the world of factories and mass production. They were made as exquisite and unique objects, increasingly at a remove from the mass-produced objects and industrial machines that came to define the nineteenth century. (Stephens and Heffernan 2016, 34)

At any case, there is no obvious necessary correlation between lack of consciousness and lack of uniqueness (mass production): a robot can be employed *only* for the creation of unique artworks.

Moura argues that the lack of consciousness in machine artists does not undermine machine art, because the presence of consciousness in the artist is not a necessary condition of the work being an *art*work. There have been cases of great artistic movements where non-consciousness or unconsciousness was explicitly demanded, as, for example, in Surrealism or in certain strands of abstract art. Here is Moura:

> It is true that consciousness is lacking to this [robotic] creativity. But if we look at the history of modern art, it is obvious that, for example, surrealism tried to produce artworks exactly in these same terms. The "pure psychic automatism," the quintessential definition of the movement itself, appeared as a spontaneous, non-conscious and without any aesthetic or moral intention technique. In the first *Surrealist Manifesto* André Breton (1924) defined the concept in this way: "Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations." In the field of the visual arts, Jackson Pollock was the artist that better fulfills this intention by splashing ink onto the canvas with the purpose of representing nothing but the action itself. This was coined Action Painting, as it is well-known. Perhaps, because of that, the first paintings from my robots are, aesthetically, so similar to the ones of Pollock or André Masson, another important automatism-based painter. In his surrealist period, this artist tried frequently to prompt a low conscious state by going hungry, not sleeping or taking drugs, so that he could release himself from any rational control and therefore letting emerge what at the time, in the path of Freud, was called the subconscious. The absence of conscience, external control or pre-determination, allow these painting robots to engender creativity in its pure state, without any representational, aesthetic or moral intention. (Moura 2016, 259)

Moura, then, argues that while lack of consciousness is a reality in machine art, the latter can still be art, for, like the surrealists or certain human painters of abstract art who promoted unconscious or non-conscious artistic action, machine artists can in principle create unique artworks that will be baptized as "art" by the artworld.

As before, though, we notice that this argument does not address the issue of PRHMA and hence it cannot function as its explanans. All it manages is to cast doubt on the thesis

that machine art is not really art. The crucial question, which Moura does not address, is whether or not the belief that machine art lacks consciousness causes PRHMA.

In my view, the machine artists' lack of consciousness cannot be the explanans of the pre-reflective fear or anxiety towards machine art. This is so because, reiterating the pattern of argument with which we concluded the two previous sections, the art receiver could very easily sidestep or ignore machine art and simply focus on human art if she thought consciousness is important for art and can be found only in human art. In other words, lack of consciousness in machine art does not seem threatening to the art receiver insofar as the latter has still the option of human art. In this way, a necessary condition for the possibility of fear or anxiety, that is, the feeling of *threat*, is missing and hence PRHMA remains unexplained.

There are some other reasons mentioned in the literature in apparent relation to the phenomenon of PRHMA, such as machine artists' lack of skill (Lovejoy 2004, 43), lack of effort (Colton 2008; Kidner 2018, 88; Colton and Wiggins 2012, 25), and lack of emotions (Coeckelbergh 2017, 290-291; Lovejoy 2004, 22-23; Stelarc 2018, 66; Colton and Wiggins 2012, 25; Moura 2016, 262-263). As with the reasons we have already examined, however, these other reasons exhibit the same two problems. First, in actuality the emphasis is put on developing a critique of these reasons from the perspective of the issue of whether or not machine art is "really" art. The initial suggestion that they can explain PRHMA is never developed in the ensuing debates. Second, and more importantly, a pattern has now emerged, which reveals that all reasons having the form "machine art lacks X" cannot explain PRHMA, since any art receiver could very easily turn her attention to human art instead and thereby find therein whatever she thinks is the desideratum missing from machine art. Humans would be *tolerant* to machine art insofar as human art remains as an alternative option and satisfies their desiderata or requirements. This *precludes* any suggestion that the belief that machine art lacks X is the explanans of PRHMA. Fear and anxiety towards machine art could be generated only in the case that machine art can be perceived as posing real *threat* to humanity. Such a perception surfaces occasionally in the literature, even though discussions of it remain superficial. Let us now turn our attention to this issue.

5. Human Survival

PRHMA is often associated with issues pertaining to human survival. These issues fall into two broad categories, namely, first, issues having to do specifically with the economic dimension of an individual's life and, second, issues having to do with an individual's safety in general. In both categories a threat is specified that relates to the notion of machines' "taking over." Coeckelbergh, for example, very thoughtfully notes that PRHMA can be

> part of a broader discourse and anxieties [...] concerning the question if machines will *take over*, if they will make humans obsolete in a lot, if not all, domains of previously exclusively human activities. (Coeckelbergh 2017, 287, my emphasis)

Coeckelbergh's point is that humans pre-reflectively have fear and anxiety towards machine art because they have a belief or a feeling that machines will "take over" human life and thereby make the human element, in some sense, obsolete. It is because of this fear and this anxiety that some people "see it as their mission to defend 'humanity' against 'the machines'" (Coeckelbergh 2017, 296). Fear towards machine *art* is mediated by fear towards *machines* in general. In other words, machine art is understood here as *part* of technology or the mechanization of life *in general*.

A first economic consequence of machines' "taking over" that is quite often discussed in the literature is *unemployment*, which is a phenomenon belonging to the wider problematic of human survival. Coeckelbergh is once more spot on when he writes the following:

> [C]onsider for instance the discussion about robots in healthcare or the discussion about automation and employment: will robots replace nurses and perhaps replace all kinds of jobs previously done by humans? (Coeckelbergh 2017, 287)

That robots pose a real threat to human employment is confirmed by Bar-Cohen *et al.*, who write that

> [a]s humanlike robots become more capable and useful, one can envision that years from now they may become our household appliances or even our peers, and we may use them to perform difficult and complex tasks *as well as possibly to replace unskilled human laborers*. (Bar-Cohen et al. 2009, 5-6, my emphasis)

In fact, in Japan humanoid robots are already populating shopping malls and are quite a commercial success, increasingly replacing more and more human labourers, especially in such professions as hospital and home healthcare workers, receptionists, security guards, and tourist guides (Bar-Cohen et al., 21).

Even if one could object that machines cannot really take over *all* human jobs, it is certainly a cause of concern that contemporary researchers in computational creativity have explicitly expressed the desire to promote machine art to such a degree and in such a way that an enormous amount of machine artworks will be distributed commercially through the Internet. This vision seems to have the consequence that a large portion of the artworks sold will be machine artworks. Consider, for example, the following telling thought by Colton and Wiggins:

> Currently, having a bespoke painting, poem or piece of music created is the privilege of the few. However, one day, *the needs of the many will outweigh the needs of the few*, and we will expect the Internet to provide new ideas and new artefacts on demand, just like we expect it right now to provide old ideas and old artefacts. We will go online for: a new, relevant, joke for a speech; an exciting new recipe for a party; or a bespoke and beautiful new painting for a present. We cannot expect the world's creative people alone to supply artefacts for such a huge demand, so autonomously creative software will be necessary. The research in Computational Creativity projects – to help break the *final frontier* in AI research – will be pivotal in bringing about this technological and cultural revolution. (Colton and Wiggins 2012, 25)

If machine art became so widespread and easily accessible on the internet, it would not be an exaggeration to see it as causing increase of unemployment to human artists in the artworld.

A second economic consequence of machines' "taking over" that is also frequently mentioned in the literature is the capital's use of machines in order to establish lower wages and to make it even harder than before for the workers to protest against their employers (for fear of being replaced by a machine). Nake, for one, insists that machines are tools in the hands of "the rich and the ruling" with which they exert an even greater control over the workers. Nake, a pioneer in computer art, expressed this thought in a 1971 paper entitled "There Should be no Computer Art" (Nake 1971). This classic paper makes apparent in the most luminous manner the pre-reflective fear humans have of machine art, and that this fear stems from general concerns about machines' affecting the economic flourishing of individuals.

Rutsky explains that at its very inception modernity distinguished itself from the medieval "dark ages," from pre-modernity, via what he calls "the instrumental conception of technology" (Rutsky 1999, 2). This conception was that technology is the means or "the instrument" for the moderns "to know and control the world" (Rutsky 1999, 2). Gradually, however, and as the involvement of machines in human life became increasingly deeper, humans started developing a parallel sentiment, that of fear. Fear was fully justified as machines indeed increased unemployment and the gulf between rich and poor, and contributed to making the workers' life entirely miserable. The rich owned technology and used it to control the workers' wages and labour even more than before. Wood writes that throughout the nineteenth century "factory workers came to feel they had been reduced to the mechanical pieces they were in charge of producing, hour after hour, day after day" (Wood 2007). This situation led to Marx's and Engels's cry that humans have become a mere "appendage" of the machines that "enslaved" them (Marx and Engels 2008, 34). Rutsky remarks that "despite the pronouncements of various technological 'visionaries' and corporate chiefs detailing how 'high tech' will 'democratize' society, enabling universal access, participation, and control over one's life, high technology remains a 'tool' for distinguishing social classes" (Rutsky 1999, 3).

As noted, PRHMA is associated in the literature not only with issues having to do with the economic dimension of an individual's life, but also with issues having to do with an individual's overall safety. Such issues relate to scenarios envisioning that robots will one day gain the upper hand in their symbiosis with humans. In fact, as Bar-Cohen *et al*. convincingly show, there is real danger that, unless precautionary measures are taken, machines *will* pose a threat to human safety in the not so distant future. The following passage is long but greatly illuminating:

> Humanlike robots are being developed to be smart, mobile, and autonomous machines. These capabilities would make them quite powerful. Under certain circumstance, they may also become dangerous to us. Although this technology may improve our lives, it can also cause complications or even terrible destruction if we are not very careful. Some of the concerns may include ethical questions and

> potential dangers to humans resulting from unlawful acts. To prevent such dangers, we must address the potential concerns long before the possibility of their becoming superior to us is realized.
>
> In order to get the most benefit from their advancing capabilities it is important to channel their development into positive directions and protect ourselves from the negative possibilities. If humanlike robots become more capable and equipped with simulated cognition there will be legitimate concern regarding their continued "loyalty" to us. One may wonder what would happen if they take on questionable roles such as acting as a specific person's clone and then commit a crime, or have access to our assets and private or intimate information and possibly do something to hurt us using our information. Science fiction movies and books are creating public misconceptions of what humanlike robots can do and the danger that they may pose. Yet, as science-fiction ideas are rapidly becoming an engineering reality, it is increasingly becoming important to try to envision the potential issues of concern that may arise and find ways to stave off the possible negative outcomes. (Bar-Cohen et al. 2009, 17)

It is not only that an individual citizen's life can be affected negatively by human criminals' using robots for their illegal tasks. There is also the very realistic scenario that robots will one day "surpass human levels of intelligence" and "develop a will of their own," which in circumstances of tension could lead them to form military robotic groups that will be unbeatable in the battlefield (Bar-Cohen 2009, 18). To make a long story short, Bar-Cohen *et al*. affirm a realistic possibility that humans one day may become slaves to robots or even be annihilated by them. This is not actually a "fantastical" or "unrealizable" projection: imagine only what could happen if highly intelligent, skillful and literally fearless robots learned to mechanically fix and even build other robots.

It is the combination of projections (but also actualities) of economic and physical dangers posed by robots that generate the pre-reflective sentiments of fear and anxiety, the general pre-reflective hostility, towards robotic technology. Since machine art involves such technology, it receives that hostility as well.

One may object that machine art does not have an obvious economic or military function, as robots – as we have just seen – certainly have, so it does not *itself* pose any threat to humanity. Machine art does not itself cause unemployment to workers in general, and even the idea that it can cause unemployment to artists is somewhat far-fetched, given the enormous amount of funding a project of machine art currently requires. Machine art does not seem to have much relevance to situations of military control and policing, or to situations of class struggle and social division. Why, then, should we accept that PRHMA is caused by the humans' believing or feeling that their survival is threatened by machine art?

This objection overlooks a significant fact about human psychology, to wit, that it transfers sentiments from a general domain to its parts and/or extensions. Humans fear – pre-reflectively – robotic technology and transfer this fear to anything that involves such technology, including machine art. Humans see in machine art a "symbol" or a "sign" of the expansion of machines in their lives. Machine art is not *itself* a threat to humanity, but humans "see" it as or "feel" that it is

an extension of robotic technology in general, which they pre-reflectively consider, for the reasons we have specified, to be such a threat.

Crucially, note that this explanation does not succumb to the difficulty that the previously discussed explanations face. Here the art receiver cannot simply sidestep or ignore machine art and turn her attention to human art instead. This will not remove the threat to her survival. If the art receiver does not find skill in machine art and seeks skill in art, she can very easily turn to human art. By contrast, if the art receiver finds machine art threatening to her survival (in the "symbolic" fashion I explained above), this threat will remain even if she turns to human art. The difference between the explanation based on the threat to human survival and the explanations based on lack of such an element as autonomy or spirituality or consciousness or emotion or skill, and so on, is that in the former case the art receiver's turn to human art does not resolve what the receiver conceives of as a problem. For example, in the case of an art receiver who looks for spirituality in art and does not find it in machine art, her turn to human art will satisfy her demand. By contrast, in the case of an art receiver who thinks that machine art is a threat to her survival (or the survival of the human species), her turn to human art will not make her life any less vulnerable to the (alleged) threat posed by machines.

Precisely because of this difference I suggest that the true explanans of PRHMA is humans' "symbolic" belief that machine art is a threat to human survival. All other explanations fail to account for the very real existence of a pre-reflective feeling of fear or anxiety towards machine art. This, of course, does not mean that such a threat is real. All that matters here is that humans pre-reflectively *imagine* such a threat, either on the level of actuality or on the level of possibility.

6. Conclusion

There is a well-documented pre-reflective hostility against machine art (PRHMA). How can it be explained? Explanations based on the (alleged) fact that machine art lacks an element that is (allegedly) found in human art do not work. Such explanations cannot account for the sentiments of fear and anxiety present in PRHMA, because the art receiver could simply turn to human art for finding the element she is looking for. By contrast, an explanation based on the idea that machine art is "symbolically" a threat to human survival can be successful, since the art receiver's turning from machine art to human art does not eliminate the (alleged) "symbolic" threat machine art poses for human survival. If there is a pre-reflective *belief* or *feeling* that machine art *is* such a threat, then it is perfectly understandable why humans exhibit a pre-reflective *hostility* against machine art.

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Understanding the Subjective Dimension of Work from a Buddhist Perspective

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Abstract:

The notion of the subjective dimension of work has its roots in Catholic Social Teaching. This essay offers a Buddhist perspective on this topic. Although there is no distinction between the subjective-objective dimensions of work in traditional Buddhist texts, Buddhist teaching on karma contains implicit affirmation of the subjective dimension of work as the source of the morality of work, and this notion is a useful explanatory framework in understanding right livelihood in contemporary setting. While Buddhist perspective on subjectivity of work is consistent with the view of Catholic Social Teaching, consideration of Buddhism in our conceptualization of the subjective dimension of work will challenge us to revise and expand the concept and practice of meaningful work to integrate the wellbeing of workers, interpersonal relationships, meditative practice (mindfulness) and concern for the environment.

Keywords: Buddhist Ethics, Catholic Social Teaching, Subjective Dimension of Work, Meaningful Work, Religion in the Workplace, Business Ethics, Comparative Ethics, Contemporary Buddhism, East-West Comparative Philosophy, Religious Ethics, Applied Ethics.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) report on decent work identifies subjective dimension of work (SDW) as a fundamental concept that all major religions subscribe to. It states:

> The different traditions attribute a high and positive value to work, based upon the concept of the divine "call" to work. Traditions speak of work according to its objective dimension (the outcome or end product of labour) and its subjective dimension (the worker as subject of work, expressing and enhancing his or her humanity through labour) (ILO 2012, 28).

The notion of SDW has its roots in Catholic Social Teaching (CST), specifically in the encyclicals of John Paul II that affirm SDW as the source of the morality of work. In the same manner, ILO (2012, 18) confirms that the ethical component of work is closely linked to SDW.

> The best approach for incorporating the principles of justice into work is by paying attention to the subjective dimension of work. The objective dimension changes drastically over time, with

> the development and expansion of technology, industrial production, communication, trade and communication.

Studies also indicate the primacy of SDW in conceptualizing meaningful work – a topic that continues to generate interest in business ethics. This is because meaningful work is more related to one's subjective experience of self-realization and fulfillment while working rather than to some objective characteristics of work (objective dimension). While the two dimensions of work are interconnected, no objective aspect of work is sufficient to guarantee its meaningfulness. Unfortunately the ILO document leaves much to be desired as far as this topic is concerned. On the other hand, CST scholars rarely engage in cross-cultural or interreligious dialogue. It is essential to make an in-depth analysis and articulate in a systematic way the presence of SDW in other religions in order to fully understand the significance of this concept outside CST.

This paper presents a Buddhist perspective on SDW. While Buddhism acknowledges the importance of meaningful work since right livelihood is included in the 8-fold path, not much attention is given to this topic in traditional literature. Early Buddhism proscribes all kinds of economic activities for monks. "Sàkyamuni Buddha, to whom all Buddhist schools refer, never did regular work himself, neither in a payed job nor in voluntary employment" (Baumann 1998, 133). Because right livelihood is designed for laity, the lack of attention given to it reflects the tendencies in Buddhism, especially during its earlier stage to focus on monastic way of life as a means to attain nirvana, while the life of a layperson is a means to attain better rebirth. For this reason, Buddhism "did not play the same type of role attributed to Protestant ethics in the West" when it comes to work ethic (Ornatowski 1996, 199).

My position in this essay is that while there is no distinction between subjective-objective dimension of right livelihood in traditional Buddhist literature, Buddhist teaching on karma implies affirmation of SDW as the source of the morality of work, and that SDW as conceptualized in CST is a useful explanatory framework in applying right livelihood in modern-day setting. While this Buddhist standpoint on SDW that I expound is consistent with CST, consideration of Buddhism in our understanding of SDW will challenge us to revise and expand the notion and practice of meaningful work to integrate the wellbeing of workers, interpersonal relationships, meditative practice (mindfulness) and concern for the environment. In developing *a Buddhist perspective*, I draw from authors who belong to *Contemporary Buddhism*. This term refers to new modes of Buddhism that emerge in the West since the last decade of the 20th century as a result of Buddhism's encounter with Western philosophy and its engagement with the modern world. While generally reflecting the teachings of *Therevada* as contained in the early Buddhist texts, Contemporary Buddhism does not intend to represent any particular school of Buddhism. As a religion, Buddhism is non-credal and non-dogmatic. It considers adherence to any absolute doctrine or singular dogma as a kind of attachment that can lead to suffering. Thus, there is no homogenous ethical system that is followed by all Buddhists. "This theory of more than one ethical system is more flexible and in accord with the actual moral practices of Buddhist communities"

(Promta 2005, 156). For many Buddhists, the diversity of schools in Buddhism is a manifestation of the fecundity and timelessness of its message, rather than a reason for conflict and exclusion.

At the outset we must bear in mind that we cannot expect a perfect fit between Western and Buddhist concepts without risks of superimposing Western categories. According to Edelglass (2014, 477-478) "no one Western meta-ethical theory provides an adequate theoretical framework for grasping moral thinking in any of the major traditions of Buddhism, and a fortiori, the vast and heterogeneously diverse tradition of Buddhism as a whole." Nonetheless, the fact the Western terminology does not fully capture the nuances of Buddhist ideas does not mean that all endeavors to apply Western categories to Buddhism are misconceived. Western philosophy generally offers precise definitions and taxonomies not found in traditional Buddhist texts. Such approach does "not only refine our interpretations but also generate new insights and perspectives that otherwise would not arise" (Velez, 2013). Whitehill (2000, 26) adds, "no one argues that Buddhist ethics or morality are *sui generis*, a unique and inviolate form of Buddhist tradition to be transplanted whole and entire into Western cultural soil."

The Two Dimensions of Work

CST makes a distinction between objective and subjective dimensions of work. Objectively, work is a transitive action that brings about the use or transformation of natural objects to satisfy human needs. As such, it is a means to economic development and appears in various types or values depending on its output. But work is not only a transitive action, it is also an immanent or a self-perfecting act. "For when a man works, he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well. He learns much, he cultivates his resources, he goes outside of himself and beyond himself" (Vatican Council II 1965, no. 35). This is SDW where work is seen as the "axis of human self-making" (Baum 1982, 10). In all types of work, it is the person who acts and human faculties are utilized. Through work, we develop our natural talents, learn and acquire new skills, and improve our knowledge and competencies. Every human act leads to an end which is the realization of the subject's intent, its fulfillment. Fulfillment involves not just the completion of the act but the actualization of the subject. Subjectively, work is an *actus personae* (act of the person) that can only be predicated to the person. It cannot have meaning and value apart from the worker from which it proceeds. "Thus, work bears a particular mark of man and humanity, the mark of a person… And this mark decides its interior characteristics; in a sense it constitutes its very nature" (John Paul II 1981, no.1). As an *actus personae*, work cannot be considered as a material commodity or valued according to the laws of market economy. While objectively work may come in various types, it is only a single activity subjectively considered, it does not admit degrees or qualifications for its worth comes from the fact that it proceeds from the person who is much more than a material being. "As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfill the calling to be a person that is his reason of his very humanity" (John Paul II 1981, no. 8).

The term *subjective* in CST has nothing to do with subjective relativism. It has a technical meaning in the pre-pontifical writings of John Paul II where we find influences of personalist philosophy that gives "primary emphasis on subjectivity, i.e. on man's entry into personhood through fidelity and other self-actualizing commitments" (Baum 1982, 15). CST rejects a subjective-relativist definition of meaningful work that affirms the freedom of everyone to choose any means to earn a living. SDW means that the human person is the subject of work. Being a subject is more than being an agent, for a subject is a conscious, self-governing, and self-determining being who experiences her own self in her actions. She is aware that she is responsible for her action and its concomitant effects. Human action is auto-teleological in the sense that it is *self-end* and this end is self-fulfillment. The person cannot direct himself toward external goals or values without determining himself and his values. As expressions of our inmost being, our professions have physical, ethical, and spiritual repercussions on ourselves.

SDW takes priority over its objective dimension. The person as a subject cannot be an object. Being an end in itself, the person cannot be subordinated to other lesser ends or values. To put more emphasis in its objective dimension is to alienate workers from their nature by transforming them into a mere instrument of production. Any economic activity that violates human dignity and treats the person simply as a tool of production cannot be considered meaningful work. What is more morally significant is not the external effects of work but its internal effects – what work does to the worker.

"The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one" (John Paul II 1981, no. 6). SDW is the root of the morality of work. It connects work with the person. Because SDW reveals how our work shapes our being and brings about our fulfillment, choosing one's work is a moral choice. We must reject any kind of work that is not consonant with our dignity. To recognize the priority of SDW is to be committed in a certain way of organizing work too. Firms are obligated not only to respect the rights of workers by providing them with morally minimum standards of working conditions, but also to ensure that "such conditions must come to reflect a full understanding of the reality of human personhood and the person's inherent impulse to manifest and fulfill his or her own subjectivity" (Savage 2008, 213).

Buddhist Teaching on Karma

Following the approach taken in CST, I analyze work from a Buddhist perspective by starting with human act or karma, since work is a specific kind of human action. The Sanskrit word karma (*kamma* in Pali) means both work and action – it applies to all kinds of intentional acts whether verbal, mental, or physical, including their moral consequences. Because karma is directly concerned with morality, any discussion of work from a moral perspective must begin with karma. For "the Buddha, the moral order of the universe is contained first and foremost in the doctrines of *kamma* and rebirth" (Gowans 2003, 29). While traditional Buddhist literature does not distinguish the objective and subjective dimensions of right livelihood, it speaks of transitive and intransitive effects of karma (Keown 2003).

Buddhism uses the terms *kusala* (wholesome) and *akusala* (unwholesome) to denote the axiological qualities of human act. It will be misleading however, to translate these terms as good and evil in English. *Kusala* and *akusala* are mental states or conditions that produce results initially in the mind. The Buddha says "Bhikkhus, whatever qualities are wholesome, partake of the wholesome, and pertain to the wholesome, all have the mind as their forerunner. Mind arises first followed by the wholesome qualities" (Bodhi 2012, 98). *Kusala* refers to condition of wellbeing and contentment without suffering. *Akusala* is the condition when the mind is unhealthy, deluded, envious, or ignorant – mental states that cause suffering. Intention is "a volitional process that intends, initiates, and directs action toward fulfilling a goal" (Heim 2014, 21). Intentionality, state of mind, the presence of mental defilements that motivate the act and full consciousness are all crucial in determination of moral responsibility. *Anguttara Nikaya* states that karma is *cetana* – a term that connotes intention, volition or the act of willing, and motivation. (Keown 2003) "It is volition, bhikkhus, that I call *kamma*, for having willed, one acts by body, speech, or mind" (Bodhi 2012, 963).[1] Although karma is action, morally speaking it means the intention behind the action.

Buddhism accepts five presuppositions of the teaching of karma (Reichenbach 1990, 13). These are (1) actions have axiological qualities, (2) actions have effects, (3) these effects can be manifested immediately or in the future, (4) they can be accumulated, (5) people are reborn. Karma has two kinds of effects: *Phalas* – the "fruits" of action or all its external consequences which may be visible or invisible, and *Samskaras* or the invisible and transformative effects of action to one's character. Some examples of *Phalas* are changes in physical appearance, increase or decrease in wealth, presence of diseases, or destruction of objects. *Samskaras* or mental formation refers to our mental dispositions, habits, and tendencies to act virtuously or viciously (Fink 2013, 670). Moral action leaves a "*samskaric* imprint" or intransitive effect in ourselves.

Looking at its effects, karma has two aspects: subjective and objective. The subjective aspect of karma considers the internal effects of actions to the quality of one's thought.[2] It refers to intransitive or character-based effects that create "dispositions and tendencies, merit and demerit, which in turn affect our desires, passions, and perspective on the world" (Reichenbach 1990, 31). Gradually, one becomes what one regularly intends. On the other hand, the objective aspect affects "the instruments of our experiences, from our own bodies to the world around us" (Reichenbach 1990, 31). Objectively, karma refers to external expressions and direct impacts of actions to others. It operates based on the law of causality, a kind of natural law akin to the law of gravity (Keown 1996a). "While the intransitive aspect of moral action affects only the agent, the transitive aspect (what is actually done) affects other parties" (Keown 1996b, 334).

"It is noteworthy" Keown adds (1996b, 334), "that discussion of karma in Buddhist literature almost invariably focuses on the *intransitive* effects of karma. What is emphasized is the way moral deeds enhance or prejudice the personal circumstances of the actor, and little is said about the effect of moral action upon the world at large." The reason for this is that first, these intransitive

or subjective effects manifest themselves directly in the life of an individual in her present or future existence. Karma implies that once we have made a conscious choice to act in a certain way, our subsequent intentional acts change who we are. We become predisposed to choose in the same way to the point that our future choices become more and more limited. Second, the connection between the transitive aspect of karma to specific actions is hard to identify with precision because of the influence of non-karmic factors. Buddhism does not rule out the role of chance or luck in human behavior. On the other hand, the subjective dimension of karma is known to a person in a direct way as one becomes aware of the transformation of one's character or the steady improvement in her wellbeing in terms of happiness and equanimity as a result of consistently doing wholesome actions. We *produce* and *reproduce* ourselves as *subjects*, as it were from moment-to-moment in the ethical volitions and choices we make. Third, the subjective aspect of karma remains fully in the subject in a non-contingent manner. For example, even if my attempt to commit robbery did not harm anyone because I was caught in the process, it still has a karmic effect on me as it shapes me into being a certain kind of person (as a thief). Finally, the intransitive effects of karma are intrinsically connected to actions that produce them in the sense that they cannot be acquired in any other way without performing those actions, e.g. one cannot be a generous person unless she acts generously. From this, it is clear that what is emphasized in Buddhism is the subjective dimension of karma - the intransitive effects of our actions in terms of how they transform us.

Because of its emphasis on the subjective dimension, some philosophers like Keown consider Buddhism as a kind of virtue ethics.[3] For his part, Fink describes Buddhism as inward-looking. "Moral questions are settled, not by considering one's action from an external point of view, but by examining one's underlying motives and intentions" (Fink 2012, 376). This does not mean, however that external consequences of actions do not matter as long as we have the right intention. Even if it is the intransitive or subjective dimension of karma that takes priority, the transitive aspect is still important since action involves both intention and external outcomes. External effects of actions on other persons and the natural environment also affect the doer in terms of how the environment and other persons condition her present or future existence.[4]

For Keown, it is a mistake to interpret Buddhism as a kind of utilitarianism. The utilitarian ethics of Mill does not only hold that acts have consequences, but that acts do not have any intrinsic morality. Although Buddhism considers the ethical relevance of the effects of karma, the determining factor in the morality of action and in the kind of rebirth is *cetana*. The way Harvey (2000) puts it is that it is not bad rebirth or negative consequences of action that make the action wrong, it is because the action is wrong so it generates negative consequences, if not to other beings, definitely to the doer. Further, there is an intrinsic connection between means and end with regard to the 8-fold path and nirvana, i.e. the path is not only instrumentally good but is good in itself inasmuch as it is the only means to achieve the highest good (nirvana). The 8-fold path is a "process of developing and perfecting qualities in order to achieve the end of awakening, but at the same time these excellent qualities constitute awakening" (Vasen 2014, 549). The full realization of the 8-fold path is identical with nirvana.

The Priority of SDW – Buddhist Perspective

Buddhists recognize that work has two main functions. First, it is a means to earn a living. This is the objective dimension of work where work is considered as a transitive act and the focus is on the external goods that it creates. Work is essential to ensure economic independence and avoid misery caused by poverty and material deprivation. The *Dhammapada* states that "Hunger is the illness most severe" (Carter 1987, 37). Poverty makes it difficult to develop spiritual values and is the major cause of crimes and other unethical behaviors. Buddhism manifests positive attitude toward wealth acquired through hard work (Holder 2006, 30; Carter 1987, 61). The Buddha acknowledges possession of wealth, economic security, and freedom from debt as legitimate forms of happiness for householders.[5] He also talks about the right use of wealth: e.g. to raise family, protect oneself, help those in need, and support the *sangha*. A person with stable income is not a burden to society, and those with greater income have more resources to alleviate the sufferings of others. Describing a virtuous householder, the Buddha says he "seeks wealth righteously, without violence, and having obtained it, makes himself happy and pleased; and shares the wealth and does meritorious deeds; and uses that wealth without being tied to it, infatuated with it, and blindly absorbed in it, seeing the danger in it and understanding the escape" (Bodhi, 2012, 1461). The Buddha also condemns idleness and considers habits that cause squandering of wealth such as gambling and addiction as vices that must be avoided.

The ultimate goal of work, however, should be nirvana. As part of the 8-fold path, right livelihood leads to human fulfillment by freeing us from our samsaric existence. It must be recalled that the eight components of the path are inseparable and mutually reinforcing. In our employment, we are regularly confronted with ethical dilemmas and environmental issues that we must solve with right intention. Our encounter with adversity, conflicts, disappointments and failures in pursuit of our careers enables us to exercise right understanding that makes us resilient to such challenges. It is written in *Dhammapada*: "Winning, one engenders enmity;/ Miserably sleeps the defeated./ The one at peace sleep pleasantly,/ Having abandoned victory and defeat"(Carter 1987, 37). There are many factors in our working life that can generate or reinforce envy, sadness, anger, and mental distortions (pride, racial or gender prejudice, illusion of grandeur). These unwholesome thoughts may cause suffering to oneself in terms of stress or depression, and are also the roots of wrong actions that harm other beings. Through right effort we can prevent the arising of these thoughts. With regard to company communications (meetings, workshops, annual reports, emails and memos, telephone conversation, promotional materials) the Buddha says that our speech must be truthful, inaccuracy in communication can create confusion and disruption. Compassion can be expressed in sharing our talents to our colleagues, spending more time to help others, and going extra mile to assist clients and customers – especially those who are vulnerable, i.e. the aged, young children, and those who are sick or economically disadvantaged. As employees, we have choices to make on how we treat each other on a daily basis. We can be humane and respectful with one another by observing the moral precepts of right action, or we can turn our offices into a hostile and less

productive environment where sexual misbehavior, theft, and bullying are present.

Buddhism recognizes the value of external goods that our livelihood produces, but it gives more importance to internal goods we acquire through work – spiritual and moral values essential for self-development and enlightenment, i.e. the intransitive or subjective dimension (SDW). Every time we practice the 8-fold path in the workplace, we do something incremental to our character regardless of the external outcomes. Our right actions may not make any difference or may be interpreted simply as a kind of social investment. Rather than helping someone, our compassion may cause co-dependence. On account of misunderstanding, our co-workers might doubt our right intention, but regardless, our acts have internal effects – they mold us into a certain kind of person and influence our future decisions by shaping our character. As mentioned previously, what takes primacy in Buddhism is the transformative/intransitive effects of our actions. The priority of SDW in Buddhism is in line with its emphasis on subjective or internal aspect of karma.

"The Buddha strongly criticized the caste system, and advocated the subjective dimension of work, where work is undertaken for man's spiritual renewal and development; as a conscious and free subject he chooses his work in order to realize his humanity" (Peccoud 2004, 36). The caste system and other dehumanizing ways of organizing work that exploit workers by treating them as tools of production are forms of wrong livelihood, especially if these livelihoods can be organized in different ways but are not done so because of concern for excessive profits. Under these conditions, the objective dimension of work is given priority over SDW, and the human worker becomes subject to work rather than the subject of work. SDW means that work is for the person, not the other way around (John Paul II 1981, no. 6). Aside from the fact that wrong livelihood causes misery, (Bodhi 2012, 1493) it is an obstacle to nirvana because it cultivates unwholesome mental dispositions. One cannot follow the 8-fold path and engage in economic activities that involve excessive violence, production and selling of intoxicating substances, or pornography. Wrong livelihood also includes occupations based on fraud or intentional lying (Walshe 1995, 71-73). In telling a lie that we know is untrue, we deceive ourselves, making it difficult for us to practice not only right speech but also right understanding.

The priority of SDW involves concern for the good of others and the environment, not just the individual worker. This is because in Buddhism, work is an act of a person who is a conscious subject but not a completely autonomous individual or an independent-substantial self. The notion of independent-substantial-self expressed in the statement "I am a substantial, self-identical entity" is a conventional view.[6] The term *self* refers to a bundle of constantly changing physical and mental heaps (*skandhas*) or constituents that interact and condition each other.[7] The Buddhist notion of *anatta* or no-self does not negate the existence of persons as conscious subjects of experience and agents of action and moral responsibility.[8] Intention is central to the domain of ethics, to abandon the notion of an intentional subject is to abandon the moral domain itself. It has been argued in many Buddhist studies that *anatta* is not incompatible with moral responsibility. Whether there is a permanent self or not, the negative or positive effects of our actions continue to exist.

Whenever *self* is denied in Buddhism, it is always qualified. What *anatta* negates is the reality of an autonomous, reified, and unconditioned substantial self, rather than the existence of the person as an acting and experiencing subject, bringing in the fact that persons are relational beings. "[W]hile there is no permanent Self, each person is seen as a particular, individual combination of changing mental and physical processes, with a particular karmic history" (Harvey 2000, 36). Neither does Buddhism deny the presence of self-experience, but renders certain modes of self-experience incompatible with *anatta* as illusory. Further, Buddhism teaches that all living beings are interconnected in the natural processes of birth, suffering, old, age, and death. This view, called *paticcasamuppada* or dependent co-arising is usually expressed in twelve causal links.[9] Thus, there is no inherent conflict between one's wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.[10]

With this notion of self, cooperation and sharing rather than competition or self-interest are the characteristic marks of rational action. The good of oneself and of others are seen as closely inter-twined. Buddhism does not negate concern for oneself, it posits that the exercise of understanding oneself, if it is to be inclusive and realistic, involves reference to others. The Buddha says, "a wise person of great wisdom does not intend for his own affliction, or for the affliction of others, or for the affliction of both. Rather, when he thinks, he thinks only of his own welfare, the welfare of others, the welfare of both, and the welfare of the whole world" (Bodhi 2012, 555). Clearly, this is another way of expressing the second evangelical commandment: Love thy neighbor as you love yourself (Matt. 22:37-39). Resonating with CST, our choice of employment in Buddhism is a moral one. We have to look at the consequences of our livelihood, not just to our individual selves but to our fellow humans and the environment as a whole for they are also part of what we are.[11] One has the moral obligation to reject occupations that cause avoidable harm to non-human living beings. This includes businesses that pollute the environment, engage in arms trade or unnecessary animal testing, manufacture violent video games, and support repressive governments. Consideration of the quality of goods and services is also important. Right livelihood entails efficient use of natural goods in order to satisfy the authentic needs of our present community without compromising the welfare of future generations. Work that has something to do with production and sale of luxury goods and inferior products that have to be replaced in a short time is wrongful since it makes us use natural resources for unnecessary purposes.

Another criterion for right livelihood from its subjective dimension is that it entails harmonious relationship in the workplace. In the current economy, production cannot be considered as an individual or even a group activity, but a joint effort of so many people working across geographical boarders and producing products and services exchanged in globally integrated markets. It involves not just the actual production process but also the scientific and technical preparation, conceptual planning and design, as well postproduction efforts such as marketing, promotions, delivery, etc. No work is done in complete isolation without connecting the person with other workers and the natural world. Relationship makes work possible. CST scholars call this the social dimension of work. According to *Centesimus Annus*, individual work "is naturally

interrelated with the work of others. More than ever, work is work with others and work for others" (John Paul II no. 31). Moreover, the workplace today is the main vehicle for social interconnectedness where lasting relationships are oftentimes formed. These meaningful interpersonal dynamics that unfold in the workplace can be a powerful source of meaning of work for many employees.

Right Livelihood and Meaningful Work

Buddhism is more interested in our daily activities, i.e. actions that we do form moment to moment rather than major grand decisions. It is about transformation of our daily lives. "Right livelihood is interesting, absorbing work. Not so much because it is exciting, glamorous work, but more because the mindfulness practice involved makes it possible to be fully present in the work, whatever its day-to-day reality might be" (Whitmyer 1994, 255). Thus, right livelihood cannot be a meaningless job.

To be meaningful, work must be accompanied by mindfulness. By mindfulness, I refer to the Buddhist practice of mental discipline in the 8-fold path that includes right effort, right attentiveness, and right concentration. We need to be fully present in our jobs and attuned to our emotional reactions and those of others. There are times when we have the tendency to auto-pilot in the workplace especially when we do tedious or repetitive chores. Being a meaningful work, right livelihood cannot be a necessary evil, something we need to get done and over with so that we can move on for the rest of our day. Buddhist mindfulness is a mental skill that sustains attention when excitement and energy for work wane as a result of burnout or boredom. It requires focusing the mind in the present moment and "purposefully paying attention to things we ordinarily never give a moment's thought to" (Whitmyer 1994, 252). With mindfulness, we become aware of our automatic thoughts, memories, and emotional reactions as mental entities. In Buddhism, our mind is very powerful to the point that we tend to substitute ideas and emotional reaction to how things really are. The result is that we fail to grasp reality as it is. To be effective mindfulness has to be extended to everyday living, especially in our working life. There are various techniques in Buddhist meditation that can promote consciousness at work (Thich Nhat Hanh 2008; Marques 2012; Whitmyer 1994). Doing repetitive tasks in the workplace provides workers with opportunity to practice the discipline of right concentration where the mind maintains deep awareness and attention on each moment. Buddhists "aim to make work as powerful a tool of personal transformation as formal sitting meditation. Indeed, if we understand meditation to be the systematic cultivation of positive states of mind, one might say that we aim to make our work an extension of meditation" (Baumann 2000, 379).

There is a growing body of literature in psychology and organization studies that indicates that Buddhist mindfulness has several desirable outcomes in the workplace both in terms of productivity and wellbeing of employees.[12] Mindfulness makes the mind calm and focused. It provides relief of anxiety and depression as well as promotes mental clarity, increased self-awareness, collaboration and teambuilding, leadership development, ethical decision making, and improved

efficiencies. It minimizes aggressive reactions, disruptive activities, and behaviors associated with bias and discrimination. Through the practice of mindfulness, stressful events in the workplace can be experienced as less threatening by enabling the workers to maintain calmness during such situations. In his book, Richmond (1999) writes that one does not have to be a Buddhist in order to benefit from these practices.

To fully realize right livelihood from its subjective dimension, we need to be engaged at work and excel in it by accomplishing it to the best of our ability. Through mindfulness, we can develop profound appreciation and discover the meaning of ordinary work. What matters more is not the material output of work but how consciously and carefully it is done. From this perspective, the meaning of work comes from our daily experience – the way we serve our customers and clients, the quality of our relationship and interaction with our co-workers, the accuracy of our audit and accounting reports, our attention to details when we do our inventories, the manner we write our corporate communications, and other activities that involve reflection, initiative, mind-presence, exercise of responsibility, absorption, practice of virtues, and interpersonal dynamics.

Most employment today has a measure of wrong livelihood. Many workers cannot strictly follow the Buddhist precept of non-harming. We need police and armed forces to provide us protection from criminals or terrorists, plants need to be protected from pests, mosquitoes that carry deadly viruses have to be eliminated. Our economic activities generate negative externalities such as garbage and toxic wastes, noise, congestion, and pollutants that cause suffering or inconvenience to others. I may work in a retail store that does not cause any direct harm but the clothes that we sell may have been produced in factories that do not observe fair labor practices or are located in countries where government repression of workers' rights exists. The firm I work with may offer retirement benefits from mutual funds that invest, without my knowledge, in environmentally harmful industries.

In his commentary, Baum (1982, 11) says that as far as the SDW is concerned, CST avoids any form of dogmatism. Among the many possible definitions of the person, John Paul II chose to define the person as a working being (*homo laborans*) for the reason of "its historical usefulness and transformative power." As the subject of work, the meaning we assign to our work cannot be separated from our vision of a meaningful life. In CST, the person is the end of her own conscious actions because she cannot direct herself toward external goals and values without determining her very being at the same time. As workers, we need to find deeper meaning for our daily toil and sacrifice. In the same vein, meaningful/right livelihood in Buddhism is not simply a matter of choosing the right kind of job. All types of work can degenerate into wrong livelihood if we become too attached to our careers, achievements, or material success. Any type of work can cause greed or egocentricity. Any profession can engender workaholism where work alone becomes the ultimate and only source of individual fulfilment. Loss of one's profession may cause depression. Any livelihood may be pursued simply as a means to collect paychecks, rather an opportunity to attain enlightenment. From its subjective dimension, any occupation could be an example of wrong livelihood.

As far as SDW is concerned, both CST and Buddhism are inward-looking in their approach since work is an intentional activity. Because karma is primarily *cetana*, Buddhism gives priority to the intentional aspect our act and its subjective effects in moral analysis. Wrong livelihood is rooted in unwholesome states of mind. "The degree of unwholesomeness of an action is seen to vary according to the degree and nature of the volition/intention behind the action, and the degree of knowledge (of various kinds) relating to it" (Harvey 2000, 52). But intention is only one aspect of the completed action. One act can have a number of consequences, not all of them are intended. Not all aspects of our actions are within our control. We can only have full control of our intentions. Having negative effect by itself does not make an occupation wrongful. In order to cure diseases, doctors have to prescribe medication that has negative side effects. "An evil action done where one intends to do the act, fully knows what one is doing, and knows that the action is evil. This is the most obvious kind of wrong action, with bad karmic results, particularly if it is premeditated" (Harvey 2000, 55). Unintentional killing or injury is not considered a violation of the moral precept of non-injury.[13] Workers are not to be blamed if they are forced by poverty to work in deplorable conditions if their intention is provide their families with basic necessities. In addition, if one contributes to a project (e.g. manufacturing weapons) but is not fully responsible for its completion due to division of labor, one does not get full demerit for the negative outcome. An act can have wholesome and unwholesome intentions. Causing harm to a criminal to save innocent lives has two karmas, one good and one bad. One's occupation can possess multiple degrees of nirvanic qualities corresponding to different degrees of blameworthiness. Even if our livelihood has negative external effects, it is still a positive step toward nirvana if accompanied with good intentions. We ought to look at all the aspects of our work in making moral assessment.

One implication of the priority of SDW is that firms have limits in promoting meaningful work. "One of the ironies of the subject is that organisations can foster meaninglessness through exploitative, thoughtless and directionless treatment of people. They cannot, however, create meaning or ensure fulfilment" (Overell 2008, 46). Because the meaning we attribute to our work comes primarily from our intention, it cannot be provided or "managed" by management. There are studies that indicate that people do not simply derive meaning from their employment in a passive way, but actively search for it by relating their work to their personal goals, beliefs, and values.[14] Unfortunately, "The majority of studies on the meanings of work has been focused on finding effective methods of 'managing meaning' rather than on understanding the subjective experience of meaningful work" (Lips-Weirsma and Morris 2009, 509). The task of management is to create a supportive environment where all workers are respected regardless of their level of education, skills, and abilities. However, the intention of employers is important. If the employers' intention is all about productivity, they may only cause more harm than good by appearing insincere and fostering employee cynicism. Employers can only have influence on the objective aspect of work – how work is concretely organized, but they have no control with regard to SDW – how workers intend their work.

Buddhism emphasizes that we are responsible for our own enlightenment. The Buddha

assigns considerable epistemic significance to mindfulness (Bodhi 2012, 584-585). One may accept the Buddha's teaching on non-attachment theoretically, but it takes intensive meditation on *anatta* to fully overcome ego-centeredness. Mindfulness enables us to distinguish wholesome from unwholesome thoughts. It helps us explore deeply our intentions, assess our priorities and motives, and develop a state of heightened sensitivity to the moral features of our profession. To determine what is meaningful work or right livelihood, we must look at ourselves, meditate, examine our intentions, and honestly ask ourselves what motivates us to do the kind of work that we do and accept the exigencies and limitations that our livelihood imposes on us. Some critics may find this aspect of Buddhist teaching ambiguous or relativistic. The Buddha is known for adjusting his teachings to accommodate the individual character or the specific circumstances of his followers. One's subjective moral knowledge and ability to live it depends on one's level of enlightenment and contingent on her progress in practicing the 8-fold path.[15] But this is not relativism. Relativism is incompatible with the moral outlook of Buddhism where there is a clear distinction between wholesome and unwholesome thoughts. Certain livelihoods that involve sex trafficking or cruelty to children are so bad that it is impossible to pursue them with wholesome state of mind. Gambling and drug dealing generate negative consequences in terms of unhappiness to oneself or others that they remain bad regardless of what the doer thinks about them. Buddhist ethics has an element of pragmatism because it allows certain flexibility depending on context, but it does not imply relativism or deviation from the moral values it holds. Contextual based ethics does not entail relativism (Gombrich 2009).

The priority of SDW in Buddhism and in CST does not imply subjective relativism. The Buddha wants us to exercise our own judgment, informed by right intention, to decide what is right livelihood in accordance to our specific historical and economic conditions. In pursuit of SDW, our whole life and our whole society are intimately involved. We may not be able to fulfill all the requirements of right livelihood. What is important is that we exert our best effort to minimize the intentional harms caused by our economic activities, and maximize their opportunities to promote the welfare of all.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis shows that Buddhist perspective on SDW is consistent with CST. It reinforces CST's teaching that the meaning and value of work is not found in material wealth we produce, or even in the physical skills and cognitive abilities per se that we develop at work, but in internal goods we acquire in terms of how work enhances our humanity and promotes our spiritual flourishing as well as the wellbeing of our communities. Both traditions affirm that work is an intentional activity that cannot be treated as a commodity. Both reject a purely utilitarian or a subjectivist approach to meaningful work. Work has value not only because it is useful, but because it is an essential component of human fulfillment. Any economic activity that demeans us or directly causes unjustified harm cannot be called meaningful work in the moral sense.

The difference between SDW in Buddhism and in CST fundamentally lies in their ontologies of self. In his encyclicals, John Paul II insists that as an *actus personae* that cannot be separated from the person, work, in the final analysis must benefit the worker who is a *concrete*, *historical* and *individual* person. This is probably a reaction against the threat of totalitarianism backed by communist regimes during the latter part of the 20th century. In traditional Catholic philosophy, the *person* refers to the unique incommunicable individual, the *individua substantia* of the classical *Boethian* definition. Although a bundle/non-substantial ontology of self analogous to Buddhism was proposed by Hume in Western philosophy during the 18th century, the substantial view is still dominant in the West especially in management theory, and is the ontology of self that is presupposed in CST. Ironically, the totalitarian ideology that CST rejects is somehow premised on this standpoint. Totalitarianism regards the individual and society as distinct entities that are separate and oppositional, so it seeks to safeguard the *superior* social good from the individual who is only after his self-interest through repression of human rights. The substantial view of self is not incompatible with the *homo economicus* model for human behavior put forward by economic materialism – a position that is severely criticized in CST because it treats work as a commodity.[16] This notion of self is also related to the anthropocentric view of ecosystem where natural goods have no value in themselves except for human consumption. *Laudato Si* (Francis 2015, no. 115) identifies modern anthropocentrism as one of the roots of ecological crisis, it "sees nature as insensate order, as a cold body of facts, as a mere 'given', as an object of utility, as raw material to be hammered into useful shape, it views the cosmos similarly as mere space into which objects can be thrown with complete indifference."[17]

This is not the place to settle the metaphysical dispute between the bundle and the substantial theories of self, and I do not believe that a resolution is necessary for this essay. Many Buddhists consider *anatta* as more of a rejection of attachment to one's ego, rather than a rejection of the self per se. It is a way of living, not a metaphysical dogma. The Buddha is known for declining to give categorical responses to metaphysical questions, emphasizing instead the importance of addressing the presence of suffering in the world.[18]

Having said this, I find Buddhist perspective to be both timely and relevant in the way business is taking place today. In our global economy, all things are interconnected. Work is not a solitary affair but a shared experience and a collaborative venture in the supply chain that takes place in communities existing within earth's biosphere. SDW in Buddhism emphasizes solidarity and cooperation rather than independence, autonomy, and competition. While CST speaks of workers' solidarity, social dimension of work and *integral ecology*, Buddhist SDW integrates solidarity, meaningful work, environmentalism, and concern for others into a synthesis that inspires holistic commitment to social and ecological issues. Promoting work is oftentimes framed as a tradeoff between employee welfare and caring for the environment. Buddhism links together the intention to pursue these two goals since workers are part of the ecosystem. It is not possible to accomplish one at the expense of the other.

Finally, Buddhism teaches that mindfulness is essential to fully realize SDW. On account of the benefits of mindfulness, there is a growing interest today among managers of some of the largest companies in the United States to promote it in the workplace by investing in mindfulness or meditation training and seminars, access to mindfulness literature, spiritual retreats and meditation, or distraction-free rooms. The practice of meditation has a significant place in Catholicism too, especially in the works of mystics like Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross, but it is not emphasized in CST nor integrated in its SDW. Mindfulness however, cannot wipe away all the negative effects of work. One misconception regarding Buddhism is that it encourages resignation by advocating a purely psychological/therapeutic approach to human problems. But Buddhists never consider mindfulness as a panacea. Meditation in Buddhism is not simply a form of relaxation but is also a time to pause and reflect on broader socio-political issues responsible to our afflictive condition in and outside of the workplace.

British economist E.F. Schumacher says work is meaningful partly because it liberates us from our egocentricity by uniting us in a common task. One paradox that Lips-Weirsma and Morris (2009) found in their research is that while self-making is one of the sources of meaningful work, in the end meaningful work and meaningful life entail transcendence of one's self. In ethics, we often find this tension between satisfying one's individual needs and preferences and serving and belonging with others. Subjectivity may be essential in order to experience fulfillment and authenticity, but "Pushed to extremes, identity and authenticity reveal their dark side, becoming narcissistic, egotistical and subjectivist – and as they do so they make life poorer in meaning because they narrow and flatten moral horizons by making everything a matter of self" (Overell 2008, 46).

Endnotes:

1. "It is by *cetana* that we generate the *kammic* force behind our acts. Not only does this have an explanatory role in the process of *kamma*, but it also makes intention a key component of the Buddhist understanding of ethics and ethical consequence" (Webster 2005, 121).
2. "In contemporary discourse, the term 'subject' is often used to denote the self, but in Buddhist usage the term subject is closer to the definition of consciousness, that is the subject of valid cognition or simply the knowing phenomena. 'Knowing and awareness' is a classic Buddhist definition of consciousness. Knowing and awareness are momentary by nature and no 'knower,' or subject of the knowing analogous to a substantial self, is implied" (Tsomo 2006, 58).
3. One fundamental difference between Buddhism and Aristotle's Virtue Ethics is actions in Buddhism have transformative effects because they are products of our intention rather than habituation. Some Aristotelians claim that through habituation of our intellectual and physical activities, we will be able to think, feel, and act as a virtuous person. But for Aristotle, virtue is not a mindless repetitive act. Performance of virtue requires thoughtful analysis of every situation in which the virtue is to be exercised. Thus, there are ethicists today who are suspicious of the primacy of habituation in the acquisition of virtues. The notion that virtue is the result of mindless repetition is perhaps on account of Aristotle's analogy between acquisition of virtue and learning a practical skill, like playing a lyre or shipbuilding. But this comparison with practical skill is meant to highlight the notion that in performing virtues, one acts in a way that is spontaneous and immediate, but not a matter of routine.

4. Keown (1996b, 337) claims that "a coherent account of karma can be given purely in terms of *saṃskāras*."
5. See Bodhi (2012, 449 ff).
6. "According to the substance conception, a self is a single, unified substance (we might also say it is a being, entity, or thing). In this respect, a self is like other substances in the world such as ordinary physical objects. A substance is something that is ontologically distinct from other substances – that is, though a substance has properties, it is not itself the property of another substance" (Gowans 2003, 69).
7. See *Samyutta Nikaya* in Holder (2006, 66-67).
8. A non-egoic view of consciousness has been defended both in Eastern and Western philosophy. Conscious experience requires a subject, not a self. *Anatta* is the rejection of the *atman* – the enduring permanent self in Brahmanical literature. It does not negate the presence of a fluid and spatio-temporal conscious subject that undergoes experiences. Neither is it incompatible with the concept of subject per se, but only with a specific understanding of the latter.
9. "Dependent on ignorance, there are dispositions to action; there is consciousness; dependent on consciousness, there is psycho-physicality; dependent on psycho-physicality, there are the six bases of sense; dependent on the six bases of sense, there is contact; dependent on contact, there is feeling; dependent on feeling, there is craving; dependent on craving, there is attachment; dependent on attachment, there is becoming, dependent on becoming, there is birth, dependent on birth, there is aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, despair and distress. Thus there is the arising of whole mass of suffering" (Holder 2006, 83).
10. In the same manner CST states that individual and social advancement go hand in hand. "Man's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on each other. From the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person, which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need social life." (Vatican Council 1965, no. 25)
11. Buddhism is known for being at the forefront of the struggle to solve global ecological crisis.
12. See Yang (2017); J. Marques (2012); Richmond (1999).
13. If killing is done with good intention, e.g. to save lives, rather than being motivated by anger or desire for vengeance, it is not a purely negative act.
14. See Overell (2008).
15. See "Abhayarajakumara Sutta" in Holder (2006, 126-127).
16. See John Paul II 1981, no. 7. "Economics, management and organizational theories assume, at least implicitly, a certain model of the human being, and this has significant consequences for the subsequent development of such theories and the practice of management. So far the dominant model has been, and continues to be, that of the *homo economicus*, although with certain variants. *Homo economicus*, in simple terms, is an individual with interests and preferences and a rational capacity oriented to maximizing those preferences, which are usually considered as self-regarding." (Melé and Cantón 2014, 9) At present "the material paradigm still constitutes the main framework of reference and driving force in defining public policy" (Peccoud 2004, 24). Religious and spiritual variables have been largely excluded from organizational research. CST points out that the degradation of work is the result of the triumph of materialistic-economism that denies SDW.
17. One criticism leveled against *Laudato Si* is the lack of consistency. Initially, it departs from the traditional "stewardship paradigm" that dominates Christian environmental ethics and is related to anthropocentrism that the encyclical criticizes, and instead uses love language in expressing our relationship with the natural world. But as the text progresses, it "employs the more measured analyses and conceptual tools" of CST (Graham 2017, 59).
18. The ten classical unanswered questions by the Buddha shows that his concern is not metaphysical. It is not that metaphysics is irrelevant to ethics, but resolving metaphysical issues will not necessarily lessen suffering in the world.

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Towards Articulating the Unity of Augustine's *Confessiones*

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Abstract:

This essay argues that the unity of Augustine's *Confessiones* is found, as Augustine later remarks in the *Retractationes*, in his profound notion of *confessio*. Some commentators maintain that the text lacks a discernible unity; others claim that it has a spiritual unity located in some kind of progressive account of how, by God's grace, Augustine and/or 'everyman' can attain unity with God. The latter commentators characterize the matter in terms of spiritual increase, the biblical parable of the Prodigal Son, or the text's various triads and trinitarian structures. In this regard, *Confessiones* is viewed as progressive, universal, and structured by some kind of 'return to origin' (*exitus-reditus*) pattern. This study agrees with the commentators assessments, but finds the ultimate source of the text's progression, development on the plane of universality, and *exitus-reditus* pattern in the nature of *confessio* that Augustine introduces and explains at the outset, i.e. in 1.1.1-5.6, and develops and endeavors to validate in the biographical (books 1-10), and exegetical (books 11-13) segments that follow. *Confessio*, consisting in the person's enjoying, cultivating, and encouraging spiritual unity with divine goodness, is intrinsically restless, developmental, and dynamic because, led by God, its *telos* consists in attaining (albeit in an afterlife) complete unity with Him. As such, *Confessiones* derives its progressive, universal, and *exitus-reditus* elements from Augustine's disposition of *confessio*. In short, the unity of *Confessiones* results from the unity of *confessio*.

Keywords: *confessio*, *exitus-reditus*, divine goodness, spiritual union, immutability, progressive, universal, Wisdom, Manicheans, Platonists, Trinity, trinitarian.

I.) Introduction

Many studies have focused on Augustine of Hippo's (354-430 A.D.) famous *Confessiones* (*conf.*) [397-401 A.D.][1] but, to my mind, none has taken adequate account of Augustine's claim that his main topic therein is *confessio*.[2] By this, Augustine means to encourage both his own and his readers'[3] understanding *and* affectivity towards God by praising God's goodness and justice for governing his (i.e. Augustine's) good and evil acts. Therefore, as Augustine states retrospectively in his *Retractations (retr.)*, *conf.*'s principal theme consists in distinguishing and inspiring man's proper disposition towards God. In his words:

> The thirteen books of my *Confessions* praise (*laudant*) the just and good God concerning both my evil acts and my good acts, and they excite the understanding and affection of men towards Him. That, in any event, pertains to me – when they were written they had that effect upon me and they bring about [the same effect upon me] when they are read. What others think about them, they themselves shall determine; nevertheless, I know that they give pleasure to many [Christian] brothers and that they greatly pleased them.[4]

Augustine also remarks that *conf.* includes two major parts, viz. (i) a biographical component found in books 1-10 and (ii) an exegetical component in books 11-13. In his words: "The first ten books were written about myself; the final three [were written] about the holy scriptures from this passage, 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth,' all the way to the sabbath rest."[5]

Questions arise, therefore, concerning exactly how Augustine's effort to encourage praising God encompasses the two topics he places in *conf*. What, in other words, connects together the content for praising God Augustine manifests in books 1-10, concentrating on biography, with that shown in books 11-13, focusing on 'the holy scriptures' to give an account of God's creation from its beginning unto its sabbath rest?

On this matter, interpretations abound. While some imply that the unity Augustine speaks of is illusory[6] or beyond comprehension[7] – but that attempts to distinguish it are helpful,[8] others, considered immediately below, maintain that *conf.*'s unity can be distinguished. In the latter regard, one recent commentator maintains that *conf.*'s unity is found in "a sophisticated exercise in affective mimesis." It is said that "through language … content, and … the way he paces his narrative" Augustine strives "to replicate in the reader his own emotions – his affective state – at a given time in his progress [towards God]."[9] Another, older and traditional, perspective claims that *conf.* follows the pattern of the Prodigal Son parable[10] and/or, in some form, a Neoplatonic[11] or a Neoplatonic influenced pattern of *exitus-reditus* (i.e. outgoing from and return to origin)[12] whereby Augustine details how he abandoned and then returned to God. A third view, related to the second, maintains that *conf.'s* unity consists in an assortment of intimately related triads,[13] the most decisive being the divine trinity expressed in books 11-13,[14] that is sometimes said to underlie the other triads *conf*. employs.[15] Therefore, while some find the link between Augustine's doctrine of praise in *conf*. 1-10 and 11-13 more in Augustine's description of his affective state as he becomes progressively united with God, others locate it in various theological structures whereby the God who has created man progressively moves man towards unity with Himself. In general, then, the commentators agree that Augustine's presentation in *conf*. is essentially progressive, universal,[16] and structured by some kind of *exitus-reditus* pattern centered in divine generosity. But they attempt to explain all of this by ignoring the unity Augustine's emphasis on praising God, and therefore on *confessio*, intends.[17]

Accordingly, this essay acknowledges insight in each of the above interpretations by agreeing that Augustine's presentation is essentially progressive, universal, and structured by an *exitus-reditus* pattern. However, it argues that *conf.*'s unity is found in Augustine's articulation and sharing of his profound notion of *confessio* as man's[18] proper disposition towards God/Wisdom/divine goodness.

In this regard, *confessio*, which Augustine introduces to his reader at *conf*.'s outset as mutable man's teleological spiritual union with an immutable God (1.1.1-5.6) – given through God's mediation in Christ (1.1.1; 1.5.5), constitutes *conf*.'s fundamental ground or baseline. In other words, Augustine uses the aforementioned *relationship* to show *confessio*'s coherence and gauge its development. On the one hand, this relationship underlies each teaching of man's union with divine goodness that *conf*. presents; on the other hand, it is the standard by which greater enjoyment and understanding of human-divine union is measured. *Confessio*, therefore, is presented as an intrinsically dynamic reality centered in enjoying and augmenting man's right relationship with God. Upholding and developing this relationship is *confessio*'s origin and goal; it is Augustine's motive for analyzing his life (*conf.* 1-10) and the scriptures (*conf.* 11-13); and growing *confessio* is the object Augustine's analysis hopes to achieve. Hence *confessio*, understood as outgoing from and return to origin (in the sense of augmenting spiritual union), underlies *conf*.'s *exitus-reditus* structure, and is responsible for the text's progressive and universal characteristics.

II.) *Confessio*'s Progressive Focus on Man's Proper Response to Divine Goodness

What supports this claim about *conf*.? To begin with, we notice that *confessio*'s theological dimension can be simplified in one respect. Since Augustine prominently claims that God's goodness (*bonus,* e.g. 1.5.5; 1.7.12/*bonitas*, e.g. 13.1.1) is His pre-eminent characteristic – as he teaches that God creates man entirely for his good, i.e. so man can share eternally in God's goodness (13.2.2) – God's justice (*justitia*, e.g. 4.3.4), particularly as punishment, is essentially remedial.[19] Its purpose is to encourage its patient towards *confessio* by punishing him/her for vice (e.g. 1.20.31). Yet, Augustine's account of God's goodness also contains significant complexity. On the one hand, he claims that God only shares His goodness as such, or positively, with His elect – everyone else receives His goodness under the form of justice (13.14.15). On the other hand, Augustine especially identifies God's goodness with His Spirit (e.g. 13.1.1-10.11; 13.34.49-38.53) Who, for His part, belongs to a triune Godhead (e.g. 13.5.6). Moreover, God's goodness, and therefore His Spirit and Godhead, is manifested to humanity in all things – particularly by His incarnation (1.1.1; 7.9.13), church (1.1.1), and scriptures (books 11-13), whereby God helps men achieve beatitude. Therefore, although Augustine's eschatology and philosophical theology in *conf.* are not systematic, they are obviously centered in his teaching on divine goodness.

That said, Augustine's narrative also shows that *conf*.'s eschatology and philosophical theology are subordinate, in a way, to distinguishing and encouraging his notion of man's proper relationship to God's goodness. Therefore, while Augustine's account of divine goodness is multi-faceted, it is ultimately shaped by his theological anthropology. Thus, in 10.27.38, Augustine evinces that he writes *conf.* from the perspective, and for the purpose, of praising God's goodness since he understands that this disposition establishes him in right relationship with God and leads to perfect union with Him,[20] i.e. to a sabbath rest (13.35.50-38.53). In this respect, Augustine upholds as ideal the very same disposition towards God that he confesses (in the first-person) to his reader as he

narrates *conf*. It seems, then, that Augustine names his text *Confessiones* since, based on *confessio*, it intends to encourage narrator and reader alike to know and embrace divine goodness. As I will emphasize later, Augustine often confesses that he narrates *conf.* for human persons (including for himself) rather than for God since, as he judges that God Is good (e.g. 7.4.6), it is only man who requires inspiration and encouragement towards embracing God's goodness. Hence, Augustine commences his second major confession, beginning in *conf*. 11, with these words:

> Lord, eternity (*aeternitas*) is yours, so you cannot be ignorant of what I tell you. Your vision of occurrences in time is not temporally conditioned. Why then do I set before you an ordered account of so many things? It is certainly not through me that you know them (*non utique ut per me noveris ea*). But I am stirring up love for you in myself (*sed affectum meum excito in te*) and in those who read this (*et eorum qui haec legunt*), so that we may all say 'Great is the Lord and highly worthy to be praised (*laudabilis valde*)' (Ps. 47:1). I have already affirmed this and will say it again: I tell my story for love of your love (*amore amoris tui facio istuc*).[21]

Augustine's principal point, then, is that humans, as God's creatures, properly owe humble thanks to Him for their opportunity to attain eternal union with Him – to which all other goods (personal, social and ecclesial) are subordinate. Hence, if man humbly pursues and/or receives the goods towards which he is innately oriented, he orders himself towards his *telos*; if he otherwise pursues and/or receives goods, he becomes disordered. *Confessio* is owed to God, then, not insofar as humans exist (1.2.2) but because their existing is for the sake of attaining His sabbath rest (1.5.6; 13.35.50-38.53). Consequently, man achieves his *telos* by conforming his thought and action, or heart, to God's thought and action. Augustine's approach, then, entails that each human is fundamentally *relational and teleological*. To his mind, each person (whether recognizing this or not, e.g. 10.27.38) always stands in relationship with God and acts, in all things, either for his *telos*, by embracing *confessio*, or against his *telos*, by practicing *praesumptio* (7.20.26). There is no middle ground; one loves God and neighbor in due proportion or, as Augustine's pear-theft shows (2.6.14), one loves oneself above God and neighbor.

Nevertheless, *conf*. teaches that this ideal structure is complicated by three related factors, viz. by original sin, personal sin, and the vicissitudes or contingencies of the church's historical development (e.g. 1.1.1). Due to original sin (1.6.7-8), the human being is disposed to direct itself more towards creatures than towards God. On account of personal sin (1.20.31), a human embraces creatures as its *telos*. Finally, because of the contingent character of church development (1.9.14; 1.11.17-18), i.e. since the gospel's proclamation depends on historical factors, only some have the full opportunity to aim themselves towards God to the extent He makes that possible, in this life, through Christ and His church.

For his part, however, Augustine has the good fortune of encountering Christ's church from infancy onwards (e.g. 1.11.17). Hence, as the entirety of *conf.* shows, Augustine's relationship with God and, consequently, his encounter with original and personal sin, is always responsive to Christ's church. This brings to mind two important points. First, Augustine writes *conf.* for an audience that shares his good fortune of engaging the church.[22] Second, the presence of original sin, personal

sin, and the church's historical development do not alter Augustine's central point: whether man is fallen or not, he properly responds to God with *confessio* since he is a product of, is governed by, and exists for the sake of enjoying God's goodness.

Most important, *conf.* recounts the stages (in a progressive manner) whereby Augustine's heart, i.e. understanding and love, came to embrace *confessio* and tries to explain, first on the personal level but ultimately on eschatological and theological levels, what that entails. To aid comprehension I divide this overview of *conf.* into four parts, distinguishing Confessor Augustine's first major division, books 1-10, into three parts (viz. 1-4, 5-7 and 8-10), while leaving as is his other major division, books 11-13.

Before considering this progressive development, however, we note three significant matters. First, Confessor Augustine aims to show that *confessio* is philosophically coherent. As *conf.* 7 makes clear, Augustine's justification for *confessio*, rooted in his claim that the Catholic religion rightly proclaims that Christ. i.e. 'the Word made flesh,' is Wisdom, is governed by his notion of Wisdom. In this respect, Confessor Augustine's concept seems to have three principal parts. These are: (i) that God is immutable substance;[23] (ii) that man is a mutable substance, composed of soul and body, with orientation towards permanent union with God;[24] and (iii) that man, by God's gift, can be permanently united with God (ultimately in the afterlife [10.43.69-70]) through adhering to His incarnation, formally distinguished as 'the Word made flesh.'[25] To Confessor Augustine's mind, then, knowing Wisdom requires attaining knowledge of God, man, and divine mediation; this underlies his writing of *conf.* and account, therefore, of young Augustine's intellectual development. Secondly, the above implies that, in agreement with Confessor Augustine's account of spiritual progress in 10.27.38,[26] *conf.* could be divided into two parts. While in books 1-7, Confessor Augustine explains how he achieved insight into the nature of Wisdom and that *confessio* is rational, the remainder of *conf.*, books 8-13, explains how he came to enjoy spiritual union with God, i.e. embraced *confessio*, what that entails and, therefore, how practicing *confessio* brings additional insight into *confessio*'s reasonableness.

In the third place, as the above distinctions imply, Confessor Augustine always handles his non-Catholic philosophical/intellectual/religious sources in the service of Catholic doctrine. Confessor Augustine makes evident in 3.4.8-9, 5.14.25, and 7.9.13-15 that he is only interested in non-Catholic texts and doctrines to the extent that they help him show that the Catholic religion discloses Wisdom (cf. *Teaching Christianity*, 2.39.58-42.63 [~ 396 A.D.]). My point is not that Confessor Augustine deliberately falsifies these sources or his own intellectual development (though these matters are sometimes debated)[27] but that he only takes from them specific notions and/or implications that help – whether directly or indirectly – to validate his claim that Christ is Wisdom. On this basis, Confessor Augustine never displays a neutral attitude towards non-Catholic sources; he does not want to know them for their own sake but only for validating the Catholic doctrine of Wisdom. From beginning to end, the latter is Augustine's final cause.

How, therefore, is *conf.* progressive? In books 1-4, Confessor Augustine explains that, though

having Christ and His church present to him, he succumbed to the influence of original sin and personally sinned during his youth but subsequently began his climb towards *confessio*. Books 1-2 describe young Augustine's embracing an explicitly anti-*confessio* or presumptuous attitude towards reality that reached its nadir in his theft of pears as an early adolescent (2.10.18).[28] Then books 3-4 detail how adolescent Augustine mitigated that attitude – albeit with only minor success – when, after vowing to pursue Wisdom (3.4.7-8) under the condition of identifying Wisdom with Christ (3.4.8-9), he joins the Manichean religion.[29] In the former regard, Confessor Augustine claims that reading Cicero's *Hortensius*[30] at the age of eighteen inaugurated his *reditus* to God. He writes:

> That book of his [i.e. of Cicero] ... entitled *Hortensius* ... changed my feelings (*mutavit affectum meum*). It altered my prayers, Lord, to be towards you yourself. It gave me different values and priorities. Suddenly every vain hope became empty to me, and I longed for the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardour in my heart. I began to rise up to return to you (*surgere coeperam ut ad te redirem*). ... My God, how I burned, how I burned with longing to leave earthly things and fly back to you.[31]

However, in the remainder of book 3 and throughout book 4, Confessor Augustine explains that his affiliation with Manichean religion curbed but did not cure his egoism for, on this score, his intellectual aims and practical life were riddled with vanity, superstition, and error. In terms of understanding Wisdom, Confessor Augustine implies that young Augustine's (i) reflection on Manichean religion in light of the death of his dear friend (4.4.7-7.12), and (ii) study of the liberal arts (4.16.30), including a translation of Aristotle's *Categories* (4.16.28), prepared him to consider Wisdom in a more thoughtful manner than before. On the one hand, young Augustine's reflection on his friend's death seems to have caused him to reconsider his thoughts about man and about God. Concerning his friend, what young Augustine missed was not the good particles in which (by the Manichean cosmology) his friend temporarily shared, but that friend, i.e. the concrete unified entity, which he (i.e. the concrete entity Augustine) had loved and lost (4.8.13-9.14). Moreover, since the Manichean God could not provide Augustine with consolation at the death of his friend (4.7.12), it is easily inferred that Augustine entertained doubts concerning the Manichean account of God since, under such circumstances, the latter appeared uncaring and abstract. How, Augustine might have wondered, is the Manichean God compatible with Wisdom since what He appeared to love was not man but His own particles, i.e. Himself. Is the Manichean God good? Does He really care for man?

On the other hand, Augustine's study of Aristotle's *Categories* might have helped to crystallize considering man as some kind of organized unit and contributed to rethinking the Manichean notion of God. In the former regard, Aristotle's account of substance agreed with the notion of man Augustine derived from loving his friend for both sources imply that man is some kind of organized entity rather than a temporary amalgam of good materials and evil materials (4.1.1; 5.10.18-20). Furthermore, Augustine's attempt to achieve an intelligible notion of God by employing to that end the literal mode of the *Categories* (4.16.29-31) in conjunction with disappointment (as

stated above) concerning the Manichean God, shows that he was beginning to consider God as some kind of organized entity rather than divided, to a degree, by some bad principle/material (3.6.10-7.12; 7.3.4). Hence, Augustine was seeking a knowledge of God that differed from Manichean doctrine. Confessor Augustine strongly suggests, therefore, that although young Augustine lacked conceptual understanding of Wisdom (3.7.12; 4.16.31), his learning, from experience and from texts, caused doubt concerning aspects of the Manichean religion and seems to have turned him in the direction of recognizing certain conditions involved in knowing Wisdom. In these respects, we find progress towards *confessio*.

This continues in books 5-7 since Confessor Augustine discloses how he discovered that a rational attitude towards Wisdom belongs to *confessio*. In general, this occurs through the conjunction of three factors: (i) leaving the Manicheans to re-enroll as a catechumen in the Catholic Church, (ii) existential anguish, and (iii) consecutive study of the liberal arts, Neoplatonist philosophy, and the Christian doctrine of Christ as 'The Word made flesh.' In particular, book 5 details the steps whereby young Augustine, based on his study of the liberal arts in general (5.3.3) and affinity for the skepticism embraced by the Academic philosophers in particular (5.10.19), resolved to end his affiliation with the Manicheans and re-enroll as a catechumen in the Catholic Church (5.14.25). *Conf*. 6 depicts the profound difficulties in Augustine's practical life concerning his pursuit of wealth, honor, and friendship (6.6.9-16.26) due to his despair regarding his, even then recognized (6.11.18-19), unreasonable desire to attain an indubitable knowledge of the entirety of Wisdom on par with the mathematical teaching that 7+3=10 (6.4.6).

In book 7, Confessor Augustine describes how young Augustine came to see that the Catholic account of Wisdom is cogent. By studying Neoplatonist philosophy, he learned that it was possible to attain indubitable knowledge of key aspects of Wisdom (7.10.16-16.22).[32] These include that: (i) God is immutable (7.17.23); (ii) God created all things good (7.11.17); (iii) evil, looked at in terms of the aforementioned understanding of God and creation, is a privation concerning substance rather than substance itself – in other words, it is not God's creature (7.12.18-13.19); (iv) humans sin by free choice of will (7.16.22); and (v) God provides a way, i.e. mediation, for man to attain temporal and eternity unity with Him (7.10.16). Then, by studying the Catholic teaching that Wisdom is 'the Word made flesh,' Augustine discovered that the latter contains both the indubitable truths concerning Wisdom found in Neoplatonist philosophy as well as, contrary to Neoplatonist teaching on divine mediation (which, to Augustine's mind, subverts immutable to mutable reality [7.9.13-15]), a cogent account concerning how Wisdom can be attained. Augustine writes:

> I was certain (*certus*) that you are infinite without being infinitely diffused through finite space. I was sure that you truly are, and are always the same; that you never become other or different in any part or by any movement of position, whereas all other things derive from you, as is proved by the fact they exist. Of these conceptions I was certain (*certus quidem in istis eram*), but to enjoy you I was too weak (*nimis tamen infirmus ad fruendum te*). ... With avid intensity (*avidissime*) I seized the writings of your Spirit and especially the apostle Paul. ... I began reading and found that all the truth I had read in the

> Platonists (*inveni, quidquid illac verum legeram*) was stated here together with the commendation of your grace, so that … he is not only admonished to see you, who remain ever the same, but also healed to make it possible for him to hold on to you. … 'Who will deliver him from this body of death' except your grace through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:24), who is your coeternal Son ….[33]

Confessor Augustine has now shown his reader what belongs to knowledge of Wisdom, i.e. of God, man, and divine mediation. Everything recounted in the earlier books is intended to lead to this insight. By studying Cicero's *Hortensiu*s, young Augustine was motivated to embrace Christ as Wisdom. By experiencing the Manichean religion in conjunction with suffering the death of his friend and studying Aristotle's *Categories*, young Augustine, contrary to Manichean doctrine, implicitly sees that knowledge of Wisdom – and therefore of God, man, and mediation – includes recognizing that God is good and that existing things are organized units or substance. Then, by considering the Manichean and Catholic claims that Christ is Wisdom through the prism of learning gained (i) from astronomy, (ii) the skeptical doctrines of the Academics, and (iii) the sermons of bishop Ambrose of Milan (5.14.24; 6.3.4), young Augustine sees that Wisdom (if it can be known with certitude)[34] must include 'rational' accounts of God, man, and mediation. Therefore, because he finds that the Catholic account of Wisdom is more credible than its Manichean rival, young Augustine formally detaches himself from the Manichean religion and enrolls as a catechumen in the Catholic Church.

Finally, by studying the 'Platonist books,' young Augustine attains philosophically satisfying accounts of God and of man and, by analyzing the Catholic scriptures, discovers that Catholic doctrine holds the aforementioned teachings and, in that light, offers a cogent account of mediation. Confessor Augustine teaches, therefore, that young Augustine discovered the key components of Wisdom and learned that since man owes his being and beatitude to God, i.e. to divine goodness, his right attitude towards God consists in acknowledging human imperfection and seeking unity with Him. As these are characteristics of *confessio*, Confessor Augustine has now shown that *confessio* has a rational basis. Again, we find progress towards *confessio*.

Progress is also visible in *conf*.'s remaining books since Confessor Augustine describes how, through having the good fortune of becoming joined with Christ and His church, he embraced a *confessio* attitude towards reality and discovered more of its reasonableness. While books 8-10 concentrate on the relatively greater knowledge and lifestyle given by joining with Christ, books 11-13, by the medium of exegesis, focus on still greater knowledge and lifestyle given through joining oneself, in Christ, to a triune God.

Book 8 discloses the steps whereby young Augustine was converted to Christ and began to practice *confessio*. In book 9, Confessor Augustine details the stages by which he came, especially by his friendship with mother Monnica, to embrace formally the vocation of *confessio*. In this regard, Augustine imitates key aspects of Monnica's *confessio* lifestyle and learns more about it – including its limitations in this life (9.10.23-6) – through sharing a vision of heaven with Monnica at Ostia and striving to respond to her death in an appropriately Christian manner (9.8.17-13.37). Then, in book 10,

the last of *conf.*'s overtly biographical passages, Augustine, now serving in Christ's church as priest and bishop and writer of *conf*., discloses key aspects of the psychological structure of *confessio* that he recognizes both in himself and in fellow Christians.

All told, Augustine teaches in books 8-10 that, by God's goodness, the lifestyle of *confessio* consists in the love of God and neighbor. In particular, however, this requires conforming to God's providence, wherein temporal reality is not loved for its own sake, i.e. as end in itself, but to adhere to God's eternal plan[35] and enjoy Him forever in the afterlife (9.10.25-6). This claim is fortified by recognizing not only that soul's innate pursuit of happiness, as 'joy in the truth (10.23.33),' represents a fixed orientation towards c*onfessio* insofar as happiness really consists in the enjoyment of God (10.22.32), but also that attaining to Him requires cultivating Christ's present and future activity upon the soul. Therefore, while an immutable God is ontologically and spiritually present to each soul, cultivating His presence is decisive since that is the purpose of soul's intrinsic ontological structure and inchoate spiritual union with Him. By 'the Word made flesh,' human substance explicitly participates in divine immutability so that man – even though participation in this life is limited (10.40.65)[36] – is on the way to participated immutability. While Augustine is painfully aware that much remains to be accomplished (10.42.67), he recognizes that he has made progress in the moral life (10.35.56), and that loyalty to Christ will bring him (in the afterlife – 10.43.69) to the perfect union he seeks. Thus, Augustine's conclusion to book 10 contains these important words concerning Christ's mediation:

> With good reason my firm hope is in him. For you will cure all my diseases (Ps. 102: 3) through him who sits at your right hand and intercedes with you for us (Rom. 8:34). Otherwise I would be in despair (*alioquin deperarem*). Many and great are those diseases (*multi … et magni sunt … languores*), many and great indeed. But your medicine is still more potent. We might have thought your Word was far removed from being united with mankind and have despaired of our lot unless he had become flesh and dwelt among us (*nisi caro fieret et habitaret in nobis*) (John 1:14).[37]

Confessor Augustine has now detailed that, through Christ, he embraced the lifestyle of *confessio*, and that his understanding of Wisdom and character improved. By this, Augustine intends to give cognitive *and* existential evidence concerning the Catholic religion's claim that Christ is Wisdom. So, his presentation has progressed. But it is not complete. For, as *conf.* 11-13 will show, Augustine maintains that that lifestyle's center is not simply Christ but what He points to as Word, viz. to God in Himself, the divine Trinity – Father, Word, and Spirit. In this respect, Christ is the gateway to what stands beyond. God's goodness is, in one way, more transcendent over man and, in another way, more intimate to him than what Augustine has said so far. Therefore, in the context of engaging in scriptural exegesis, Augustine augments his 'proof' that Christ is Wisdom – and consequently, that *confessio* is man's proper disposition – by considering divine Trinity, man's trinitarian structure, and God's plan, through His church, to bring humanity to participate immutably in His immutability. How does this fortify Augustine's proof? He claims that practicing *confessio* allows one to better understand not only God, man, and divine mediation but,

more significantly, how the opportunity to participate immutably in divine immutability stands at the core of the Godhead and therefore at the heart of God's purpose for creating. In this regard, Confessor Augustine's presentation progresses by grounding its evidence for *confessio* in God in Himself rather than in Christ.

Thus in books 11-13 Confessor Augustine, the priest and bishop exegete, transitions through Christ (e.g. 11.2.4) from microcosm to macrocosm (from unity with God in Christ *to* unity with the Godhead through Christ) while offering a profound *confessio*-centered exegesis of Gen 1.1-2.3 concerning God's creating and governing His church unto the sabbath rest. Until he reaches 13.12.13, Augustine shows how the scriptures, when approached with the disposition of *confessio*, can disclose four closely related matters. To begin with, it is claimed that the principal aspects of God's providence – pertaining to creation as such – are structured by divine goodness, as specified by the divine Trinity (13.5.6). This is because exegesis teaches that *confessio*'s ultimate exemplar is no less than God in Himself. Stated in terms of the Godhead, this is (i) the eternal Father, Who is creator (books 11-12), (ii) the eternal Word (begotten by the Father) through Whom the Father creates and is therefore the exemplar of creatures (books 11-12), and (iii) the eternal Spirit, the cause of motion/love (12.9.9-32.43; 13.1.1-9.10). On the basis, then, of distinguishing God as eternal Trinity (13.5.6-12.13), Augustine holds that the created order derives from God its being, intelligibility, and activity. In other words, God gives creatures their existing, mode of existing, and motion towards their *telos*. As a result, each of (i) the scriptures (e.g. 12.18.27-31.42 – cf. 3.5.9), (ii) man's nature (13.2.3-4), and (iii) man's inner life (13.11.12) are structured in likeness to the Godhead for the sake of man's achieving unity with God.

I will now show Augustine's progressive identification of divine goodness with his notion of the Godhead, i.e. that God is Trinity, in books 11-13 by tracing Augustine's account therein of God's purpose for creating humanity and therefore, in a related vein, concerning the nature of God's presence to the human mind and, by His church, to the human race. To begin with, Augustine focuses on the Godhead to argue that an immutable God creates mutable humanity so it can permanently share in His immutability. Whereas books 8-10 argued that man requires the mediation God offers (and grows more rational by receiving it), books 11-13 argue that God's creating is governed, from beginning to end, by His intention to mediate (and therefore to grow man in rationality). So, while Augustine's earlier perspective views Wisdom mostly from the order of human discovery, his new perspective views Wisdom from the order of being. Augustine now claims, in other words, that man's pursuit of Wisdom is neither particular nor parochial but stands at the heart of God's creating. Pursuing Wisdom, then, not only shows how the Catholic religion exceeds the perspectives of the Manicheans and Platonists but also that this is the reason for divine creation in the first place. Therefore, human mutability seeks divine immutability not simply because man knows that is good but because divine immutability has created and, as Augustine's renewed focus on divine presence will assert, structured humanity to know and seek His immutability. Consequently, Augustine's progressive *confessio* of divine goodness has a pronounced universal focus.

In book 11, Augustine begins to give evidence for this claim by confessing the mode of divine creating and, in a related vein, the mode of divine presence. In these matters, Augustine uses the analogue of mutable mind's intellect and will (11.10.13-31.41) to show divine goodness in God the Father's creation by His immutable Word. Whereas human thought and action in the *saeculum* is inextricably time-conditioned because mind is time-conditioned (11.27.34-30.40), God creates temporal reality apart from temporality since His substance is eternal (11.4.6-5.7; 12.14-13.15). Therefore, while mind's making requires change in intellect and will, God the Father creates by His Word apart from any change in His immutable substance (11.31.41).

By this, Confessor Augustine shows two things on the plane of universality. First, he makes evident the ontological gap between divine immutability and human mutability. While God is immutable or eternal creator, man is a mutable or temporal creature. Secondly, he evinces that God creates mutable man so the latter can share immutably in His immutability (11.29.39-30.40). This is visible not only in Augustine's account of man's ability to know of eternity and that man would rather know eternally, but also in his developing account of mind's ontological kinship with the Godhead. While the former shows that mind participates in divine immutability (for how else could it recognize the difference between time and eternity?) and wants greater participation therein, the latter shows that divine goodness structures and governs mind for unity with itself.

This is because Augustine claims that God's presence to mind is intimate, consisting in God in Himself united with mind in itself. In this respect, we notice that, based on his account of divine presence in *conf.* 10, Augustine is now paralleling more of God in Himself with mind in itself. In this regard, Augustine has expanded the divine side by specifying immutable divinity into immutable Father and immutable Word. As mind is distinguished into intellect and will, the human side of divine presence appears essentially the same as in book 10. However, Augustine's teaching at the end of book 11 actually parallels intellect with Father in two ways and will with Word in two ways. On the one hand, intellect both knows the Father (11.29.39) and, imitating Him, plans to make the things that are made (11.31.41); on the other hand, will loves the Father through the Word (11.29.39-30.40) so it can attain immutability and, imitating the Word, it makes things (11.31.41). Hence, Augustine distinguishes intellect and will with ontological functions that look to the Godhead both for participating immutably in God's immutability and for making mutable things. Can these apparently opposed accounts be united? Although Augustine does not mention the matter here, it seems that his second account is rightly subordinated to the first since, as *conf.* 9-10 have shown, mind's proper activity of knowing and loving God should govern its temporal activity.

In any event, Augustine's matching of mind with Godhead is incomplete not only because the former distinctions require clarification but also since Catholic doctrine, as he knows, distinguishes the Godhead as triune.[38] Thus far, Augustine has made no mention of God's Spirit and, therefore, considered mind in relation to God the Father, Word, and Spirit. He has begun to parallel God in Himself with mind in itself, yet there is more terrain to cover. In that respect, progress is visible but the goal is not yet accomplished. The latter, moreover, falls beneath Augustine's

ongoing progressive account of Wisdom. For it shows not only that God has structured Augustine to participate immutably in divine immutability but also that He has structured man for that purpose. Augustine's progressive consideration of Wisdom continues to develop on the plane of universality.

Augustine advances his project in book 12 by focusing both on God's creating and on mind's relationship with God through His scriptures. On the one hand, Augustine's distinction of God the Father's creation by His immutable Word of the abode of the blessed (signified by "heaven" in Gen. 1.1)[39] and corporeal beings (signified, in a way, by the term "earth" in Gen. 1.1)[40] shows that man, though mutable, participates in divine immutability and longs for complete participation. On the other hand, and more significantly, Augustine instructs that God's Spirit (12.9.9, 30.41) encourages the exegete towards complete participation in divine immutability, i.e. towards the 'heaven' signified in Gen. 1.1, by interpreting the scriptures according to the principle of love. How so? Augustine sees this in mind's ability to distinguish a multitude of reasonable interpretations of Gen. 1.1 (12.18.27). Based on recognizing that God alone is omniscient (12.25.35-28.38) and that His goodness inspires men to love Him and neighbor through interpreting the scriptures (12.18.27), Augustine claims that love requires those with more sophisticated understandings of the scriptures to encourage those seeing less, and contrariwise. Hence, Augustine is motivated to speak of God's immutable Spirit as what inspires Moses' words in Gen. and, therefore, to encourage Gen.'s interpreters to imitate God's Spirit by loving as He loves (12.32.43). As such, God's Spirit employs the scriptures to encourage its interpreters to participate more fully in divine immutability.

Augustine's introduction of God's Spirit, moreover, makes evident his claim that God has structured and governs man to participate immutably in His immutability. Why is that? This is not only because Augustine thinks that the Spirit inspires the lifestyle of love that leads to 'heaven,' but also because this implicitly expands his account of divine presence towards showing that God has created man (not just Catholic Christians) in His likeness. In this regard, Augustine's doctrine of God's presence is now extended on the divine side by specifying immutable divinity into Father, Word, and Spirit. On the divine presence's human side two distinctions are implied. First, we see that will, as love, corresponds with God's Spirit (as *conf.* 10 had implied) rather than, as *conf.* 11 suggests, with God's Word and second, that intellect, which understands God via scripture, is better affiliated with the immutable Word, through whom the immutable Father creates scripture, than with the immutable Father (which *conf.* 11 implies). However, if will is affiliated with Spirit, and intellect with Word, how is mind (the subject of intellect and will) associated with the Father, the ultimate source of created reality? Although Augustine has resolved the apparent contradiction we noticed concerning the functions of intellect and will at the end of book 11 by maintaining that intellect and will's knowledge and love for divine immutability causes it to know and make salutary interpretations of God's scripture, trinitarian considerations make it clear that Augustine's account of God's presence to mind requires development. Augustine's concern with studying divine presence belongs to his larger intention to provide evidence that Christ is Wisdom but, by his principles, more effort is needed.

Augustine's project to validate his notion of Wisdom culminates in book 13 for three related reasons. To begin with, his account of divine goodness – subsequently affiliated with God's Spirit – claims that God's motive for creating is entirely for the welfare of His creature. According to Augustine, God creates him, humanity, and the angels, so each can share immutably in His immutable goodness. Augustine presents divine goodness, initially, by focusing on it as such (13.1.1) and then by identifying it as primary cause of the blessed angels' and humans' movement in love towards God (13.2.2-4.5). Hence, Augustine maintains that God creates because He is Wisdom, i.e. so that persons can share in His immutable goodness.

Secondly, Augustine validates his teaching on Wisdom by completing his account of divine presence. In this respect, he parallels God in Himself, as presented by the Church Creeds, with mind in itself. Therefore, after claiming that Gen. 1.2 signifies the immutable Spirit and, consequently, that Gen.1.1-2 indicates the entire Trinity (13.5.6-10.11), Augustine reconsiders the nature of divine presence in 13.11.12. While distinguishing mind's self-certain knowledge that it (i) exists, knowing and loving, (ii) knows, existing and loving, and (iii) loves, knowing and existing, Augustine juxtaposes what constitutes the Godhead, viz. Father, Word, and Spirit, with mind, now conceived as trinitarian. Hence, Augustine's doctrine of divine goodness' presence to mind has been expanded again, but this time on the human side so that he now parallels God in Himself with mind in itself. The contrast with Augustine's previous accounts is obvious. *Conf.* 10 presented the divine presence in terms of immutable divinity united with mind's intellect and will/love. C*onf.* 11's teaching juxtaposed Father and Word with intellect and will; and *conf.* 12 implied that Word (and perhaps Father) is united with intellect and Spirit with will. However, *conf.* 13.11.12 explicitly parallels a specified immutable divinity, viz. Father, Word, and Spirit, with mind now specified in terms of the apparently co-implicate and co-equal activities of existing, knowing, and willing/loving.

In this regard, will (as book 12 implied) is explicitly affiliated with God's Spirit. Intellect (as book 12 intimated) is allied with God's Word instead of being loosely affiliated with the Father. Moreover, a new distinction, viz. existing/*esse*, is fittingly introduced whereby mind is associated with God the Father. Why is this fitting? For two related reasons. On the one hand, if the Spirit represents God's motive for creating, and the Word represents the created order, then the Father, by logical priority, must represent that order's creator. Put differently, since the existence of created being is logically prior both to knowing created being and to loving created being, it is appropriate, by way of analogy, to assign *esse* to the Father, *nosse* to His Word, and *velle* to His Spirit. On the other hand, moreover, it is obvious that mind must exist in order to know and to love. If mind does not exist, it cannot know or love. Hence, *esse* logically precedes *nosse* and *velle*. Therefore, as Augustine's study of kinds of priority in *conf.* 12 shows (12.29.40),[41] what he means to posit regarding the above distinctions is priority neither in time nor in preference but in origin or order. This is because what Augustine signifies by God and/or by mind are existing things, i.e. things existing in a certain way.[42]

Looking back to *conf.* 10, we see that Augustine's account of divine presence continues to consist in paralleling immutable divinity with mutable mind. But both sides are now specified,

according to the mode of divine Trinity, so that divine goodness is shown to be more intimate to mind than ever before. Whatever one thinks of Augustine's pathway to his doctrine in 13.11.12, it is obvious that his account of divine goodness' presence in the soul has progressed. Augustine's claim that God has created man to share immutably in His immutable goodness is augmented by his claim that God creates mind's structure and is present to it as such. By this, Augustine adds to his claim that God is Wisdom. Progress continues.

The third reason Augustine's project to validate Wisdom culminates in book 13 is found in his exegesis of the church (13.12.13-38.53) which is closely related to his account of divine presence, and by which he also finishes *conf*. In this regard, Augustine's conviction to complete his exegesis of God's church and *conf.* is probably motivated by his claim that divine goodness, now specified in the divine Trinity, is first cause of being and therefore structures the exegete's mind. In this regard, Augustine recognizes not only that the church, as God's creature, must have a trinitarian structure but also that his interpreting *Gen*. to distinguish God's creating His church (wherein are included his own life together with his writing *conf.*) has divine goodness, now identified with the triune Godhead, as its primary cause, exemplar, governor, and goal. Therefore, as Christian priest, exegete, and narrator of *conf*., Augustine's ultimate inspiration is divine goodness as that is now manifest in the Godhead. Accordingly, Augustine's immediate operation, considered in terms of the co-implicate activities he understands to structure mind, viz. *esse*, *nosse*, and *velle* (13.11.12), is analogous to the divine Trinity. Moreover, Augustine's media, both his temporal life considered in books 1-10 and study of the scriptures in books 11-13, are likewise; and his goal, to understand God's creating His church, and thereby become conformed to Him in His sabbath rest, also has a trinitarian character. Hence, Augustine knows and loves that he exists and is moved by, through, and to God's goodness. In this respect, Augustine understands that *confessio* is both structured by and united with the Godhead.

It is fitting, therefore, that Augustine completes books 11-13 and *conf.* itself with these words:

> At one time *we* were moved to do what is good, after our heart (*cor nostrum*) conceived through your Spirit (*de spiritu tuo*). But at an earlier time *we* were moved to do wrong and forsake you. But you God, one and good (*une bone*), have never ceased to do good. Of your gift (*ex munere quidem tuo*) *we* have some good works, though not everlasting. After them *we* hope to rest (*nos requieturos*) in your great sanctification. But you, The Good (*bonum*), in need of no other good (*nullo indigens bono*), are ever at rest (*semper quietus*) since you yourself are your own rest (*tu quies tu ipse es*).
>
> What man can enable *the human mind* to understand this? Which angel can interpret it to an angel? What angel can help a human being to grasp it? Only you can be asked, only you can be begged, only on your door can we knock (Matt. 7:7-8). Yes, indeed, that is how it is received, how it is found, how the door is opened.[43]

Looking at things from the perspective of the macrocosm (note Augustine's use of the word 'we' signifying his first-person narrative of his location in the church), Augustine now sees, by God's

goodness, his own life (and therefore his writing *conf.*) not only within the church but also within God. In this respect, Augustine manifests profoundly eschatological and theological perspectives. For by virtue of his remarkable exegesis in books 11-13, Augustine's biographical emphasis in books 1-10 is now assumed not only into his study of the church's eternal destiny but also, and more significantly, into his account of the Godhead, understood as the source, governor, and goal of created reality. In this respect, Augustine underscores *confessio*'s universal dimension.

Taken altogether, then, *conf.* 13 caps Augustine's doctrine in books 11-13 that Christ is Wisdom, and therefore that *confessio* is reasonable, by providing cognitive and existential evidence that is more on the plane of universality than ever before. How so? On the one hand, Augustine grounds his cognitive evidence for Wisdom in his notion of the Godhead. In this respect, Augustine locates his teaching on God's motive for creating – and, therefore, his notions for divine scripture, divine presence, and the church – in an account of God's inner life, specified in terms of immutable relationships between immutable Father, immutable Word, and immutable Spirit. On the other hand, that *confessio* discovers these matters provides existential evidence concerning Wisdom for it suggests that practicing *confessio*, i.e. actively loving Wisdom, leads to deeper insight into Wisdom. If Wisdom is *confessio*'s proper object, and if Wisdom is God in Himself, then *confessio*'s proper object is God in Himself. All told, Augustine's confession in books 11-13 intends to provide more validation for the claim that Christ is Wisdom by grounding the entirety in an account of God in Himself.

III.) *Confessio*'s Universal and Progressive Dimensions show *Conf.*'s *Exitus-Reditus* Structure

We have seen how *conf.* teaches that *confessio* is progressive and universal but the latter characteristic is worthy of continued analysis both for its own sake and because study thereof helps towards distinguishing *conf.*'s essential structure. By viewing *conf.* from the perspective of its conclusion in the Godhead and sabbath rest, we see, to a greater extent than before, that Augustine intends his text to be as much about *confessio qua* universal as about *confessio qua* personal. In fact, Augustine has emphasized his universal scope from the very first, disclosing in *conf.*'s opening words that what follows is a work in theological anthropology aiming to encourage men, especially Christians who (like Augustine) have been 'stirred' by God, to embrace a lifestyle praising Him. Augustine writes:

> 'You are great (*magnus*), Lord, and highly to be praised (*laudabilis valde*) [Spirit] (Ps 47:2): great (*magna*) is your power (*virtus*) [Father] and your wisdom (*sapientiae tuae*) [Word] is immeasurable' (Ps 146:5). Man, a little piece of your creation, desires to praise you (*laudare te vult*), a human being 'bearing his mortality with him' (2 Cor 4:10), carrying with him (*circumferens*) the witness of his sin (*testimonium peccati sui*) and the witness that you 'resist the proud' (1 Pet 5:5). Nevertheless, to praise you (*laudare te*) is the desire of man, a little piece of your creation. You stir man (*tu excitas*) [Spirit] to take pleasure in praising you (*ut laudere te delectet*), because you have made us for yourself (*quia fecisti nos ad te*), and our heart is restless (*et inquietum est cor nostrum*) until it rests in you (*donec requiescat in te*).[44]

Hence, prior to introducing *conf.*'s biographical elements, Augustine addresses God and

describes the dimensions of the proper relationship that man, as God's creature, should have with Him. Moreover, Augustine immediately follows the above passage with a progressive and universal meditation on key aspects of the nature of God's presence to the human soul that concludes in 1.5.6 and whereby he endeavors to explain and validate his notion of human-divine union. Augustine commences (1.1.1) with his account of the conditions underlying man's proper union with God, viz. receiving the divine incarnation *via* (i) church preaching and (ii) the sacraments. By this, Augustine means the benefits of 'the Word made flesh' whereby man is established in an explicitly teleological relationship with God. On this basis, Augustine presents the nature of man's union with God, beginning with a materialist, pseudo-Manichean, view – which has the chief disadvantage of viewing God as divisible (1.2.2-3.3), transitioning to an incorporeal, pseudo-Platonist, view that truncates the human-divine union – which has the chief disadvantage of limiting divine goodness (1.3.3-4.4), but finishes with his understanding of proper union (1.5.5-5.6). The latter upholds soul's union with God as incorporeal, and therefore spiritual, and culminates, as Augustine's opening paragraph in 1.1.1 asserts, in soul's total union with God.[45] As is found throughout *conf*., Augustine's theology in these passages is ordered to his theological anthropology to progressively distinguish what he thinks is man's proper relationship with God. In other words, what is said (i) to and about God – including His attributes, adumbrations of His Godhead, and His action upon man, and (ii) about man, is said simultaneously by Augustine to himself and to his fellow readers to distinguish and encourage the disposition of *confessio*. On this basis, *conf*.'s author uses his own relationship with God as a medium to describe the nature of man's proper relationship with God. In agreement with his own understanding, attainment, and enjoyment of *confessio*, Augustine explains *confessio*'s nature in conjunction with his affiliations first, with Manichean religion (and its materialist ontology) later, with Platonist teaching (whereby he learned of the primacy of incorporeal being), and finally with the Catholic religion (whereby he learned the proper ontology of human-divine union). In this regard, Augustine equates his personal spiritual progress with spiritual progress as such.

As the above shows, recognizing Augustine's account of *confessio* in 1.1.1-5.6 opens a window onto *conf*.'s universal dimension. Viewed from this perspective, we find that c*onf*. presents its reader with an ascent to God, and ultimately to the Godhead, as *Summum Bonum*. Confessor Augustine details *confessio*'s nature and encourages its practice by transitioning, through the benefit of Christ's mediation (1.1.1), *from* (books 1-4) the realm of sense (first descending and then ascending), *to* the realm of mind (books 5-7), and subsequently *to* God via mind's principal powers, viz. intellect and will joined together in union with Christ (viz. books 8-10). Then, in books 11-13, with intellect and will united in Christ, Augustine goes higher, as it were, by meditating on the scriptures, divine creating, human selfhood, and God's church, in the context of considering the Godhead that is above all and in all.

Hence in divine goodness distinguished as triune, sense, mind, and church, wherein Augustine himself is found with all other Christians, are contained in their completeness in God's gift of

the sabbath rest. According to Augustine, what begins in the Godhead without the church finishes, by the Godhead, with the church connected. In His immutable Wisdom, God decided to create His church (which includes Augustine); and this concludes in the church's eternal enjoyment of God. Consequently, the church's journey from its creation in the eternal angels (book 12) to the sabbath rest and what is included therein, notably Augustine's personal journey from infancy to his present longing for the sabbath rest, have their origin and end in the Godhead. Thus, Augustine's argument is progressive and universal so far as it moves from embracing *corporeal reality* to *mind* and finally to *God* as *Summum Bonum* – first in Christ and then, through Him, in a triune Godhead.

Confessor Augustine's progressive disclosure of c*onfessio qua* universal is also visible by comparing his approaches to divine immutability in the four sections of *conf.* we distinguished. However, the latter needs modification in light of recognizing how 1.1.1-5.6 distinguishes the nature of (divine) immutability's presence in the human soul. (We will present this modification in a bit.) For now, however, we note that within book 1-4's biographical elements, Augustine does not offer any proof for immutability since, by the materialist ontology he ascribes to Manichean theology, the latter is impossible to attain. Although the Manicheans acknowledge divine presence (and Augustine implies they are right about that – e.g. 1.2.2-3.3), their interpretation of its nature contradicts its reality. This is because while divine presence is incorporeal, and therefore presupposes that God and soul are incorporeal and indivisible entities, the Manichean theology Augustine embraces shortly after deciding to pursue Wisdom holds that God is corporeal and mutable (3.6.10-7.14). Hence, Augustine maintains that Manichean ontology is unable to explain the phenomenon of divine presence that Manichean religion upholds. Towards the end of books 5-7, long after recounting how he had once embraced certitude, in a modified way, as his criteria of judgment (5.10.19; 6.4.6), Augustine presents a Neoplatonist-aided proof for divine immutability that moves from sense *to* mind *to* divinity, and shows that the immutable God both transcends and is present to mind (7.17.23).

In book 10's ascent to God (10.6.8-26.37), however, Augustine (as in book 9's ascent to God with Monnica at Ostia, 9.10.23-5) presupposes divine immutability and presence (e.g. 10.1.1) while transitioning *from* sense *to* mind *to* immutable divinity, for the sake of disclosing that immutability's presence causes mind's, i.e. intellect and will's, cardinal activity to seek happiness, i.e. immutable divinity (10.20.29-23.34). Finally, in 13.11.12 Augustine assumes what had been argued about immutability in books 11-13.10.11 and immutability's presence to mind in books 10-12. But now he (i) holds by faith that God is immutably triune and (ii) asserts that mind can achieve self-certain knowledge that it exists, knows, and loves, to argue that God's triunity, which specifies His goodness, both structures and is spiritually present to mind. Unlike before, divine goodness is squarely identified with an immutable Godhead. That is what *confessio* now praises.

It is fitting, therefore, that Augustine's *retr.* mentions how pleased he and his brothers are by *conf.* as a work that encourages praising God. Augustine writes:

> The thirteen books of my *Confessions* praise [*laudant*] the just and good God ... and they excite the understanding and affection of men towards Him. That, in any event, pertains to me – when they were

> written they had that effect upon me and they bring about [the same effect upon me] when they are read. What others think about them, they themselves shall determine; nevertheless, I know that they give pleasure to many [Christian] brothers and that they greatly pleased them.[46]

Most important, focusing on *conf.*'s encouragement of praise helps us consider the text's overall structure. In general, *conf.*'s handling of divine immutability transitions *superiora-exteriora-interiora-superiora* to illustrate that divine immutability, ultimately understood as triune, both structures and is present to mind.[47] For, considering now the importance of Augustine's introduction to *conf.*, we see that *conf.*'s handling of immutability actually begins with a relatively sophisticated account of spiritual union between an immutable God and mutable man, and then offers progressive justification for that teaching. Hence, after Augustine presents his account of spiritual union in 1.1.1-5.6, *conf.* moves from viewing God and man: (i) as spiritually united yet incomprehensible to mind (*conf.* 1.6.7-4); (ii) as spiritually united but ultimately comprehensible to mind – and whereby man, through Christ, is motivated to seek greater unity with God (*conf.* 5-7); (iii) as spiritually united and growing in unity through Christ (*conf.* 8-10); and finally (iv) as spiritually united and growing in unity through the Godhead (*conf.* 11-13). In a rough manner, the distinctions stated above parallel Augustine's treatment of divine presence in 1.1.1-5.6. After stating what he thinks are the conditions for spiritual union, viz. participation in 'the Word made flesh' (1.1.1), Augustine then explains that union first, by the mode of a materialist ontology (1.2.2-3.3) second, by the manner of an ontology that recognizes the primacy of incorporeal substance but is truncated (1.3.3-4.4) and finally, by the mode of Catholic doctrine which presents divine-human union as incorporeal and teleological (1.5.5-5.6). Therefore, while *conf.* 1.6.7-4 have kinship with 1.2.2-3.3, *conf.* 5-7 have likeness to 1.3.3-4.4, *conf.* 8-10 have kinship with 1.5.5 (insofar as Augustine appears to invoke Christ, 'the Word made flesh'[48]), and *conf.* 11-13 have likeness to 1.5.6 (since Augustine seems to invoke God's Spirit,[49] thereby signifying the Godhead). In general, *conf.*'s structure follows Augustine's original account of *confessio* and, therefore, unites *conf.*'s conclusion with its beginning.

Philosophical study of *conf.* shows, then, that the text has an essentially progressive structure rooted in Augustine's intention to encourage *confessio*. However, as the symmetry between Augustine's introduction and conclusion shows, the nature of *conf.*'s progress is more circular than linear. In this regard, the text has an *exitus-reditus* or 'return to origin' structure wherein linear progress is built into circular progress. By following Augustine's claim that mutable humanity depends for its existence and operation on immutable divinity, we can see how *conf.* moves from cause to effect and then from effect to cause. In other words, the text transitions from Augustine's progressively distinguished notion of the order of being (in 1.1.1-5.6) to his notion of the order of discovery and, after a lengthy study of man's proper response to God, back to the order of being which details key aspects of *conf.*'s introduction. Therefore, although Augustine places biography before exegesis, it is really, as *conf.*'s introduction shows, exegesis' content that informs biography. More exactly, the biography Augustine presents in books 1-10 is grounded in distinguishing and encouraging the nature of *confessio* as that is stated at *conf.*'s outset and developed and clarified

in books 11-13. As the general identity between Augustine's introduction and conclusion to his text shows, *conf*.'s universal progress is set within an *exitus-reditus* structure exhorting *conf*.'s reader to practice *confessio*.

We notice, therefore, that insight into the order of being, conceived by and as *confessio*, gives *conf*. its overall unity so that the text, as a whole, has a kind of *exitus-reditus* structure akin both to God in Himself and to the scriptures. In the former regard, *conf.* shows a pattern similar to the Godhead wherein, according to the Church Creeds Augustine knows,[50] the Father 'eternally begets' the Word (11.13.16) and the eternal Spirit (13.5.6) designates L/love. Likewise, *conf.* shows a pattern similar to the scriptures, which begin with Gen., finish with Rev., and progress in between from human particularity to universality, i.e. from individuals to families to tribes to a nation to the Church and, through that, to humanity as such. Hence, the 'return to origin' structure found in *conf*. is similar to relatively more significant structures with which Augustine is familiar. However, although the matter is worth considering,[51] it is unclear whether *confessio* takes explicit inspiration from any of those structures.

IV.) Conclusion: *Conf.*'s *Exitus-Reditus*, i.e. Return to Origin, Structure is Governed by *Confessio*

We see, then, that the commentators mentioned at the outset correctly claim that (i) *conf*.'s biographical elements are carefully linked to Augustine's universal purpose, (ii) *conf*. is progressive, and (iii) *conf*. has an *exitus-reditus* structure. But we also understand that the latter's principal content is neither 'affective mimesis' as Augustine progresses towards God, nor the parable of the Prodigal Son as an example of human exile from and return to God. Nor is it the divine Trinity as the ultimate exemplar of created, and especially of psychological, reality. Rather, *conf*.'s *exitus-reditus* structure derives from Confessor Augustine's doctrine of *confessio* that governs his entire narrative and which *conf*. endeavors to explain.

To begin with, it is certainly the case that *conf.* contains an account of Confessor Augustine's growing affectivity as he progresses in union with God. In this regard, Augustine expresses a constant love for God that peaks, in a way, with his depiction of the sabbath rest at *conf*.'s conclusion. But this fails to explain *conf*.'s transition from biography to exegesis or consider the nature of the means, viz. the conjunction of divine goodness and man's intrinsic desire to praise God, whereby God inspires the human heart towards Him. Why, one asks, does Augustine concentrate on exegesis in books 11-13 if that is not because he also wants to consider creation, selfhood, and church in light of the Godhead? Additionally, by what realities does Augustine achieve growth in affectivity? Moreover, how is that connected to the aforementioned transition from biography to exegesis? In short, Augustine's growing love for God requires proper explanation.

Second, Confessor Augustine's historical relationship with God has an *exitus-reditus* pattern much like what the parable of the Prodigal Son displays. Augustine was introduced to God as a young child but, as a teenager, turned away from Him; however, as *conf.* 7-10 makes clear, an older and more

learned Augustine returns to God with great zeal. However, *conf.*'s transition from biography to exegesis also militates against the claim that *conf.*'s structure formally imitates the parable of the Prodigal Son. Where, for instance, does the prodigal son meditate on the scriptures to detail God's creating His church, the structure of exegesis, the Godhead, and human selfhood as trinitarian? Still this interpretation is beneficial because it (i) recognizes, like the 'affective mimesis' thesis, that the text is about man's account of his relationship with God, (ii) depicts man's burgeoning love for God, and (iii) implies that *conf.* has some kind of *exitus-reditus* structure.

So what constitutes *conf.*'s *exitus-reditus* structure? Is it centered in Confessor Augustine's grasp of the divine Trinity? It cannot be that either. Analysis of books 11-13 shows that Augustine progressively specifies God into Trinity and acknowledges the Godhead as the created order's, and therefore mind's, exemplar. This is also implied at *conf.*'s outset where (as my quote from 1.1.1 suggests) God's power can be identified with the Father, His wisdom with the Son, and His goodness (which stirs man to praise Him) with the Spirit. Hence, some might say that *conf.* takes its *exitus-reditus* structure from the divine Trinity and that Augustine, both as exegete and prodigal son, comes to embrace God in a trinitarian manner. This claim, like the previous ones, has merit since it sets together God with man – and that is by a more intimate manner than ever before. However, this thesis is offset by the fact that Augustine only formally distinguishes God as Trinity and human selfhood as trinitarian in book 13. Although interpreting *conf.* as trinitarian has the advantage of alerting the reader to Augustine's developing notion of man's relationship with God, it cannot account for *conf.*'s *exitus-reditus* structure since Augustine has only narrated his trinitarian specification at the end.

Our analysis of the aforementioned views makes it evident, however, that *conf.*'s *exitus-reditus* structure is properly identified with Confessor Augustine's account of *the relationship* man has with God that permeates his narration of *conf.* What is this relationship? As I hope I have now shown, it consists in the disposition of *confessio*, i.e. enjoying and augmenting spiritual union with God, that Augustine intends to (i) validate (ii) but especially encourages his audience to embrace. On a strictly cognitive level, Confessor Augustine endeavors to confirm *confessio* by arguing, explicitly in *conf.* 7, that its proper object, viz. Wisdom, is grounded in the claims (i) that God is immutable substance, (ii) that man, composed of soul and body, is a mutable substance with orientation towards immutable participation in divine immutability, and (iii) that God offers man opportunity to participate immutably in His immutability through His mediation in 'the Word made flesh.' This teaching has central importance in *conf.* 1-7, and is augmented in books 8-13 by Augustine's respective focuses on Christ and Godhead. Viewed in light of upholding immutable divinity as Wisdom, *conf.*'s speculative argument transitions *from* divine immutability presupposed (books 1-4) *to* divine immutability recognized (books 5-7), *to* divine immutability enjoyed in Christ (books 8-10), *to* divine immutability enjoyed in the Godhead (books 11-13).

Nevertheless, as Augustine's focus in books 8-13 highlights, *conf.*'s overall argument for Wisdom subordinates its strictly cognitive element to what is cognitive *and* affective. Throughout *conf.*, Confessor Augustine exhorts his audience to know *and* love what he himself everywhere

confesses, viz. that, through 'the Word made flesh,' he is stably united with God and aims to augment that spiritual unity unto the sabbath rest. Stated cognitively, Augustine constantly confesses (i) that God, as made known though 'the Word made flesh,' is good, (ii) that he is created and governed by God solely for his welfare, and (iii) that man's proper end is achieved by conforming to God's immutable goodness. As such, *conf*.'s determining *exitus-reditus* pattern, to which Confessor Augustine introduces his reader at the outset (1.1.1-5.6), depicts man *in relationship* with God, according to what Augustine confesses is man's proper mode of conformity to God's immutable goodness. Whether Augustine considers (i) his past, present, and hoped-for future, (ii) biography or scripture, (iii) or divine immutability, either, as such (e.g. *conf.* 7), in Christ (e.g. *conf*. 8-10), or in Trinity (e.g. *conf.* 11-13), the disposition of *confessio* centers and governs his activity. This basic notion of *confessio*, consisting (as 1.1.1-5.6 shows) in mutable man's spiritual union, given through Christ, with immutable divinity, is the text's fundamental or baseline account of man's relationship with God. *Confessio*, therefore, is intrinsically dynamic since it is, in one way, its own origin and goal. As soul's spiritual union with God, *confessio* is where Augustine's analysis begins; *confessio* is the motive to analyze; *confessio* is the prism by which analysis occurs; and *confessio* is analysis' goal insofar as the latter aims to augment spiritual union – for which reason *confessio* guides *conf*.'s progress. Hence, Augustine's *confessio* has an *exitus-reditus*, i.e. outgoing from and return to origin, structure insofar as it actively enjoys and strives to augment itself (i.e. its spiritual unity with divine goodness), and this orders and gives unity to *conf*. as a whole.

Confessor Augustine begins *conf.* with the teaching that 'the heart is restless until it rests in God' because, to his mind, an immutably good God has created and governs man 'to rest in Him.' Here Augustine speaks of each human heart, as he does everywhere in *conf*., from the depth of his own heart as, by teleological spiritual union with God, it enjoys and strives to attain perfect rest in Him. While narrating *conf*.'s biographical and exegetical segments, Confessor Augustine presupposes, employs, validates, and develops his fundamental paradigm of *confessio*, and highlights it at *conf*.'s end to explain something of *confessio*'s origin in the Godhead and consummation in the sabbath rest. *Confessio*, Augustine instructs, is restless; its restlessness (as *conf.* 1-13 shows) motivates it to know its origin and *telos*, and attaining the latter will require more *confessio*. Accordingly, *confessio* governs *conf*.'s *exitus-reditus* structure, causing the latter's biographical and exegetical elements to be progressive and universal, and shows the way to fulfillment.

Why does Augustine confess? So his disposition of *confessio* can grow and encourage others to want and pursue the same. In fine, *Confessiones* is about *confessio*; and *confessio*, by God's immutable goodness, consists in loving God, self, and neighbor.

Endnotes:

1. For discussion of *conf*.'s background see *inter aliis*: C. Hammond, "Title, Time, and Circumstances of Composition; The Genesis of the *Confessions*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's 'Confessions',* (ed.) T. Toom (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press; 2020), 11-27; C. Conybeare, *The Routledge Guidebook to Augustine's Confessions* (New York, NY: Routledge; 2016), 4-9; G. Wills, *Augustine's Confessions: A Biography* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press; 2011), 1-25; P. Brown, in F.J. Sheed, *Augustine: Confessions*, 2nd edition, introduction by P. Brown, edited and notes by M.P. Foley (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hacket Publishing Co.; 2006), xv-xxxii, and idem., *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber; 1967), 158-81; J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers; 2005), 35-86, and idem., *Augustine: Confessions*, Volume 1, Introduction and Text (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; 1992), xli-li; A. Solignac, *Les Confessions, Livres I-VII,* Oeuvres de Saint Augustin, vol. 13, text de l'édition de M. Skutella; introduction et notes par A. Solignac, traduction de E. Tréhorel et G. Bouissou, Biblothéque Augustinienne (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes; 1998, 1992, 1962), 26-36; H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions*, translated and with an introduction and notes by H. Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 1991), xi-xiii; and E. TeSelle, *Augustine The Theologian* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers; 1970), 189-91.

   For recent bibliography see *inter aliis*: C.G. Vaught, *Access to God in Augustine's Confessions: Books X-XIII* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; 2005), 257-63; C. Conybeare, *The Routledge Guidebook to Augustine's Confessions* (New York, NY: Routledge; 2016), 151-61; B. David, *Pursuing and Praising God: Augustine's Confessions* (*PPG*) (Hobe Sound, FL.: Lectio Press; 2019), 273-84; and *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's 'Confessions'* (*op. cit.*), 26-7, 45, 59, 74, 90-1, 106, 122, 137, 152-3, 174, 190, 207, 226, 241, 261, 275-6, 293-4, 316, 334.
2. On the meaning of *confessio* as praising God see *inter aliis*: Brown (1967, *op. cit.*), 175-81; O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit.*) vol. 1, xlii-li and vol. 2, 3-5; G. Wills, *Saint Augustine's Childhood* (New York: Viking Penguin: 2001), 13-15; M.P. Foley, in F.J. Sheed, *Augustine: Confessions*, 2nd edition, (*op. cit.*), 329; J. Ortiz, "Creation in the *Confessions*," in *Saint Augustine, The Confessions*, (ed.) D.V. Meconi, *Ignatius Critical Editions* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; 2012), 475-90, 488-9; J.-L. Marion, *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine*, translated by J.L. Kosky (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 11-55; P. Rigby, *The Theology of Augustine's Confessions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2015), 6-33; and David (*op. cit.*), 3-7, 9-12.
3. Taking its cue from T.F. Martin ("Book Twelve: *Exegesis* and *Confessio*," in *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, [ed.] K. Paffenroth and R.P. Kennedy [Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press; 2003], 185-206, 255-8, 196)**,** and Brown (1967, *op. cit*., 161-2), this essay holds that *conf*.'s principal audience consists in Catholics, especially Catholic bishops like Alypius, Augustine understands to have imperfect notions – shared with Manicheans and/or Platonists and/or Donatists – of the doctrine that Christ, 'the Word made flesh' is Wisdom. (Cf. J.D. BeDuhn, "Anticipated Readers," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's '*Confessions' [*op. cit.*], 46-59, and A. Kotzé, *Augustine's 'Confessions': Communicative Purpose and Audience* [Leiden & Boston: Brill; 2004], who claim that Augustine's principal audience consists in those Catholics having some kind of Manichean mindset. This is certainly plausible, but Augustine's presentation in 1.1.1-5.6 [see ahead] also emphasizes concern with a Platonist mindset. To Augustine's mind, it is more exact to refer, respectively, to Manichean ontology and Platonist ontology since each 'mindset' is centered in what is, by Augustine's standard of the Catholic doctrine of Wisdom, an incorrect and/or incomplete ontology. Moreover, since Augustine claims that a Platonist ontology is next to [since in some ways identical with] Catholic doctrine, his concern is either for a Platonist mindset's transition to Catholic doctrine or for a Manichean mindset's transition, through Platonist ontology, to Catholic doctrine. Augustine's focus

on Platonist ontology, therefore, is decisive. I have not mentioned Augustine's concern with a Donatist mindset but, as the Donatists claim that spiritual purity is available to some in this life [Brown, 1967, *op. cit*., 213], that matter is certainly addressed in 10.28.39-43.70, and might be implied within 1.5.5-6's account of the impediments involved in attaining complete spiritual union with God in this life. In any event, it is fitting to consider Augustine's Catholic audience broadly rather than narrowly.)

In general, therefore, Augustine's approach is 'protreptic' (Kotzé [*op. cit*.] 250); he intends to persuade his Catholic audience to more fully embrace Catholic doctrine. In particular, Augustine writes for an audience implicitly sharing his view concerning the nature of Wisdom whom he wants to have knowledge of Wisdom. What, to Augustine's mind, does knowledge of Wisdom consist in? As I see it, the latter is comprised of three key claims. These are: (i) that God is immutable (and therefore incorporeal, self-sufficient, good, creator etc.) (7.10.16-17.23), (ii) that man, a soul-body composite, has orientation towards immutable participation in God (7.10.16), and (iii) that God in Christ (understood as 'the Word made flesh') offers man the opportunity to immutably participate in Him (7.21.27) – which, for its part, is only brought to completion in the afterlife (10.43.69-70). Augustine thinks, then, that his Catholic audience shares with him general notions of (i) God as creator and good, (ii) man as a unified being with orientation towards enjoying God forever, and (iii) Christ as God's appointed way for man to enjoy God now and forever. But, to Augustine's mind, these notions are vitiated by limited ontologies. Therefore, while recounting his own philosophical discovery and subsequent (including present) enjoyment of Wisdom, Augustine aims to lead his audience from right opinion to knowledge. Moreover, to show that the Catholic doctrine of Wisdom is philosophically sound, Augustine employs everything else – even if it means developing non-Catholic doctrine – towards that end. Hence, when Augustine speaks of what he learned from Cicero's *Hortensius*, Manichean doctrine, the *Categories*, the teachings of the secular scientists, the skeptical doctrines of the Academics, the Epicureans, and the Platonists, that learning is never presented for its own sake but for showing that the Catholic doctrine of Christ as Wisdom is sound.

Augustine's focus on Catholic doctrine pervades *conf*.'s introduction (1.1.1-5.6). While trying to explain and validate the Catholic doctrine of divine-human union, Augustine thinks that his Catholic reader shares with him the assumptions that (i) man, a soul-body composite, is united with God, (ii) God is unchanging, and (iii) man has orientation towards enduring participation in God that is ultimately achieved in the afterlife. On this basis, Augustine aims to show that the Catholic account of divine-human union is reasonable because it claims that that union's nature is incorporeal and teleological – holding, in the latter regard, that man is structured for complete union with God so that He permanently centers the human heart. In particular, Augustine argues his claim by showing that the Catholic view of divine-human union is neither materialist (1.2.2-3.3), since that would make God mutable instead of immutable (1.3.3), nor incorporeal but limited (1.3.3-4.4), since that would ultimately deny divine goodness (1.5.5-6) which Christ's mediation makes evident and accessible (1.5.5).

For its part, *conf*.'s narrative of Augustine's coming to know and enjoy Wisdom shows that while the first view has a Manichean provenance (e.g. 3.6.10-7.14), the second has a Platonist provenance (e.g. 7.10.16; 17.23). However, the specific views of divine-human union Augustine employs in 1.2.2-4.4 towards validating the Catholic view of divine-human union are neither Manichean nor Platonist since neither party shares Augustine's underlying assumptions concerning God, man, and Christ's mediation. The Manicheans hold that (i) God is mutable in one respect (so far as He is divided) yet immutable in another (so far as part of Him remains intact), (ii) man, composed of divine and anti-divine particles, is mutable and perishes, and (iii) Christ's 'mediation' brings the divine particles constituting part of man back to God after man dies (J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* [London: Longman's, Green and Co. Ltd.; 1965], 69-79; and J.D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, I*: *Conversion and Apostosy*, 373-388 C.E. [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 2010], 42-105; and *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, 2*: *Making a "Catholic"*

Self, 388-401 C.E. [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 2013], 331-6). The Platonists, (if we take the writings we now have of Plotinus and Porphyry as the content of the 'Platonist books' Augustine reads in 386 A.D. – see L. Ayres [*Augustine and the Trinity* (New York: Cambridge University Press; 2010), 13-20) claim that (i) supreme divinity is incorporeal and immutable (e.g. *Ennead* 5.1.5), (ii) man, the soul body composite, ultimately perishes (i.e. man is not made for immutable participation in God – e.g. *Ennead* 1.1.9-10), and (iii) divine mediation is not needed since *nous* and/or the rational soul containing *nous* is akin to supreme divinity and can achieve unity with Him in an afterlife by the combination of *nous*-centered philosophical activity in this life and bodily death (e.g. *Ennead* 1.1.10, and see L.P. Gerson, "Virtue With and Without Philosophy in Plato and Plotinus," in *Passionate Mind: Essays in Honor of John M. Rist*, [ed.] B. David [Baden-Baden: Academia Verlag; 2019], 191-208).

Augustine, therefore, is not actually comparing the Catholic view with Manichean and Platonist views, but with pseudo-Catholic views he has made by grafting certain ontological claims, found in Manichean and/or Platonist teaching, onto Catholic assumptions about God, man, and divine mediation. Hence, the views Augustine produces derive from Catholic teaching and function as stepping-stones, in the manner of dialectical aids, towards showing its validity. Augustine's understanding of Catholic doctrine is his *alpha and omega*.

4. *Retr.* (~427 A.D.), 2.6.1. I have translated this passage in consultation with: *The Retractations*, book 2, chapter 6, paragraph 1, translated by Sister M.I. Bogan, *The Retractations*, chapter 32, 130. The Latin text is from Solignac (*op. cit.*), 270.
5. *Ibid.*
6. E.g. H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris: Boccard; 1938), 63; and O'Meara (*op. cit.*), 13. While Marrou remarks that "The plan of the *Confessions* has something bizarre about it" so far as it transitions from autobiography (books 1-9) to dogmatic considerations (book 10) and then to an allegorical interpretation of Gen. 1 (books 11-13), O'Meara describes *conf.* as "a badly composed book ...."
7. E.g. O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, xxiii) writes: "But for a text as multi-layered and subtle as the *Confessions*, any attempt to find a single key is pointless. Augustine says himself that he meant to stir our souls, not test our ingenuity as lock-picks" (see also *ibid.*, i-ii). Likewise, Vaught (2005, *op. cit.*, 23) states: "no single principle is an adequate way of binding Augustine's text together."
8. As A. Kotzé, ("Structure and Genre of the *Confessions,*" *The Cambridge Companion To Augustine's 'Confessions'* [*op. cit.*], 28-45, 33) writes: "Thus while it is true that scholarship has not yet come up with one satisfactory explanation that adequately expresses the essence of the *Confessions* (and probably never will), the many different ways of explaining its unity all reinforce the other."
9. Conybeare (*op. cit.*), 25.
10. (Luke 15.11-32.) For example, TeSelle (*op. cit.*), 190; and *Augustine: Confessions Books I-IV*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics, (ed.) G. Clark (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1995), 114.
11. This is exemplified by R.J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Confessions; The Odyssey of Soul* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press; 1969), 5-12.
12. See, for example, R. McMahon, *Augustine's Prayerful Ascent: An Essay on the Literary Form of the Confessions* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press; 1989), 148. Cf. idem., "Book Thirteen: The Creation of the Church as the Paradigm for the *Confessions,*" in *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions* (*op. cit.*), 207-23, 258-9.
13. F.J. Crosson's article ("Structure and Meaning in St. Augustine's *Confessions*," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 63 [1989], 84-97) traces Augustine's reliance on the triad of the sins of the world, flesh, and devil in books 1-9 (87-9). However, he says nothing about Augustine's pronounced focus on that triad in 10.28.39-41.66 (90-1), and views *conf.*'s overall unity according to

Augustine's doctrine of divine incarnation (89-95). Cf. idem., "Book Five: The Disclosure of Hidden Providence," in *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions* (*op. cit*.), 71-87, 237-39.

14. O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit*., vol. 1), xxxii-xli. Cf. idem., (2005, *op. cit*.), 70-2.
15. Wills (2011, *op. cit*.), 148; O'Donnell (2005, *op. cit*.), 70-2; R.D. Crouse, "'*In Aenigmate Trinitas*' (*Confessions*, XIII, 5,6)," *Dionysius*, vol. 11, (1987), 53-62, 61-2, and idem., "*Recurrens in te unum*: The Pattern of St. Augustine's *Confessions*," *Studia Patristica,* vol. 14 (1976), 389-92; and C.J. Starnes, "The Unity of the *Confessions*," *Studia Patristica*, vol. 18:4 (1983), 105-11,105-6, and idem., *Augustine's Conversion: A Guide to the Argument of Confessions I-IX* (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfred Laurier University Press; 1990), xiv, n. 1.
16. I mean 'universal' in the sense that Augustine's audience is his fellow Catholics who he intends to show that Catholic doctrine is broadly universal, i.e. applicable to each human person and community, rather than to Catholics alone.
17. My recent book on *conf*., viz. *PPG* (*op.cit.*), focuses on Augustine's doctrine of *confessio* as c*onf*.'s unifying principle but, all things considered, I now think that *PPG* over-emphasizes the trinitarian character of *confessio*. This study agrees with *PPG* that *confessio* governs *conf*. and therefore lies at the heart of its every topic. However, while acknowledging that Augustine ultimately specifies *confessio* as trinitarian, this essay claims that Augustine's formal doctrine of *confessio* focuses on the relationship between God, generally conceived, and man, generally conceived, that Augustine confesses at *conf*.'s outset (1.1.1-5.6). On this basis, more attention is paid to analyzing *confessio* as a departure from and return to origin, i.e. as an *exitus-reditus*, reality in its own right. Accordingly, the reason for *confessio*'s activity, i.e. going forth from and returning to origin, is to develop its spiritual union with God – and this accounts for *conf*.'s focuses on biography and exegesis whereby Augustine explains not only how he came to embrace and enjoy *confessio* (*conf.* 1-10) but also the latter's ultimate origin and *telos* in God (*conf.* 11-13).

    On *confessio* as *conf*.'s central doctrine see also: J. Ratzinger "Originalitat und Uberlieferung in Augustins Begriff der *Confessio*," *Revue des Ètudes Augustiniennes*, vol. 3 (1957), 375-92; and A. Solignac, *Les Confessions*, vols. 13 and 14 (Paris: *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*; 1962), vol. 13, 25.
18. Unlike the Manicheans and Platonists (see above, n. 3), Augustine holds that man, a soul-body composite, is a substance with orientation towards the immutable enjoyment of God.
19. Thus, in *conf*. 2.2.4, Augustine does not speak of divine justice as such but certainly has that in mind. He writes (translated by H. Chadwick [*Saint Augustine: Confessions* (*op. cit*.), 25]): "I exceeded all the bounds set by your law, and did not escape your chastisement – indeed no mortal can do so. For you were always with me, mercifully punishing me ... You 'fashion pain to be a lesson' (Ps. 93:20 LXX), you 'strike to heal', you bring death upon us so that we should not die apart from you (Deut. 32:39)." This typifies Augustine's approach to divine justice throughout *conf*.
20. In *conf.* 10.27.38, Augustine distinguishes three kinds of relationships with God. First, there is an implicit (or natural) relationship, signifying that man is structured by but does not necessarily acknowledge divine presence. Second, there is an explicit (or supernatural) relationship, signifying that man is structured by, acknowledges, and is aided by divine presence; and that he pursues the perfect union with God that is ultimately attained in an afterlife. Third, there is the perfect relationship which man enjoys in the afterlife. *Conf*. 10.27.38 states: "Late have I loved you, beauty (*pulchritudo*) so old and so new: late have I loved you! [Implicit Union – Augustine's relationship towards God before his conversion] But behold, you were within (*intus*) and I was in external things (*foris*) and sought you there; and in those beautiful things that you made I plunged into deformity (*deformis inruebam*). You were with me but (*et*) I was not with you. Those things – which would not exist if they did not exist in you – were keeping me far away from you. [Explicit Union – Augustine's present relationship with God] You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness; you blazed up (*coruscasti*), you shone forth (*splenduisti*), and you chased away (*fugasti*) my blindness; you were fragrant, and I drew in my

breath and now pant after you; I tasted you and I hunger and thirst; you touched me, and I was set on fire [Complete Union in a sabbath rest] for your peace." (I have translated this passage from the latin [O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit*., vol. 1), 134], while consulting Chadwick [*op. cit*.], 201).

Most important, Augustine writes *conf*. from the viewpoint of an explicit relationship with God. Within that perspective he confesses, on the one hand, how he once embraced an implicit relationship with God but transitioned, by Christ's grace, to an explicit relationship with God and, on the other hand, what the latter relationship with God entails, including the hope that, by Christ's grace, he will attain a perfect relationship with God in the afterlife.

21. *Conf.* 11.1.1, 221, translated by Chadwick (*op. cit*.); latin is from O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit*., vol. 1) 11.1.1, 148.
22. See above, n. 3, for discussion of Augustine's audience. As stated there, this essay follows Martin's and Brown's claims that Augustine's principal audience is both (i) ill-educated Catholics who might harbor certain Manichean and/or Platonist and/or Donatist notions concerning Wisdom, and (ii) North African Catholic bishops, like Augustine's friend Alypius, who might have any of the aforementioned notions but are being exhorted, especially by Augustine's exegesis in *conf.* 11-13, to embrace the ideal of 'monk-scholar.'
23. E.g. *conf*. 7.17.23.
24. E.g. *ibid*., 7.10.16; 7.17.23.
25. E.g. *ibid*., 7.21.27.
26. See above, n. 20, where, in 10.27.38, Augustine describes three stages in his relationship with God, viz. natural, supernatural, and perfect. Since Augustine is not in heaven, i.e. does not have a perfect relationship with God, *conf.* recounts his natural and supernatural relationships with God. Hence, by Augustine's principles, *conf.* might be divided (as stated above) into two parts, viz.(i) coming to see that *confessio* is rational (books 1-7), and (ii) living *confessio* (books 8-13).
27. For discussion see: O'Meara (*op. cit*., 131-42) and O'Donnell (2005, *op. cit*., 35-86, 171-208). When all is said and done, I think that Augustine's case (in *conf*.) for Wisdom is philosophically defensible since each of the three claims it is based on concerning God, man, and divine mediation (see above n. 3) can be validated. But that, of course, is another argument for another time.
28. For study of this important passage see *inter aliis*: B. David, "Augustine's Analysis of his Theft of Pears – the Medium Represents the Message," *Humanities Bulletin*, 1 (2) (2018), 8-32; G. Wills, *Saint Augustine's Sin* (New York: Viking Penguin; 2003), 7-17; S. MacDonald, "Petit Larceny, The Beginning Of All Sin: Augustine's Theft Of The Pears," *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 20.4 (2003), 393-414; J. Cavadini, "Book 2: Augustine's Book of Shadows," in *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions* (*op. cit*.), 25-34; C. Vaught, *The Journey Toward God in Augustine's Confessions: Books I-VI* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; 2003), 52-65; J. Crosby, "How Is It Possible Knowingly To Do Wrong?" *American Catholic Philosophical Association Proceedings*, Vol. 74 (2001), 325-33; O'Donnell, (1992, *op. cit*. vol.2), 104-44; Starnes (1990, *op. cit*.), 37-51; L. Ferrari, "The Pear-Theft in Augustine's *Confessions*," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 16 (1970), 233-41, and "Symbols Of Sinfulness In Book II Of Augustine's "Confessions"," *Augustinian Studies* 2 (1971), 93-104; and W. Mann, "The Theft of Pears," *Apeiron* 12 (1978), 51-9, and "Inner-Life Ethics" in (ed.) G. B. Matthews, *The Augustinian Tradition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; 1999), 140-65, 157-60.
29. Confessor Augustine discloses (*conf*. 3.4.7-5.9) that young Augustine joined the Manicheans, rather than embracing Cicero's approach to Wisdom or the Catholic Christianity in which he was nurtured, because he identified Wisdom with Christ (which excluded Cicero) and his egoism and materialist leaning found appealing the Manichean claim that Christ is Wisdom (which excluded Catholic Christianity).
30. For discussion of what is known of Cicero's *Hortensius* see O'Meara (*op. cit*., 57-8) and O'Donnell

(1992, *op. cit*., vol. 2, 162-3, 165-6). It seems that although the text had an extraordinary effect on Augustine, it was not an extraordinary text. Moreover, all that remains of it are fragments culled from various places in Augustine's written *corpus*.

31. *Conf*. 3.4.7-8, 39, translated by Chadwick (*op. cit*.); latin is from O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit.,* vol. 1), 3.4.7-8, 25.
32. As mentioned before (see n. 3), the doctrines that Confessor Augustine identifies as Neoplatonist are, in many respects, his own. These are developments on Neoplatonist philosophy, i.e. what the latter includes (e.g. the primacy of incorporeal/immutable substance) and some of what it implies, that depend, in various ways, on Confessor Augustine's Catholic notions of God, man, and divine mediation. In this respect, Augustine is, in certain respects, reporting philosophical doctrine he has made rather than Neoplatonist doctrine itself. For example (as n. 3 stated), Augustine, holds that man, the soul-body composite, is made for immutable participation in God. By contrast, the Neoplatonists claim that man's *nous*, so to speak, immutably participates in supreme divinity and can immutably participate in God, apart from divine mediation, in the afterlife. Hence, Augustine's accounts of man, divine mediation, and God differ, to some extent, from the Neoplatonist accounts thereof.

    This is not to say that Augustine is wrong philosophically concerning Catholic doctrine or that he misreports *key elements* in Neoplatonist philosophy. Rather, to focus on the latter matter, the point is that he commonly reports *key elements* in Neoplatonist philosophy instead of the entire Neoplatonist doctrine. Put differently, Confessor Augustine identifies and employs Neoplatonist learning within the context of Catholic doctrine; while the former is his material cause, the latter is his formal cause. Augustine's handling of the Neoplatonist teaching that supreme divinity and the human soul are incorporeal can illustrate this point. While Augustine learns of incorporeal reality (7.10.16) from the 'Platonist books' (7.9.13), his notions of God (e.g. 7.9.13-15; 7.17.23) and of the human soul (7.10.16; 7.17.23) are distinct. Hence, what Confessor Augustine often claims as Neoplatonist philosophy is, in certain respects, a result of his development of that philosophy based on (i) identifying the extent to which Neoplatonist philosophy agrees with Catholic doctrine, (ii) treating that common ground, i.e. *key elements*, within the domain of philosophical assumptions belonging to Catholic doctrine, and (iii) seeking to validate Catholic doctrine.
33. *Conf*. 7.20.26-21.27, 130-1, translated by Chadwick (*op. cit*.); latin is from O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit*., vol. 1), 7.20.26-21.27, 86-7.
34. In *conf*. 6.1.1, Confessor Augustine remarks that young Augustine despaired of finding Wisdom after enrolling as a catechumen in the Catholic Church. In his words: "I had no confidence, and had lost hope that truth could be found" (translated by Chadwick [*op. cit*.], 6.1.1, 90).
35. E.g. *conf*. 9.2.2-3.6, 5.13-6.14, 8.17; 10.43.70.
36. For helpful discussion of Augustine's understanding of the nature and reasons for limited spiritual growth in the *saeculum* see N. Wolterstorff, "Happiness in Augustine's *Confessions*," in *Augustine's Confessions: Philosophy in Autobiography* (*op. cit*.), 46-70.
37. *Conf*. 10.43.69, 220, translated by Chadwick (*op. cit*.); latin is from O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit*., vol. 1), 10.43.69, 146.
38. E.g. *conf*. 13.5.6.
39. *Conf*. 12.2.2; 9.11; 11.12-13. Augustine's concept of *caelum caeli* is widely interpreted. Some (e.g. Vaught [2005, 162-3], J.P. Kenney ["The *Contradictores of Confessions* XII," in *Augustine and Philosophy*, (ed.) P. Cary, J. Doody, K. Paffenroth (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books; 2010), 145-65, 150-5], and C. Tornau ["Intelligible Matter and the Genesis of Intellect: The Metamorphosis of a Plotinian Theme in *Confessions* 12-13," in *Augustine's Confessions: Philosophy in Autobiography*, (*op. cit*.), 181-218)] view his meaning simply as 'heaven', i.e. the ultimate abode of the blessed. Others (e.g. L. Karfíková, "Memory, Eternity, and Time," *The Cambridge Companion To Augustine's 'Confessions'* [*op. cit*.], 175-190, 188) and R. Teske ("The Heaven of Heaven and the Unity of Augustine's *Confessiones*," in *To Know God And The Soul:*

Essays on the Thought of Saint Augustine [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press; 2008), 259-74, 267-73] view *caelum caeli* as also meaning something akin to the Plotinian notion of the World-Soul. According to Teske (*op. cit.,* 272), 'heaven of heaven' means both the abode of the blessed and "the fatherland from which some angels fell and from which human souls fell, from which we souls are presently on pilgrimage, and to which we are returning."

40. *Ibid*., 12.8.8. Of course, Augustine's primary meaning for 'earth' is formless matter (*informis materia*) by which he signifies a principle structuring creatures (12.3.3-8.8). For commentary on the Plotinian and biblical background to Augustine's notion of formless matter, including its distinction from Aristotle's account of formless matter, see Teske (*op. cit*.), 266-70); P. Hochschild (*Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology* [Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2012], 172-4); and Tornau (*op. cit*., 184-94). In the long run, however, Augustine uses 'earth' to signify mutable creatures (e.g. 12.8.8), wherefore Hochschild (*op. cit*., 172) appropriately remarks that "… the significance of formless matter… is the idea that there is an intrinsic instability at the heart of created things, understood as mutability, or an ontological non-necessity. This is the tendency to non-being that Augustine experiences as an embodied creature in the eleventh book."
41. See M.P. Foley ("Augustine, Aristotle, And The *Confessions*," *The Thomist* 67 [2003], 607-22) for helpful commentary on the provenance of Augustine's distinction in this context. Foley *(ibid*., 621) traces Augustine's distinctions to 11b15-15b32 in Aristotle's *Categories*. Augustine obviously read more of the *Categories* than is reported in *conf*. 4.16.28, and was willing to apply his learning from the *Categories* to help towards understanding other matters.
42. To clarify: Augustine's doctrine of *esse* might be viewed as problematic since it can designate a substance or subject responsible for the activities of knowing (*nosse*) and loving or willing (*velle*). In this respect, it might appear that *nosse* and *velle* depend on *esse* instead of sharing co-equality and consubstantiality with it. Hence, someone might suggest that *esse* is prior in time (or even in preference) to *nosse* and *velle*. However, it is possible to view them as co-equal and consubstantial when it is understood that whatever exists has essence, i.e. exists in a certain way or mode, and activity, i.e. orientation towards its *telos*. In this respect, then, existing can be viewed as co-equal to and consubstantial with knowing and loving. So in light of Augustine's analysis of kinds of priority in 12.29.40, it is probably on the basis of priority in origin/order that he views *esse* as co-equal to and consubstantial with *nosse* and *velle*. (For recent study of *conf*. 13.11.12 and its significance in Augustine's development of trinitarian doctrine see Ayres [*op. cit*.], 133-41.)
43. *Conf*. 13.38.53, 304-5, translated by Chadwick (*op. cit*.); latin is from O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit*., vol. 1), 13.38.53, 205; italicizations are mine.
44. *Conf*. 1.1.1, 3, translated by Chadwick (*op. cit*.); latin is from O'Donnell (1992, *op. cit*., vol. 1), 1.1.1, 3; trinitarian considerations are mine.
45. See n. 3 for discussion of Augustine's philosophical approach in this passage.
46. *Retr*. (*op. cit*.), 2.6.1.
47. Cf. Crosson (1989, *op. cit*.), 92. Crosson claims that classifying Augustine's *itineraria* by the mode '*ab exterioribus ad interioria, ab inferioribus ad superiora*' is "inadequate, if not misleading" on account of what it means to "encounter … the God of Jesus" (viz. the significance given to temporal realities). By contrast, this study maintains that *conf*. presents the aforementioned structure so that it includes both Christ and the mutable realities that He includes through His church. In this regard, Augustine's pathway from bodies to supreme divinity is not ultimately Neoplatonic (whose content and method Augustine shows he understands in the ascents to God he recounts in book 7) but, as the ascents to God in book 9 and 10 make clear, a form of neoplatonized Christian Wisdom.

    So Crosson rightly claims that Augustine's principal *itinerarium,* and therefore that *conf*.'s ultimate message, differs from the Plotinian ascent to God. However, Augustine's decisive modification to the latter ascent is really what structures *conf*. itself, viz. a movement '*ab superioribus ad*

exterior, ab exterioribus ad interior, ab inferioribus ad superior.' In this way, *conf.* exhibits an *exitus-reditus* structure that begins, develops and ends with an account of the proper relationship man should have with God, i.e. of *confessio*. Moreover, it is (i) within and (ii) for the purpose of encouraging men to embrace this uniquely Christian *itinerarium*, wherein, through Christ, an immutable God and mutable man are explicitly spiritually united, that Augustine presents various Neoplatonist and Christian Neoplatonist *exteriora-interiora-superiora itineraria*. Augustine not only recognizes the incomplete nature of the traditional Plotinian ascent to supreme divinity but he also furnishes a new, specifically Christian, mode of ascent that uses aspects of the Plotinian ascent as its material cause.

48. *Conf.* 1.5.5 begins by speaking in a manner that points to Christ, the 'Word made flesh,' since Augustine understands Him as the corridor to the proper mode of spiritual union. Hence, in a manner evoking 1.1.1's account of God in Christ, Augustine writes (translated by Chadwick [*op. cit*.], 1.5.5, 5): "Who will enable me to find rest in you? Who will grant me that you come to my heart and intoxicate it, so that I forget my evils and embrace my one and only good, yourself?"
49. *Conf*. 1.5.6 speaks of God but, based on Augustine's implicit signification of God's Spirit in 1.1.1 and explicit account of His Spirit in books 12-13 as cause of soul's motion towards God, it seems reasonable to maintain that here Augustine has in mind God's Spirit. Augustine writes (translated by Chadwick [*op. cit*.], 1.5.6, 6): "The house of my soul is too small for you to come to it. May it be enlarged by you. It is in ruins: restore it."
50. Confessor Augustine's statements concerning the divine Trinity in 11.13.16, 13.5.6, 13.11.12, 13.12.13 and 13.16.19 show that he interprets scripture in general and Gen. in particular according to the account of God given in the Church's Creeds. In this regard, Augustine probably relies on some combination of the Nicene (~325 A.D.) and Romano-Milanese (~380 A.D.) Creeds that his book, *De fide et symbolo* (*On Faith and the Creed),* written in 393 A.D. (well before *conf*.), seems to have engaged. For discussion of Augustine's acquaintance with Church Creeds from prior to his baptism and thereafter see: J.T. Lienhard, "Creed, S*ymbolum*," in *Augustine through the Ages* (*op. cit*.), 254-5; and F.G. Clancy, "*Fide et symbolo*, *De*," in *Augustine through the Ages* (*op. cit*.), 360-1.
51. For example, Augustine states in *On Free Choice of Will* (*lib. arb*.) 3.21.60, which he writes (~395 A.D.) just before commencing *conf*., that the goal of human thought and action is to embrace the divine Trinity. In Augustine's words: "All Christian vigilance is bent upon the pious and thoughtful understanding of the Trinity, and that understanding is the goal of all one's progress" (translation is mine; Latin text is from *De libro arbitrio*, *Libri Tres*, ed. W.M. Green, in *Corpus Christianorum*, *Series Latina*, vol. 29 [Turhout: Brepols Publishers; 1970], 3.21.60.205, p. 310). *Conf*.'s account of the divine Trinity and mind as trinitarian in book 13 certainly supports this goal. But, as will be argued above, while *conf*.'s doctrine of *confessio* is specified as trinitarian, it is more concerned with articulating and encouraging the fundamental relationship between God and man.

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The Logical Relation of Consequence

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Abstract:

The present endeavour aims at the clarification of the concept of the logical consequence. Initially we investigate the question: How was the concept of logical consequence discovered by the medieval philosophers? Which ancient philosophical foundations were necessary for the discovery of the logical relation of consequence and which explicit medieval contributions, such as the notion of the formality (formal validity), led to its discovery. Secondly we discuss which developments of the modern philosophy effected the turn from the medieval concept of logical consequence to its most recent conceptions, such as the semantic, syntactic, axiomatic and natural deductive approaches? Thirdly we examine which are the similarities and the differences between the logical concepts of consequence, inference, implication and entailment? Furthermore, we ask what kind of relation signifies the concept of the logical consequence? That is to say, which is the analytic definition of the consequence relation R between the premises $p_1, p_2..p_n$ and the conclusion c of a formally valid argument? Finally, we focus on the respective answers given through the developments in proof theory by David Hilbert and Gerhard Gentzen.

Keywords: medieval philosophy, consequence, validity, formality, inference, implication, proof theory, semantic, syntactic, natural deduction

1. How was the concept of logical consequence discovered by the medieval philosophers?

The Latin term "consequentia" was introduced by Boethius, in his *Commentary on 'On Interpretation'* (2, 109-10). At a first stage, Aristotle in the *De Interpretatione* (5, 17a9-10 and 20-22), had used the concepts "(non-)connected," "conjunction" or "connective" for the expression of the relation between parts of a composite statement. Furthermore, the theory of enthymemata of the *Topics* and the theory of inference of the *Prior Analytics* of Aristotle, the five indemonstrable inference schemes of Chrysippus, and the books *De Differentiis Topicis* and especially *De syllogismis hypotheticis* of Boethius presented the first elements of a theory of consequence. The revival of the Aristotelian logic in the twelfth century motivated medieval logicians to develop their own original logic, the so-called *logica modernorum,* which included the theory of properties of terms, the theory of consequences, the theory of insolubles and the theory of obligations. The beginnings of a consequence

theory are found in medieval commentaries on Aristotle and Boethius, in discussions of fallacies, and in treatises on syncategoremata. However, the medieval theory of consequences reached a complete form in the fourteenth century, especially in the years 1300-1340, with the works of Walter Burley (or Burleigh), William of Ockham and John Buridan.

A general theory of consequence, in the bases of the ancient assertoric and alethic modal syllogistic, was set up by Garland the Computist, Peter Abelard, the anonymous authors of *Logica Modernorum*, William of Sherwood, Lambert of Auxerre, Peter of Spain, and Burley's treatises on consequences and logical obligations. Apart from these, there were the treatises on syncategoremata of William of Sherwood and Peter of Spain, along with Robert Grosseteste's commentary on *Posterior Analytics* and the logical works of Roger Bacon, Robert Kilwardby, Robert Holkot, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas (Boh 1993).

Some arguments are perfect in the sense that their premises suffice by themselves for the establishment of their conclusions, they formulate a consequentia which is true *secundum complexionem*, that is to say, true in virtue of its formal structure, for instance: "Si omnis homo est animal et omne animal est animatum, omnis homo est animatus" ("If every man is an animal and every animal is animate, every man is animate"). No matter what replacements of the terms we may try, we get always a true consequentia, if the logical form is preserved.

Abelard's doctrine of consequence was based on the *De Differentiis Topicis* of Boethius, as Spade (1994) imparts. Abelard's rules of the relation of consequence are the following: "1. on the antecedent being posited, the consequent is posited; 2. on the consequent being destroyed, the antecedent is destroyed, thus: 'if there is man there is animal', 'if there is not animal there is not man'; 3. neither if the antecedent is posited, is the consequent destroyed, 4. nor if the antecedent is destroyed need the consequent be destroyed 5. or posited, just as, 6. neither if the consequent is destroyed is the antecedent posited, 7. nor if the same (the consequent) is posited is it (the antecedent) either posited 8. or removed" (Thomas 1961, x).

The formalisation of reasoning was placed as a first priority by the theory of consequence. The study of dependence relations between propositions should start with the general rule: from something true, something false never follows. With substitution-testing we are able to find out if an inference is valid and the consequence relation is satisfied. Only one fallacious example is sufficient for the invalidation of an inference. Formally, therefore, every logically valid inference, if it satisfies the consequence relation, can never be falsified by any particular application.

An inference is valid, namely, a consequence holds, when the consequent follows from the antecedent and the antecedent is incompatible with the opposite of the consequent. Therefore, if the antecedent is true and the consequent is false, the consequence is not valid. However, the relation of antecedent to consequent in a conditional proposition is different from the relation of premisses to conclusion in an inference or argument. As King (2001) points out, conditionals make statements while inferences do things with statements. The conditionals indicate truth and belong to the object-language, while the inferences indicate validity and belong to the meta-language.

Furthermore, the conditionals in medieval logic, together with conjunctive and disjunctive expressions, belong to the general rank of "compound sentence" (*propositio hypothetica*).

According to earlier writers (Burley, Ockham) formal consequences are valid because of the meanings of terms. However, Buridan defined formal validity in the manner of modern logic, as the validity of all instances of the same logical form. He defined formal validity exclusively in terms of uniform substitution. Buridan in his *Treatise* (I, 2) introduced the notion of the "cause of truth" of a proposition and insisted on the role of the distribution of a term of a sentence, which is the starting point of the substitution process. A substitutional account was also proposed, in the nineteenth century, by Bernard Bolzano. The truth of a sentence, according to Bolzano, depends on its relation to the set of the sentences that occur from the substitution of one of its terms: if every grammatically appropriate substitution of this certain term renders this sentence true, then the sentence is logically true. The terms that we allow to vary are called by Bolzano *variables* and the terms that we keep fixed are called *fixed* terms. The substitutions of terms that we permit are critical for the truth of a sentence (Etchemendy 1999). The substitutional initiative was criticised, but finally many logicians utilised both definitions, the one based on meaning and amounting to analyticity, the other substitutional and pertaining to logical validity. The Parisian tradition connected the notion of formal validity with truth-preservation under all substitutions of non-logical terms. The English tradition proposed a containment-principle, which implied that the understanding of the antecedent should contain the understanding of the consequent, as Klima (2016) explains.

Our research will consider as seminal two medieval works on consequence:

▪ Walter Burley's *De consequentiis*: Whereas Ockham's Logic is arranged traditionally around terms, propositions, and arguments, Burley's is organised around the general rules of consequences, by giving priority to propositional logic. Burley's argumentation on the compatibility and incompatibility rules of the antecedent and the consequent is indicative: whatever contradicts with the consequent contradicts with the antecedent, and whatever stands with the antecedent stands with the consequent.

▪ Jean Buridan's *Tractatus de consequentiis*: Buridan's *Treatise* covers both theory of conditionals and rules of inference. Buridan's semantics is token rather than type-based and it doesn't assume that a material consequence is not a logical one, as Archambault (2017) explains. The definition of logical consequence provided by Buridan (2015, 66) is:

> Now a consequence is a compound proposition (*propositio hypothetica*); for it is constituted from several propositions conjoined by the expression "if" or the expression "therefore" or something equivalent. For these expressions mean that of propositions conjoined by them one follows from the other; and they differ in that the expression "if" means that the proposition immediately following it is the antecedent and the other the consequent, but the expression "therefore" means the converse.

Buridan also distinguished formal and material consequence on the basis of their consisting

terms. Material consequence consists of categorematic terms (subject and predicate), whereas formal consequence consists of syncategorematic terms (logical constants). Material consequences include enthymemes, examples and inductions.

> I say that when we speak of matter and form, by the matter of a proposition or consequence we mean the purely categorematic terms, namely, the subject and predicate, setting aside the syncategoremes attached to them by which they are conjoined or denied or distributed or given a certain kind of supposition; we say all the rest pertains to the form. So we say that the copulas of both simple subject-predicate and compound propositions pertain to the form, as do negations, [other] signs, the number of propositions and terms and the mutual relation of all these, and relations of anaphoric terms and modes of signifying pertaining to the quantity of the proposition, for example, whether discrete or general, and many other things that the attentive reader can recognise if they occur (Buridan 2015, 74).[1]

Ockham's *Summa Logicae,* at the beginning of his tract on topical rules, in the third main division of the third part of the work, offers a division of consequences: a) Consequences may be either factual or absolute. A factual consequence (*consequentia ut nunc*) is valid at one time and may be invalid at another. On the contrary, an absolute consequence (*consequentia simplex*), is always valid, regardless of the time element. This distinction is also made by Buridan and Burley. b) Furthermore, a consequence may be valid in virtue of an intrinsic means (*consequentia tenens per medium intrinsecum*) or in virtue of an extrinsic means. A consequence which is valid in virtue of an intrinsic means is in reality an enthymeme. Burley suggested also that simple consequence is divided in natural and accidental (Green-Pedersen 1980, 128, 69-70). The natural consequence is intrinsically understood, while the accidental extrinsically,[2] as Burley explained (1955, 61.6-10). c) A consequence may be formal or material. Formal consequence is valid because of a general rule, while material consequence is valid because of the truth or falsity of the propositions that enter the consequence: "A material consequence exists when it holds precisely because of the terms, and not because of some extrinsic means that precisely regards the general conditions of propositions. Such are the following: If a man is running, then God exists; Man is a donkey, therefore God does not exist" (*Summa Logicae*, partis 3, pars 3, c. I.). Moreover, Ockham states that whenever there is a case in which the consequent does not follow from the antecedent, the antecedent will follow from the consequent. However, as Lewis-Langford remark, this theorem holds only in material consequence or implication.

The rules of the theory of consequence, according to Ockham, are the following: 1) From something true, something false never follows (*Ex vero numquam sequitur falsum*). 2) From false propositions a true proposition may follow (*Ex falsis potest sequi verum*). 3) If a consequence is valid, the negative of its antecedent follows from the negative of its consequent. 4) Whatever follows from the consequent follows from the antecedent.[3] 5) If the antecedent follows from any proposition, the consequent follows from the same. 6) Whatever is consistent with the antecedent is consistent with the consequent. 7) Whatever is inconsistent with the consequent

is inconsistent with the antecedent. 8) The contingent does not follow from the necessary. 9) The impossible does not follow from the possible. 10) Anything whatsoever follows from the impossible. 11) The necessary follows from anything whatsoever (*Summa Totius Logicae*, partis 3, pars 3, 37).

In a way similar with Ockham, Ralph Strode used the distinction between *illatio* and *intellectio* for the clarification of the difference between material and formal consequence, on the basis of the additional meaning or understanding (*intellectio*) that formal consequence involves. Around 1300, therefore, the theory of consequence had been developed under the recognition that modal notions, modal consequences and special modes have an analogous legitimate role, next to the alethic one (Boh 1993).

2. Which developments of the modern philosophy effected the turn from the medieval concept of logical consequence to its most recent conceptions?

The substitutional approach of Bolzano is only a necessary but not a sufficient requirement of logical truth in Tarski's philosophical logic. In fact, the substitutional method is liable to accidental results, because its notion of logical truth fails to persist through simple expansions of the language. For this reason, Tarski proposed the alternative criterion of the *satisfaction* of a sentential function. Tarski insisted on the untenability of new purely structural rules for the justification of logical consequence, such as the infinite induction between sentences conformable to a one-one correspondence with the natural numbers.

Tarski (1956, 414) summarised Carnap's definition of logical consequence with these words: "The sentence X follows logically from the sentences of the class K if and only if the class consisting of all the sentences of K and of the negation of X is contradictory." By modifying Carnap's definition of logical consequence, Tarski (1956, 417) defined logical consequence with the following words: "The sentence X follows logically from the sentences of the class K if and only if every model of the class K is also a model of the sentence X." To reconcile his definition with Carnap's, Tarski called a sentence or a class of sentences *contradictory* if it possesses no model, while he called a sentence or a class of sentences *analytical* if every sequence of objects is a model of it. Furthermore, a negation Y of a sentence X has as models those and only those sequences of objects which are not models of the sentence X.

Nevertheless, the application of the model-theoretic analysis of consequence by Tarski has been criticised by Etchemendy (1988; 1999), with the argument that it does not capture the intuitive, pre-theoretic and genuine notion of consequence. According to this critique, the syntactic proof-theoretic approach should not be considered as inferior to the model-theoretic. The modern successors of the theory of consequence can thus be found in the natural deduction systems of Jaśkowski and Gentzen (Hazen and Pelletier 2014). The correct use, the rule following and the inferential role are the natural grounds of meaning according to the semantic proof-theoretic approach proposed by Gentzen (1934/35; 1955). Natural deduction seeks normalisation or harmony between introduction and elimination, while being opposed to the axiomatisation

systems, such as the ones of David Hilbert. The abandonment or, on the contrary, the maintenance of the meanings of the manipulated symbols stand as the hallmarks of the syntactic and the semantic approaches respectively.

3. Similarities and differences between the logical concepts of consequence, inference, implication and entailment

The two basic consisting parts of the medieval logic were the theory of the consequences and the theory of the properties of terms. The medieval philosophers would use the terms 'inferentia', 'consecutio' or 'illatio' equivalently, as a synonym of the term 'consequentia'. On the other hand, William of Sherwood (1995, 74, 11-75, 4.) had distinguished four properties of terms in the following way:

> These properties are signification, supposition, copulation and appellation. Signification is the presentation of a form to the reason. Supposition is the ordering of one concept (intellectus) under another. Copulation is the ordering of one concept over another... But appellation is the present attribution of a term, i.e. the property by which what a term signifies can be predicated of something by means of the verb 'is'.

Moreover, by a careful comparison between the terms "consequence" and "inference", it can be clearly shown that the logical consequence is based on an objective grounding relation, which equals to the justification of the validity of an inference. For instance, when John F. Kennedy wrote that television's "revolutionary impact" would have far-reaching and lasting consequences for politics, he was predicting the future of the television. This example makes clear how effectively logical and causal consequence may relate to each other.

Relations may be classified according to asymmetry, transitiveness, and connexity, as Russell (1924) wrote. Causal relations are regarded as asymmetrical, non-reflexive, and transitive (Heil 2016); grounding is also an asymmetric, irreflexive and transitive relation, as Archambault (2019) holds. However, Aquinas insisted that a logical relation is a second intention, a thing that belongs merely to the intellect, such as the mental terms 'genus', 'species', 'noun', 'verb', 'case of a noun' etc.:

> Because relation has the weakest being of all the categories, some have thought that it belongs to second intentions (*intellectibus*). For the first things understood are the things outside the soul, to which the intellect is primarily directed, to understand them. But those intentions (*intentiones*) which are consequent on the manner of understanding are said to be secondarily understood. . . . So according to this thesis (*positio*) it would follow that relation is not among the things outside the soul but merely in the intellect, like the intention of genus and species and second (i.e. universal) substances (Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia* 7, 9, c).

Under this analysis, the relation of the consequence should be an objective but intellectual entity, a concept, a universal. Inference, implication and entailment should also belong to the general

category of logical relations between propositions, where the consequence belongs.

According to Aristotle, deduction is a *necessary* inference from the premises to the conclusion. Boethius regarded as inference schemes those and only those logical formulae that begin with the functor "igitur" (therefore). On the other hand, the functors "si" (if) and "cum" (when) signified implication. Leibniz regarded as necessary the propositions which are true in all possible worlds.

Clearly, the concepts of the consequence, inference and entailment have strong liaisons with modal logic, while the notion of implication would seem more appropriate for semantic and linguistic quests. However, Hilbert and Ackermann (1955, 4) defined the logical constant of implication in a solely formalistic way:

> With "$\varphi \rightarrow \psi$" (read "when φ, so ψ" or "from φ follows ψ"), we call a statement that indicates the implication formed from "φ" and "ψ" (in this order). "$\varphi \rightarrow \psi$" is defined as follows: it is correct if "φ" is wrong, and also if "ψ" is correct. It is only wrong if "φ" is correct and "ψ" wrong. This makes the sense of " $\rightarrow$ " clearly determined.

From the formalistic definition of the basic connectives (logical constants), the correctness or falsehood of a linked statement is only dependent on the correctness or falsehood of the basic statements, but not at all from its content. We can therefore understand the linkages of statements as functions that assign one of the values "true" or "false" to the values "correct" or "false" of the linked statements. We therefore also call them *truth functions.*

4. What kind of relation signifies the concept of the logical consequence?

Truth preservation, proof-theory and quantification are three significant aspects of the philosophical problem of logical consequence:

The validity of an argument and the criterion of a correct analysis of logical consequence is the truth preservation from the premises to the conclusion. A valid argument cannot consist of true premises and false conclusion. This requirement is sufficient in the classical account and may be also commonly acceptable in a purely substitutional account, only with flexible adjustments of domain, interpretation and naming of elements, as Read (1995) insisted.

Truth preservation is the semantic aspect of Logic, where the correctness refers to the meaning of the symbols involved. On the other hand, proof-theory is the syntactic aspect of Logic, as the correctness of an application of a rule of inference through a series of steps, which depends entirely on logical form rather than meaning.

The great significance of the theory of consequence lies on the conception that the truth of a consequence depends on its formal, analytical, substitutional correctness. This formal correctness allows for quantification. Second order logic, higher order logic, set theory, the problem of the universals and the logic of relations are critical for a thorough understanding of the logic of consequence, since the relation of consequence pertains to a relation between propositions; more formally, between propositional functions. After the preliminary contribution of "the logic

of relatives" by Peirce (1883, 1892) and the seminal analysis of the term "concept" as a function by Frege (1892), the term 'propositional function' occurs for the first time in Bertrand Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* (1903). By Tarski the respective term is called "sentential function."

Finally, the relation of the logical consequence between propositions ends up to the question of the grounding of a consequence, as Schnieder (2018) and Archambault (2019) propose. The grounding of a consequence relates to what Cicero and Boethius called *sedes argumenti,* the basis, seat, ground or region of an argument. The combination of a maximal proposition and a topical difference are the constituent parts of a locus, according to Boethius. Walter Burleigh (1955) also proposed that logical or dialectical topics can be either a maximal proposition or a difference of a maxim. Every good inference holds through a maximal proposition, i.e. a rule through which an inference holds. In modern Logic, Gentzen's (1934/5) rules of structural reasoning are considered as a successful grounding of logical consequence.

5. Proof theory and logic of relations

In the introduction of their joint work *Grundzüge der theoretischen Logik* (1928), Hilbert and Ackermann wrote that the idea of a mathematical logic was firstly formulated in a clear form by Leibniz. The initial results of mathematical logic originated from A. de Morgan (1806-1876) and G. Boole (1815-1864), whereas the entire later development goes back to Boole. His successors, W. S. Jevons (1835-1882) and especially C. S. Peirce (1839-1914) enriched the young science. The various developments of his predecessors were systematically expanded and completed by E. Schröder in his *Lectures on the Algebra of Logic* (1890-1895), which represent a certain conclusion to the series of developments emanating from Boole. The next stage was reached when G. Frege published his *Begriffsschrift* (1879) and his *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (1893-1903) and G. Peano and his colleagues began with the publication of the *Formulaire de Mathematiques* (1894), in which all mathematical disciplines were to be presented in a logical calculus. The publication of *Principia Mathematica* (1910-1913) by A. N. Whitehead and B. Russell marks a high point of this development.

For Hilbert and Ackermann, the requirement for formality is a priority, which must be secured by the use of a transparent and exact logical notation. For instance, in more complicated statements with an expression "Φ", it is advisable to write "~(Φ)" for "~Φ", so that it is clear which part of the sentence is negated. The requirement for clarity is especially important in the use of logical constants. When we say:

> "A candidate in mathematics and physics must be particularly thorough in mathematics, or he must be particularly thorough in physics", we do not mean that we want to exclude particularly thorough knowledge in both subjects at the same time. The "or" is used here in the sense of the Latin "vel" ("or also"). But when we say, "You have to work for the exam or you won't pass," we mean that the two cases are mutually exclusive. The "or" is used here in the sense of the Latin "aut-aut" ("either-or") (Hilbert and Ackermann 1928, 4).

Furthermore, with the logical notation "Φ ↔ Ψ" (read "Φ equivalent to Ψ") we denote a statement that is arguably called the co-implication of "Φ" and "Ψ". The expression "Φ ↔ Ψ" is correct if and only if "Φ" and "Ψ" have the same truth value, i.e. if "Φ" and "Ψ" are both right or both wrong. By combining basic connectives, we can also express the exclusive "either-or". "Either Φ or Ψ" can be represented by "~(Φ ↔ Ψ)". "~(Φ ↔ Ψ)" is correct if and only if "(Φ ↔ Ψ)" is wrong. This is the case if and only if of the two statements "Φ" and "Ψ" one is correct and the other is incorrect.

The definition of the logical constants is the fundamental step to formality, as grounding of logical validity. From the definition of our basic connectives (logical constants), the correctness or falsehood of a linked statement is only dependent on the correctness or falsehood of the basic statements, but not more from its content.

The value of the formalist ideal becomes equally important for the analysis of advanced logical ideas, such as those of the predicate calculus. In the third chapter of their *Grundzüge,* Hilbert and Ackermann declared the inadequacy of the previous calculus for the formal expression of the restricted predicate calculus. They stated some examples of this inadequacy of the traditional logical calculus in cases of logical relations:

> "If there is a president of all clubs in a city, every club in the city has a president." Here, too, one recognises the purely logical character of the sentence to the fact that the content of the terms "President" and "Club of the City" is irrelevant for the correctness of the sentence. But we are unable to explain the characteristic of this sentence with the help of the traditional logic or with the help of class calculus. The reason for this is that this is not just about certain properties, but rather a relationship between several objects. The term "President" implies such a relationship, namely a relationship between a person and a club. However, we have so far no means to represent such relationships with symbolic expressions (Hilbert and Ackermann 1928, 65).

It is precisely the relationships that play the essential role in the logical structure of mathematics. But it is not just taking mathematics into account that makes for us necessary to introduce a logic of relationships, like that first example shows. A second example:

> "x as a man has y as a child" is just another expression for "x is the father of y". On the other hand, the same sentence can also be pronounced like this: "y is the child of (man) x". The above sentence, hence, can only be put into evidence if "being father" and "being a child" is not primarily understood as a trait but as a relationship between two people, so that "x is father" and "x is child" are not the elementary sentences, but "x is father of y" and "x is child of y" (Hilbert and Ackermann 1928, 67).

The sentences "x is father" and "x is child" are then expressed, with the help of these elementary sentences, in the following way: "There is a y such that x is the father of y" and "There is a (man) y, so that the x is the child of y" - both of which sentences certainly indicate properties

of x, but they are defined by a relation between two people. Since our previous calculation has turned out to be inadequate, we are compelled to seek how to expand our logical symbolism. Let us return to the point of our considerations, where we went beyond the propositional calculus. We saw there that many statements consist of a property assigned to an object. We have not fully exploited this decomposition of the propositions statements, by introducing indeed the properties (in the form of the associated classes) into the calculus, but not the objects. In this regard, Hilbert and Ackermann try to complete the calculus by providing statements which separate the objects (individuals) from the properties predicated (predicates) to them and explicitly designate both.

6. From Hilbert to Gentzen

The basic work of Gerhard Gentzen, his dissertation *Untersuchungen über das logische Schließen,* related to the area of predicate logic, which was also called "restricted function calculus" by Hilbert and Ackermann. In addition to classical logic, Gentzen deals also with intuitionistic logic, as it had been formalised by Heyting.

The formalisation of logical reasoning, as it was developed in particular by Frege, Russell and Hilbert, is quite a long way distanced from the kind of reasoning that was actually practiced in mathematical proofs, as Gentzen stated. For this reason, the main principle (Hauptsatz) of Gentzen's investigation

> implies that every purely logical proof can be reduced to a certain, by the way by no means unambiguous, normal form. The most essential properties of such a normal proof can be expressed as follows: It does not make any detours. No terms are introduced into it, which are not contained in its end-result and therefore have to be used in order to obtain it (Gentzen 1935a, 177).

The essential external difference between natural-intuitionistic (NJ) derivations and derivations in the systems of Russell, Hilbert, Heyting is as follows: In the latter, the correct formulas are derived from a series of "logical basic formulas" by a few conclusions; the natural inference, however, does not generally start from logical principles, but from assumptions ... to which logical conclusions follow (Gentzen 1935a, 184).

A natural-intuitionistic derivation consists of formulas arranged in the form of a family tree. The initial formulas of the derivation are assumption-formulas, each of which is assigned to exactly one derivational deductive figure and it then stands "above" its sub-formula. All formulas under an assumption formula, but still above the sub-formula of the derivational deductive figure, to which the assumption formula belongs, including also the assumption formula itself, are called dependent on it. The conclusion yet makes the statements that follow after it independent of the assumption belonging to it.

There are two rules: introduction (E: Einführung in German) and elimination (B: Beseitigung in German). The designations of the individual deductive figure schemes: UE, UA etc. should mean: deductive figure formed according to the scheme is an And-(U), Or-(O), All-(A), There-is-(E),

Follow-(F) or non-(N)-sign "introduction" (E) or "elimination" (B). The deductive figure schemes are the following (Gentzen 1935a, 186):

	"introduction" (E)	*"elimination" (B)*
And-(U)	UE $\dfrac{\mathfrak{A} \quad \mathfrak{B}}{\mathfrak{A}\&\mathfrak{B}}$	UB $\dfrac{\mathfrak{A}\&\mathfrak{B}}{\mathfrak{A}} \quad \dfrac{\mathfrak{A}\&\mathfrak{B}}{\mathfrak{B}}$
Or-(O)	OE $\dfrac{\mathfrak{A}}{\mathfrak{A}\vee\mathfrak{B}} \quad \dfrac{\mathfrak{B}}{\mathfrak{A}\vee\mathfrak{B}}$	OB $\dfrac{\mathfrak{A}\vee\mathfrak{B} \quad \overset{[\mathfrak{A}]}{\mathfrak{E}} \quad \overset{[\mathfrak{B}]}{\mathfrak{E}}}{\mathfrak{E}}$
All-(A)	AE $\dfrac{\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{a}}{\forall\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{x}}$	AB $\dfrac{\forall\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{x}}{\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{a}}$
There-is-(E)	EE $\dfrac{\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{a}}{\exists\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{x}}$	EB $\dfrac{\exists\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{x} \quad \overset{[\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{a}]}{\mathfrak{E}}}{\mathfrak{E}}$
Follow-(F)	FE $\dfrac{\overset{[\mathfrak{A}]}{\mathfrak{B}}}{\mathfrak{A}\supset\mathfrak{B}}$	FB $\dfrac{\mathfrak{A} \quad \mathfrak{A}\supset\mathfrak{B}}{\mathfrak{B}}$
non-(N)	NE $\dfrac{\overset{[\mathfrak{A}]}{\curlywedge}}{\neg\mathfrak{A}}$	NB $\dfrac{\mathfrak{A} \quad \neg\mathfrak{A}}{\curlywedge}$
	$\dfrac{\curlywedge}{\mathfrak{D}}$	

We denote the free object variable designated in the relevant scheme with $\mathfrak{a}$ as the eigenvariable of an AE or EB. (Provided that it exists, i.e. that it comes out from the bound object variable labelled with $\mathfrak{x}$ in the formula labelled with $\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{x}$). The eigenvariable of an AE must not appear in the formula marked with $\forall\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{x}$ in the scheme and not in any assumption formula on which it depends. The eigenvariable of an EB must not appear in the formula marked with $\exists\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{x}$ in the scheme, neither in the upper formula marked with $\mathfrak{E}$, nor in any assumption formula on which it depends, except for the assumption formulas designated with $\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{a}$ belonging to the EB.

The meaning of the content of the NJ deductive figures

At the next stage, Gentzen tried to explain the meaning of some of the deductive figures and thus to make it clear that the calculation does indeed conform to the "real reasoning".

FE: If $\mathfrak{B}$ is proven using the assumption $\mathfrak{A}$, then (now without this assumption): from $\mathfrak{A}$ follows $\mathfrak{B}$. Of course, further assumptions may have been made, of which this result is still pending.

OB: ("case distinction"). If one has proven $\mathfrak{A}\vee\mathfrak{B}$, one can make a case distinction: one first

assumes that it holds 𝔄 and derives something like 𝔈 from it. If, furthermore, 𝔈 can also be derived from the assumption of the validity of 𝔅, then 𝔈 holds at all, i.e. now independent of both assumptions.

AE: If 𝔉𝔞 is proven for "any 𝔞", then ∀𝔵𝔉𝔵 holds. The requirement that 𝔞 is "completely arbitrary" can be expressed more precisely as follows: 𝔉𝔞 must not depend on any assumption in which the object variable 𝔞 occurs. And this, together with the natural requirement that in 𝔉𝔞 the 𝔞 of 𝔉𝔞 must be replaced by 𝔵 wherever it occurred, is precisely the part of the above "variable condition" relating to the AE.

EB: You have ∃𝔵𝔉𝔵. Then one says: Let 𝔞 be such an object for which 𝔉 holds. Hence, one assumes: It is valid that 𝔉𝔞. (Of course one has to take an object variable for 𝔞 that did not appear in ∃𝔵𝔉𝔵). If, on the basis of this assumption, one has proven a statement 𝔄 which no longer contains and does not depend on any other assumption containing 𝔞, then 𝔈 is proven independently of the assumption 𝔉𝔞. With what was said, the part of the "variable condition" relating to the EB was expressed. There is a certain analogy between EB and OB, just as the there-is-sign is the generalisation of the ⋁, and the universal sign that of the &.

NB: 𝔄 and ¬𝔄 mean a contradiction, and such a contradiction cannot be valid (theorem of contradiction). This is formally represented by the final figure NB, where ↯ denotes "the contradiction", the "wrong".

NE: (reductio ad absurdum). If something wrong (↯) follows from an assumption 𝔄, then 𝔄 is not correct, i.e. it is the case that ¬𝔄.

The scheme ↯ / D: If there is something wrong, any statement is valid.

The advantage of the natural deduction is the achieved formality of the structural reasoning rules, the avoidance of superfluous detours and the sufficient emphasis on grounding. Moreover, Gentzen (1935a, p. 190-210) provided an alternative method to natural deduction, which he called sequent calculus (L calculus). Every line of a proof in sequent calculus is a conditional tautology (or theorem) with zero or more conditions on the left. Sequent calculus does not start from assumptions as natural deduction, but from logical formulas, in the manner of Logicism. It maintains however the division of reasoning forms into introductions and eliminations of the individual logical signs. The idea of sequent calculi and of structural rules was firstly elaborated by Hertz, as it was openly acknowledged by Gentzen (1933).

The natural deduction trees deriving from Gentzen's N calculus and the sequent-based systems originating in Gentzen's L calculus belong to the main proof systems used for the instruction of Logic. However, the most popular proof system for the presentation of natural deduction was constructed by Fitch, based on Jaśkowski's notation.

Endnotes:

1. Albert of Saxony (1522, IV 1, 24rb) followed Buridan's definition.
2. The distinction between natural and accidental or non-natural consequence is also found in Boethius (1969, 835B), Duns Scotus (1966, I, d. 11, q. 2, 136-137) and William of Sherwood (1941, 80).
3. Ockham adds that the rule: "Whatever follows to the antecedent follows to the consequent" is false.

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Here Are the Materials Strewn Along the Ground – Skepticism, Autonomy and Education in Kant and Romanticism

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Abstract:

It is widely acknowledged that Kant's work presents an argument against modern skepticism (see Guyer 2008). However, it is less clear what this argument turns out to be and why, after Kant, skepticism blooms again (see Franks 2014). I argue that for Kant, skepticism is a certain disappointment of the human with its own intelligible powers, being torn between the actual and the ideal. Hence, his response to skepticism implies a limitation of knowledge as well as his image of the human as being of two worlds. The overcoming of skepticism implies the recovery of its voice as intelligible being in following the moral law, a constitution he calls autonomy. However, the image of two worlds, the sensual and the ideal, continues skepticism's most prominent image of two disparate realms (mind vs. body). After Kant, romanticism transforms Kant's two realms into the idea of the transformability of the human in a process they call *Bildung* (education). Evoking the literal project of "building" according to an image (*Bild*) or ideal, romanticism imagines a recovery from skepticism as the "up-building" of man out of fragmentation as aesthetic-educational task; a secularized salvific history by replacing God through man as author of one's existence.

Keywords: Autonomy, Education, Kant, Romanticism, Skepticism

Introduction: Skepticism after Kant

In 1794, Karl Friedrich Stäudlin published one of the first works concerning the history of modern skepticism, which he began with the following words:

> Skepticism begins to be a sickness of this age [...]. This sickness caused the newest revolution in philosophy which turned it into an object of deepest philosophical inquiry. This revolution should have brought it down, yet, after a certain discovery, [...] it should have fortified it. (Stäudlin 1794, iii)[1]

This "newest revolution in philosophy" is, of course, a reference to Immanuel Kant, whose

image decorates Stäudlin's text on the front page, next to David Hume's. Kant's philosophy aimed to bring skepticism to an end but, in the eyes of Stäudlin, seems to have failed in doing so. But this evaluation of Kant's work depends on what we take "bringing skepticism to an end" to mean and what we understood as Kant's accomplishment. Recently, Paul Franks (2014) tries to show how skepticism remains a problem *after* Kant and how a specific form of skepticism arises precisely *because of* Kant's philosophy in Jacobi and Maimon. In this way, skepticism remains a problem – of philosophy. However, 4 years after Stäudlin's text, in 1798, German (Jenaer) Romanticism is established in the first publication of the *Athenäum* journal. And famously, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy claim that "Kant opens up the possibility of romanticism" (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1988, 29). By connecting both thoughts, Stäudlin's as well as Lacoue-Labarthe's and Nancy's, I claim that *skepticism* after Kant opens up the possibility of romanticism. In other words, against Kant's own conviction to have emptied skepticism of pull, he showed skepticism's necessity and that romantic authors write under this necessity. Skepticism here means the idea that the human being is necessarily torn between two disparate worlds, mind vs. body, the sensual vs. the intelligible, and that my claims of knowledge do not reach the world outside of me. Romanticism after Kant is governed by this image but also attempts to overcome it in the idea of the world's and the human's "transformation," which romantic writers imagine as a process of an aesthetical education of the human.

In order to show this, I will demonstrate how Kant's argument with skepticism leads to a subjectification of the world that culminates in his idea of autonomy. Kant challenges the image of two distinct worlds not by refuting skepticism's claim but by changing our idea of the human. For Kant, as he says in his *Prolegomena*, skepticism is a way of thinking ("Denkungsart") in which reason violently goes against itself (P 271)[2], something he describes in the foreword to his first *Critique* as the burden of reason to be tormented with questions it can neither answer nor stop asking, since it is reason itself which poses them, and which cause metaphysical illusions. In one word, skepticism is human reason's dissatisfaction with itself. Kant's project of a limitation of knowledge aims at this disappointment of the human with itself. Therefore, he introduces the idea of the human as being capable of viewing herself from two standpoints or worlds, the sensual and the intelligible. The latter is the realm of the moral law, and to follow this law for its own sake, without subjective interest, is to enact one's autonomy and the achievement of the human. Kant calls this autonomy to speak with an objective voice.

Romanticism takes up Kant's idea of autonomy as well as the accompanying image of two worlds but rejects Kant's way of completing this ideal. The abandonment of subjective interest is no overcoming of skepticism, but an instance of it. If skepticism is the disappointment of the human with the human, hence with the ordinary life of human beings, then the overcoming of skepticism requires the reawakening of *interest in* the human. The image of two worlds can function as instance of skepticism, if these two worlds are seen as distinct worlds, or as attempt to overcome skepticism, if they are seen as certain *perspectives* on *one* world, a shift that equally requires a change

of perspective. Romantic authors often imagine the former possibility as humanity's Fall from nature which produces shame about our condition and disappointment with the current state of culture. The latter possibility, however, expresses the same disappointment with culture; yet, it sees its overcoming not in a reinstallation of nature but in a transformation of culture. Schiller imagines this transformation as aesthetical education, Schlegel calls it *Bildung* (education), Novalis calls it the "romanticization" of the everyday. In both visions, the human is fragmented, but this fragmentation is inhabited differently. The romantic idea of fragment is, as Blanchot says, "a totally new mode of fulfillment (*accomplissement*) [...]." (Blanchot 1983, 172) Romanticism strives, like Kant, for an ideal but, opposed to Kant, this ideal is not fixed objectively. The Romantic idea of *Bildung*, self-cultivation, transformation etc., entailing the word "Bild" for "picture" or "image," attempts to find an idea or image of the self that is neither transcendental, nor objective. The task is, therefore, to distinguish between an image of perfection, conceived as the "end" of *Bildung*, and "false" images of completion. In other words, Romanticism searches for a new form of subjectivity, that is deeper than the traditional sense of subjectivity, the latter remains in the opposition to objectivity, publicity, and therefore in the grip of skepticism. The romantic quest precisely is to recover the subjective voice of the human that is suppressed by skepticism (seeing subjectivity as a lack of objectivity) or by Kant's idea of an objective voice as the adequate expression of our humanity. In this sense, Bloom can announce that "Wordsworth's Copernican revolution in poetry is marked by the evanescence of any subject but subjectivity, the loss of what a poem is 'about.'" (Bloom 1970, 9)

1. Kant, Skepticism, Morality

Kant calls his accomplishment in philosophy a "Copernican Revolution." Before him, philosophers have assumed that all knowledge must conform to objects whereas now all objects must conform to our knowledge. The result of such an investigation is that, since knowledge depends on experience, human knowledge can only work under certain conditions of experience, which Kant calls space and time as pure *a priori* concepts. Only objects that fit these conditions can be known, which he calls "appearances." Whatever these appearances represent, however, cannot itself appear, hence cannot be experienced and cannot be known. Kant calls these objects "things in themselves." These transcendental objects or "ideas" must be *assumed* because they "cause" the appearances, although they escape any human knowledge. These objects are the objects of metaphysics, e.g. God and freedom. At the end of the first *Critique*, Kant shows how any proof of God's existence must remain improvable, and how freedom, although unknowable, is a practical idea. We are constantly confronted with two worlds, the world of sensual causation, or appearances, and the world of intelligible causes, or things in themselves, or freedom.[3]

If the modern epistemological discourse was determined by the representation *of* objects, the visuality of the world[4], knowledge after Kant is determined by the mind's projection *onto* "objects." Kant marks the shift from the mind's passive mirroring of an independent reality outside to an

active structuring of the world. Knowledge in pictures is replaced by knowledge in words or concepts. This Kantian revolution, together with the already existing rationalistic (Leibniz, Wolff) as well as empiristic (Locke) doctrine of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, makes representation obsolete. The more surprising is the tendency of the "aesthetical" discourse of 18th century Classicism to focus on *mimesis* as the ideal of literature, e.g. in Gottsched's poetics.[5] To be sure, the triumph of the word over the image, the intellectual over the sensual, is not without costs. The uncertainty about representation accompanies the *desire* for such visual experience, which is now impossible because of the subject's removal from the sensual world. Instead of compensating the failure of the "ocular proof," language intensifies the sense of the world's inaccessibility, which causes skepticism.

Certainly, the matter is more complicated than suggested here. What is Kant's relation to skepticism? First, the famous interruption of his dogmatic slumber in reading Hume, as he calls it in the *Prolegomena* (P 260), did not motivate him to *refute* Hume's skepticism concerning cause and effect. He takes skepticism in a different tone: instead of asking "how could we possibly know that effect B is caused by A?", he asks "under which *conditions* can we reasonably speak of cause and effect?" Skepticism is not a specific claim but a mood in which a claim is made. In the *Prolegomena*, Kant calls skepticism a *way of thinking* in which reason violently goes against itself (P 271).[6] Kant's treatment of skepticism, therefore, can only be to restore *hope*, to make room for faith, as he says, in the pursue of knowledge. For him, the limitation of absolute knowledge (representation) is the condition for knowledge. The intellect's triumph over the senses implies the split of the human being as inhabitant of two worlds. The limitation of knowledge opens the possibility of freedom as transcendental *idea*, which is not an object of knowledge but of morality. Kant shows how skepticism cannot be refuted but must be undermined, changing *the way* humans think about their own capabilities. However, Kant is convinced to have brought an end to the possibility of despair human beings feel about their own constitution. His moral philosophy is the expression of this conviction.

Kant's ultimate question in his ethics is: "How we can be sure to follow the moral law for its own sake (its ideal) and not out of mere conformity (in appearance to it)? How can we connect these two worlds, which were introduced by Kant himself, and act freely? It is important to see that Kant's philosophy was invested in this question from the beginning of his "epistemological" first *Critique* and that his introduction of these two worlds or standpoints, as he calls it, is essential to his limitation of reason, hence to his rescue of knowledge, which is his settlement of skepticism. But how can such limitation not appear to be skepticism itself since it "shuts us off" from our desired transcendental ideas and things in themselves? The direction of Kant's conclusion solely depends on our *standpoint*.[7] And taken this standpoint as crucial element throughout Kant's philosophy, we can agree with Paul Guyer in arguing against John Rawls, Thomas Hill and Karl Ameriks that far "from being indifferent to skepticism, then, Kant organized his entire philosophy as a response to the varieties of skepticism *as he understood them*," (Guyer 2008, 29) which refers to epistemological skepticism in his first *Critique* and to moral skepticism in his Practical Philosophy.

And since all of Kant's *Critiques* end in an investigation of human freedom, the way Kant sees this freedom enacted must be a response to the threat of skepticism.

Therefore, we need to understand Kant's idea of autonomy as the expression of such freedom. Autonomy means to act in accordance to as well as to give the moral law. This entails some problems. E.g., actions can be "in conformity with duty," without being "from duty," for the sake of the moral law. That means, there are actions that are "in conformity with duty" and to which the subject has "immediate inclination," in which case it is impossible to know whether the subject acted for the sake of the law or in mere conformity to it.[8] And Kant famously, scandalously claims that there is no *moral* worth of an action out of compassion. He claims that the principle of morality cannot follow from any form of "interest" (GM 449)[9] or subjective "incitement", which would be a heteronomy, but from the respect towards oneself as person (GM 427, 432). To fail to act for the sake of the law is to fail to recognize oneself as "person," as "end in itself," opposed to a thing or "means" (GM 427-428). And he then ends with one famous description of the categorical imperative: "*So act that you use humanity, in your own person as well as in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."* (GM 429) Therefore, autonomy is directly connected to my state as a human being; to fail to enact my autonomy is to fail my humanity. The fulfillment of the unconditioned moral imperative is the realization of the "Realm of Ends" in which any rational being gives the law *and* obeys it (GM 432-433).

This leads us to the crucial point for Kant that I cannot have any interest in fulfilling the moral law. Which also means that Kant is unable to provide any reason to follow it. The moral law does only apply to mixed beings that are object of temptation. The condition of the possibility of autonomy is that the human being *can* perceive itself from two standpoints. Without this double nature, there will not be any need for the call for autonomy. The "ought" of the categorical imperative would be pointless if we would already act in conformity to it (see GM 454). Human beings can only be autonomous if they can fail to do so. But *how* can we fail here? Kant acknowledges above all that philosophy cannot provide any explanation for the freedom of will, and that it fails to provide any "interest" as motivation to follow the moral law. Yet, he remarks, "[the human] actually does take an interest in them [...]." (GM 460) The moral law is not incentive *because* it interests us (which is heteronomy) but because *it cannot fail* to interest us *as human beings*: "the law interests because it is valid for us as human beings, since it arose from our will as an intelligence, hence from our actual self [...]." (GM 461) That means, for Kant, the accomplishment of autonomy requires the acknowledgement of one's humanity. If we consider Kant's word "Interesse" from its Latin root, we will get an interesting picture. "Interesse" is the present active infinitive of "intersum" which literally means "to lie between," "to be apart," "to differ", "to take part in." Failing to take an interest in the moral law, in the intelligible world, is failing to recognize oneself as human being, since, for Kant, the human being is the one "in between" these two worlds.

However, while Kant sees this as the end of our moral conversation, it should be the beginning. At any point of Kant's investigation, he must assume that we already "know" about our "ought" that constraints us in our vision of the moral world. Yet, such ideal creates the precondition of our morality in the first place, without which we exist morally voiceless. Kant always needs to presume that we *have a voice*, that we *have the ability to decide* between duty and incentive, and hence must choose what we *ought to do*. What we lack is not the law but *interest*. The opposite to a moral life, envisioned by Kant, is not an immoral (or evil) one, but one of indifference towards this life. Hence, what we need is not the law but education. Or as the German Romantics call it: "Bildung."

2. The Concept of *Bildung* in Romanticism

John Rawls interprets Kant's "main aim as deepening and justifying Rousseau's idea that liberty is acting in accordance with a law that we give to ourselves" which "leads not to a morality of austere command but to an ethic of mutual respect and self-esteem" and that "Kant speaks of the failure to act on the moral law as giving rise to shame and not to feelings of guilt" (Rawls 1999, 225). In his text *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786), Kant describes how the first development of freedom in the human being takes place as the disobedience towards the instinct, "God's voice" (CB 111). Despite the convenience to follow the voice of nature, the human listens to the voice of reason and is free, standing "on the edge of an abyss [...]." (CB 112) Although Kant takes the biblical account as holy "document" (CB 109) of the Fall of man, he does invert the occurrence of shame. Shame is no longer effect of man's knowledge but of man's failure to know, of man's lack of courage to think and instead wishing to return to a state of nature.

The experience of nature as irretrievable loss is one of romanticism's most common images, often taken to be the problem of self-consciousness. J. H. Van den Berg writes that the "factualization of our understanding – the impoverishment of things to a uniform substantiality – and the disposal of everything that is not identical with this substantiality into the 'inner self' are both parts of one occurrence. The inner self became necessary when contacts were devaluated." (Van den Berg 1970, 57) As causes for the invention of the inner self, Van den Berg lists the rise of Protestantism and Luther's distinction between the "inner" man and the outer. This diremption of the self runs like a thread from Luther to Rousseau's alienation from nature in his *Confessions*, foreshadowed by Petrach's climb of Mount Ventoux (1335), to Schleiermacher and finally to modern psychology and Freud's discovery of the unconscious, which "became possible because of an interiorization of all human realities." (Van den Berg 1970, 63) Van den Berg's observations stand in one line with other renowned critics and their diagnosis that romanticism's central problem is, as Bloom phrases it, "subjectivity or self-consciousness" (Bloom 1970, 1), i.e. that "the dominant form of Romantic tragedy [is] the tragedy of self-awareness, the sense of losing the spontaneity of one's relationship to nature and becoming an isolated and subjective consciousness." (Frye 1970, 40) Sometimes, this loss of innocence is imagined as a re-enactment or secularization of the Fall

(see Fry 1970, 26), or as the linkage between consciousness and self-consciousness as knowledge and guilt (see Hartman 1970, 49), so that Romanticism is either defined by "anti-self-consciousness" (Hartman 1970) or as the quest to lose self-consciousness by enacting consciousness, a quest "downward and inward" (Frye 1970, 33).

However, I would interpret the "problem of self-consciousness" as skepticism, the feeling of an unbridgeable distance between two realms, the inner and outer, which nonetheless remain intimately connected, like Descartes' mind and body, and Kant's sensual and intelligible realm. Then, it is questionable whether this "problem" is the cause for skepticism or its effect. It seems that the set up of this problem already implies skepticism's self-interpretation of the alienation of two distinct realms from one another, self-consciousness and nature, the claims of knowledge and the world that is claimed to be known. The former, consciousness, is related to subjectivity, whereas the latter, the world, to objectivity. If we understand skepticism as the problem of subjectivity as opposed to objectivity, as e.g. Isaiah Berlin sees it, by focusing on Hume's influence on Kant as the original birthstone of romanticism, which he calls, for reasons, "Irrationalism" (see Berlin 1999), we are nonetheless captivated in the same problem.

Instead, I would suggest that the question of self-consciousness already is an instance of our shame and not the attempt to overcome it, because it implies that this loss has actually taken place. Instead of seeing the "loss" (of nature, of immediacy, of innocence) as a metaphysical part of our condition, it is *merely* our perspective onto ourselves, our standing to ourselves, something romantic writers address as melancholy.

Schiller was the first writer who described this melancholy in terms of an actual literary mode, which he calls sentimental poetry. In his text *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, Schiller claims that there are two kinds of poetry, "naïve" and "sentimental." The former is ancient poetry (Homer), whereas the latter is modern. Naïve poetry describes a world in itself (in its totality), it is an absolute depiction, whereas sentimental poetry describes an ideal, it is a depiction of the absolute. Naïve poetry takes the point of view from inside the same world, whereas sentimental poetry is reflective and looks back onto a world, hence it posts an ideal onto the world it describes. The ultimate goal of Art, for Schiller, is the reconciliation of all oppositions between the real and the ideal which, however, remains unachievable:

> Nature unifies itself with the human, Art separates and disunites him, he returns to the unity through the ideal. But since the ideal is something infinite, which the cultivated human will never achieve, he cannot become complete in his sense, as the natural human is able to. (Schiller 1962, 717)

No culture can be perfected. As Richard Eldridge puts it, the sentimental "poet lives in this world of antagonisms [...]." (Eldridge 1997, 78) Although the ideal does not lose its attraction to the sentimental poet, she realizes that she will fail to fulfill this task. That is why the sentimental poet chooses the elegy as textual genre:

> Nature and the ideal either are objects of mourning if the former is depicted as lost and the latter as unachieved. Or both are objects of joy by representing them as real. The first possibility is the *elegy* in a narrow sense, the other the *idyll* in a broader sense. (Schiller 1962, 727)

The figure of this struggle between two genres is the child. At once, the image of an undisfigured nature in civilization, a pure innocence, *and* the source of an experienced loss. If Rousseau has discovered childhood, Schiller has discovered the loss of childhood, adolescence; maturity or autonomy is not given but must be achieved in the reunification of the real and the ideal.[10] And Schiller makes clear that this process is not only an aesthetical one but an educational one as he described it in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* concerning the idea of *Bildung* ("education"):

> Forever bound to one small fragment of the whole, man builds himself as a mere fragment, forever the univocal sound of the wheel, which he moves, in his ear, he will never develop the harmony of his being, and instead of creating humanity within his own nature, he becomes the imprint of his business, of his science. (Schiller 1962, 583)

Schiller contrasts the idea of "humanity in oneself," Kant's formula of autonomy, as a process of forming or building, with a state of fragmentation, an absorption into the everyday. He diagnoses that *culture* has turned man into a copy or fragment. However, Schiller does not see the redemption of man's "wholeness" in a state of nature but in a redemption of culture or Art: "therefore, it is our task to rebuild this totality in our nature, which Art has destroyed, through a higher Art." (Schiller 1962, 587) Man itself becomes a work of Art, an idea famously ascribed to Shaftesbury. This discourse of authorship and *Bildung*[11] is part of a secularization of the theological image of the human as *ens creatum*, created by God in his image (*imago dei*); man replaces God as the author of his/her existence.[12] Or as Abrams has called it: "the course of human life [...] is no longer a *Heilsgeschichte* [salvation history] but a *Bildungsgeschichte* [history of education]; or more precisely, it is a *Heilsgeschichte* translated into the secular mode of a *Bildungsgeschichte*." (Abrams 1973, 188) The image of the human changes from *ens creatum* to *opus artis*. That is significant regarding the problem of skepticism. In his second Meditation, Descartes makes the famous claim "[...] that this proposition I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind." (Descartes 1901, 226) In other words, the fact that the human is *ens creatum* tells Descartes that it needs a proof of its existence, that it must be created. He, therefore, envisions the human being as metaphysically dependent or incomplete or unfinished; and that means, the proof of my existence requires the proof of God's existence. In romanticism, the individual replaces God as the author of one's existence. And this authorization takes place in the process of "Bildung" (education) in and through literature. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy remark, "programmatically, the philosophical *organon* is thought as the product or effect of a *poiesis*, as work (*Werk*) or as poetical opus [...]. Philosophy must effectuate itself – complete, fulfill, and realize itself – as poetry."

(Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1981, 36) God, however, could not fail to authorize my existence, whereas the human can. Therefore, from now on, human existence is imagined not as a state or property but as an achievement, precisely because I can fail to do so. Despite the sudden enhancement of man's powers, the burden to claim one's existence is loaded onto the individual as well. But how can a dependent creature bear the weight of God? It cannot, and so skepticism remains and must remain a possibility in human life for romanticism. That means, human existence cannot be *completed*. This is one way in which romanticism receipts Kant's idea of limitation. Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis invent a whole new literary genre in order to address this problem: the fragment. *Bildung* is part of this discourse since it can never be an actual goal in itself. The idea of *Bildung* implies that it cannot be completed. Romanticism will, therefore, try to transform the concept of completion or *poeisis*. As Richard Eldridge calls it, the "movement toward *poiesis* as the site and inconclusive vehicle of philosophical thinking about our powers, is the central thematic thread of post-Kantian German romanticism." (Eldridge 1997, 71)

In his famous fragment no. 116, Schlegel calls romantic poetry a "progressive universal poetry" and that it continuously remains in a state of "becoming." (Schlegel 1967, 182) The fragment is the genre of choice to "realize" such vision of art because it expresses this paradox in its form. Peter Szondi remarks that "the fragment is conceived as 'the subjective embryo of a developing object,' i.e. as preparation of the longed-for synthesis. Rather than the not-yet-achieved, or what has remained a detached piece, the fragment is perceived as anticipation, promise." (Szondi 1978, 20)

In fragment no. 206, Schlegel says: "A fragment, like a miniature work of art, has to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and be complete in itself like a porcupine." (Schlegel 1967, 197) How can a fragment be "completed" in itself? It seems that, whether fragments are opposed to any form of "system" or not, Schlegel attempts to overcome such a distinction in establishing the genre of the fragment. That means, he does not try to overcome "objectivity" (system) through "subjectivity" (fragment), by showing how any system remains fragmented. Instead, he proposes a different idea of "completion," that does not mean "completion" but "perfection." This distinction is crucial for evaluating Schlegel's argument with Kantian philosophy, or romanticism's investment in Kant's discoveries, circling around the threat of skepticism, which either states that there can be no completion or that there must be a completion.

Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, e.g., claims that Schlegel goes deeper than Jacobi and Fichte in his critique of Kant's thing in itself "by not only criticizing the notion of a thing in itself but also to reject the accompanying ontology based on permanent substance," in which "thing" signifies "some static, lifeless, ahistorical bearer of properties" (Millán-Zaibert 2007, 142). For her, the "deal of such philosophical methods is 'some state of perfection,' which, as we saw earlier, was disavowed in Schlegel's emphasis on infinite becoming." (Millán-Zaibert 2007, 146) But Schlegel clearly avows or even welcomes the fragment as "some sort of perfection." To be sure, Schlegel's criticism does entail a rejection of Kant's noumenal realm, and hence of Kant's whole idea of

freedom, so that Schlegel's project seems to be the harmonization of Kant's two worlds in a combination of subjective Idealism and objective Realism (see Beiser 2003, 150). However, Schlegel also *inherits* Kant's notion of two worlds.[13] The romantic quest searches for a way to inhabit this double nature of human beings. Stanley Cavell makes this point in relation to his own work:

> I might describe my philosophical task as one of outlining the necessity, and the lack of necessity, in the sense of the human as inherently strange, say unstable, its quotidian as forever fantastic. [...] The everyday is ordinary because, after all, it is our habit, or habitat; but since that very habitation is from time to time perceptible to us – we who have constructed it – as extraordinary, we conceive that some place elsewhere, or this place otherwise constructed, must be what is ordinary to us, must be what romantics [...] call 'home.' [...] Romantics are brave in noting the possibility of life-in-death and what you might call death-in-life. My favorite romantics are the ones (I think the bravest ones) who do not attempt to escape these conditions by taking revenge on existence. But this means willing to continue to be born, to be natal, hence mortal. (Cavell 1988, 154)

I guess, a sense of this romanticism lies in Novalis' fragments in which he calls for a "romanticization of the everyday", to make the ordinary extraordinary, and the extraordinary ordinary, so that the beginning achievement of romanticism would be a form of *estrangement*. Estrangement implies a loss of orientation, to not know one's way about. And if that loss of orientation happens within what appeared to be familiar and ordinary, Romanticism is itself uncanny. One could say that Romanticism keeps skepticism's possibility open by warning for too much knowledge. Schlegel makes this point in his short and extraordinary text *On Incomprehensibility*: "Truly, you would be scared if the world, as you demand, would become comprehensible in all seriousness. And isn't this infinite world created by reason from incomprehensibility or chaos?" (Schlegel 1967, 370) Eldridge calls this "Schlegelian nihilism" (Eldridge 1997, 85). In fact, this is Schlegel's reception of Kant's early claim that the "I think" must accompany all my thoughts or representations and therefore must remain irrepresentable. Schlegel claims that the "inner happiness depends [...] on such an aspect that must remain in the dark but also carries and holds the whole, and which would lose this power in the moment it is dissolved in reason." (Schlegel 1967, 370) Schlegel consequently continues Kant's project. Therefore, he does not propose a form of "undecidability" (Eldridge 1997, 83), but a limitation of knowledge and the inhabitation of such limitation, on which inner happiness depends, which classically is seen as the highest good (Aristotle).

Further, Schlegel announced in 1799 in one of his *Ideen* fragments the following: "The highest good and the alone useful is education [Bildung]." (Schlegel 1967, 259) *Bildung* as the education of humanity was the central goal of early romanticism, including Novalis, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Tieck, Wackenroder, Schiller. And the emphasis of *Bildung* certainly was due to the social and political climate of these thinkers. The catastrophe in which the French Revolution ended in 1793 raised the question of how to attain political change including free,

modern citizens without falling into terror and chaos. Even before this cataclysmic event, thinkers thought about the idea that *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment) alone fails to provide the means to guide people to fulfill the ideas of *Aufklärung*; it lacked education. Rousseau, Herder and Hamann tried to provide this concept of education or perfection, as well as Goethe, Leibniz, Mendelssohn etc. Especially for the former two, education's goal was the perfection of one's sentiments and feelings, along reason, whereas for Leibniz education was a matter of cultivating one's intellect. How does the romantic idea of education differ from these? All these ideas think of education in terms of perfection, excellence, self-cultivation, but only romanticism thinks of it as aesthetic education, and only romanticism develops this perfectionism in a direct argument with Kant. The latter sees the highest good in a good will alone, that means aside of any "inclinations," "incitements" etc. Similarly, he defines the pleasure of beauty as "pleasure without interest." Schlegel directly contests Kant's idea by calling *Bildung* the highest good *and* the only thing that is useful. The affront for Kant lies here in both categories: 1. The highest good is the final end (all means lead to this end) and the complete end (nothing can be added to it), although *Bildung* describes a process. 2. The highest good, for Kant, has this status because it is *not* useful.

Further, Kant's problem is that he necessarily is unable to provide any motivation for following the moral law, since it must deprive any such incitements, so that the moral law will only be followed by already morally acting people. Hence, what he leaves out precisely is the process of becoming a moral being. And since his idea of morality or autonomy is the expression of our humanness, Kant leaves out how to become human. The romantic idea here is that we *must* take an interest in our moral life in order to be willing to act morally. To define the experience of beauty as "without interest" seems to be as scandalous as describing the compassionate act of a mother for her child as without moral worth. Hence, the task is to awaken this "interest" in our life, in ourselves, and *not* in a specific topic.[14] Novalis calls this the "romanticization" of everyday life as well as the "logarithmization" of the sacred. To romanticize the world is to see the ordinary as extraordinary, the familiar as strange, the mundane as sacred, the finite as infinite (see Beiser 2003, 101). Novalis asks for nothing less than a transformation of the world. Novalis' "operation" creates distance between us and the ordinary life by showing the latter as unfamiliar; we lack interest in our everyday life *because* it is too close to us.[15] The unknown, mystical, including Kant's transcendental idea of freedom, becomes familiar. The claim to know these ideas caused skepticism. Novalis' cure for skepticism is to discover the sublimity of everyday life. To be sure, however, this "operation" does not have an end, although it can come to an end at any point. This is the typical paradoxical attitude of all of Novalis' fragments; it is the fragmentary structure itself. Novalis' circumscription of this operation, the identification of a lower self with a better self, expresses this potentially never-ending process; there is always a "better" self. He writes in fragment no. 22: "In every moment, the human is capable to be a supersensible being." (Novalis 1981, 433) And later, he writes: "The highest task of education [Bildung] is to take control of one's transcendental self, to be the I of one's I." (Novalis 1981 437) Novalis combines this transcendental

perspective, one might call it "sane madness," with the question of interest: "The transcendental viewpoint for this life awaits us – there it will become quite interesting." (Novalis 1981, 444)[16] This transcendental viewpoint is, of course, not transcendent; it is a perspective on *this* life. It seems that Novalis suggests that the goal of *Bildung* is to retrieve an interest in one's life, that we should see the ordinary as extraordinary, and acknowledge the transformability of this ordinary realm. It is our ordinary life that is the object of such a transformation. The possibility of such transformation is given by Kant's discovery, "that reason has insight only into what it produces according to its own design; that it must [...] force nature to answer its questions [...]." (CPR BXIII) And further, let us suppose that this mode of asking questions, although it guarantees the success of our claims of knowledge, creates our disappointment with knowledge; because it is unable to provide us with "nature" independent from our mind. Therefore, it causes our indifference towards this realm. This indifference is caused by our feeling of two distinct realms, the sensual and the ideal. It is the latter's perspective that causes the disappointment in the former. Kant's idea of the human as inhabitant of these two worlds was meant to overcome this disappointment in the human and its limitation, but it merely strengthened the human chagrin with itself. Romanticism abolishes these two worlds but only in order to show how the world below, what they call the ordinary, is object of transformation; a transformation they call *Bildung*.

3. Outlook beyond Romanticism

At this point, instead of a conclusion, I would like to present some ideas on how the romantic idea of *Bildung* continues to be significant in other works outside of (German) romanticism. E.g., Emerson says the following in his *The American Scholar*: "This revolution is to be wrought by the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture. The main enterprise of the world for splendor, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man. Here are the materials strewn along the ground." (Emerson 1893, 40) "Upbuilding" in Emerson's text echoes the German *Bildung* as standing for education and culture or cultivation. And the idea of "building" takes a literal connotation with "building a house" in Emerson's "materials are strewn along the ground," which, back in Germany, Nietzsche takes to be an Aesthetical project, seeing an "expanse of rubble of the most valuable sculptural designs." (Nietzsche 1954, 328) And for all the differences between Nietzsche as the author of *Schopenhauer as Educator* and of a work like *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, where the idea of a higher culture of man turns into the overcoming of man and an image of the future, the initial position of both texts seems almost identical. Zarathustra says: "Truly, my friends, I walk among men as among fragments and limbs of men!" (Nietzsche 1954, 392)

The idea of "upbuilding" and the strewn materials on the ground, which are fragmented men, reconnects to Emerson's other statement that man "is no longer upright," as he says in *Self-Reliance* (Emerson 2009, 59). That means, the human walks bent over, feels ashamed, is not trustworthy, not honorable. In any case, it signifies that the human is not standing. Stanley Cavell, a strong voice in revisiting Emerson as well as romanticism in contemporary criticism, reads this image this way:

> We know uprightness names the posture of the human being standing on hind legs, eyes toward heaven (as in a famous outburst of Kant's praise of our moral capacity), namely as having just evolved out of the trees and come to earth. So the resultant force of "man is no longer upright" becomes: man has as it were suffered a setback (another fall, one could say), which has left him everywhere less than human (Mill will say: distorted, crippled; Nietzsche will say: degenerated), and in such a way that he is incapable of the necessary condition of morality (according to Kant, the capacity to stand on his own, that he be autonomous). (Cavell 2005, 217)

If Kant presents the problem of morality as a struggle between incitement and duty and that to choose the latter is a fact of reason, since there cannot be doubt about the "righteousness" of duty, then Kant needs to presuppose the necessary condition of such a choice, that the human already is attracted to a moral life, already stands upon its own legs and, therefore can choose. After leaving the realm of nature and joining the course of reason, there cannot be any doubt about the goal of humanity, for Kant. But what if the human fails to be attracted to a moral life? Or what if duty itself becomes a mere expression of conformity and hence an expression of heteronomy? If that is the essence of what romanticism imagines as the Fall, not as a unique event in the history of mankind, but as an everyday event, as our own apologetics, our fragmentation, then the reversal must be an everyday event as well. Emerson calls the former constitution "conformity" and its opposite "self-reliance": "The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion." (Emerson 2009, 44) And this is to say, in Kantian terms, that to act in conformity with the law is the opposite of acting for the sake of the law. Without the latter, human beings are not autonomous but heteronomous and therefore unable to reclaim their own humanity. So, Emerson, quite arrogantly, claims that "I will stand here for humanity [...]" (Emerson 2009, 53), evoking Kant's earlier phrasing of the categorical imperative. And Nietzsche connects this claim to represent humanity to the question of his identity or existence as a writer in his autobiographical *Ecce Homo*:

> As it is my intention within a very short time to confront my fellow-men with the greatest demand that has ever been made upon them, it seems to me above all necessary to declare here who and what I am. [...] I live on my own credit, and it is probably only a prejudice to suppose that I am alive. (Nietzsche 1980, 257)

And if we take Nietzsche's idea of his own voice as a writer as a further contribution to the task of *Bildung* as aesthetical achievement and acknowledgement of the fragmented human constitution, we could see here Nietzsche's inheritance of the romantic quest to "become who you are" (the subtitle to his *Ecce Homo*). In any case, the existence of this discourse in Emerson and Nietzsche might be able to reveal untaken paths in their work as well as hidden continuances.

Endnotes:

1. Quotations from original German texts are given in my translations if not marked otherwise.
2. References to Kant's works follow the "Akademie Ausgabe." For Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, I refer to the English translation by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (2011). The other works follow my own translations.
3. Kant attempted to bridge this division between his *First* and *Second Critiques* in Aesthetics, in his Third Critique, in which the work of Art is an example of freedom. And the Romantics take Kant's Third Critique (Judgement, Genius, Sublime) and transform it into the idea of the autonomy of Art as the realization of freedom.
4. Richard Rorty argues for this in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980, 17-69), claiming that Descartes marks the "invention of the mind" as *mirror* of the world.
5. One exemption might be Lessing's *Laokoon* essay (1776) in which he distinguishes between the visual art's representation of figures and colors in space and the linguistic representation of actions in time. Yet, even this distinction remains governed by the idea of *mimesis*.
6. I thank Paul Franks (2014) for pointing to this passage in Kant's text.
7. Kant's idea of a standpoint, that is an ideal to which we can strive, seems to be Kant's perfectionist side. Paul Guyer specifically does "understand Kant's own moral philosophy as a form of perfectionism, as long as we are clear about what it is that is supposed to be perfected." (Guyer 2014, 196) It is interesting to see how Kant's moral philosophy, often described as dry, entails an element of transformation, almost utopian, in it. Guyer described it in the following way: "But even though the ideas of reason cannot give us theoretical cognition, Kant holds that they can give us *ideals*, that is unique conceptions of how reality *ought to be* rather than determinate cognition of how it *is*. Thus, Kant argues that while the theoretical use of pure reason can only lead to metaphysical illusion, the practical use of pure reason generates the ideals by which we ought to act in transforming the world." (Guyer 2014, 205-206)
8. Kant's example is a salesman who does not overprice his goods. He does so in accordance with the law, but he also has a direct motivation to do so.
9. A crucial point is Kant's distinction between two forms of interest. To have interest in acting according to the moral law, because it provides benefits, is an incitement, to take interest in the moral law is to follow the idea of the realm of Ends. Kant's idea is that morality is something ordinary human beings cannot fail to take an interest in (see GM 449).
10. Richard Eldridge remarks on this point: "The child now becomes an uncanny figure of both the ideal possibility, in its unselfconscious naturalness, and horror, insofar as in its spontaneity it is already one the way into competitive antagonisms." (Eldridge 1997, 81)
11. Gadamer delivers a thorough description of the the history of *Bildung* as one of the "guiding humanistic principles" in his magnum opus *Truth and Method* (Gadamer 1972, 7-16). However, notably, he goes from Herder's idea of an "Emporbildung zur Humanität" ("upbuilding to humanity") directly to Hegel's idea of the human as no natural being, because it is not what it should be, and therefore in need of *Bildung*. But that also means that Gadamer ignores all of Romanticism's writings and Hegel's own influence by these writings.
12. See Lichtenstein's entry on "Bildung" in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie. Band 1: A–C*, edited by Joachim Ritter et al. (1971), pp. 921–927.
13. Eldridge remarks: "Kantian antidogmatism begins by pointing us toward a sense of ourselves both as free and rational inquirers and agents [...] and as beings bound up in a causally determined course of nature. But it then fails to show us how quite to live out these two senses with or against one another." (Eldridge 1997, 61)
14. If Wordworth's poetry demarcates the point when a poem loses its subject, and hence becomes "modern," then this either is the effect or the cause of a loss of interest in "subject," "things," "the

world." Wordsworth e.g. says in his *Prelude*: "all things were to me / Loose and disjointed, and the affections left / Without a vital interest." (Wordsworth 2010, 476)

15. Wittgenstein famously says: "We want to understand something that is already in plain view. For *this* is what we seem in some sense not to understand." (Wittgenstein 1958, 42) And in context of this remark, he claims that his investigation does not look for "appearances" but for the "possibilities of appearances" (Wittgenstein 1958, 42), and therefore does not want to learn anything "new." Wittgenstein, obviously, takes up Kant's transcendental inquiry to look for the conditions of possibility of experience. It is true, since Kant "merely" coasts the island of pure reason, which conditions all experience, he does not make any "new" experiences. In limiting our use of reason, Kant does not teach us anything new. But he also does not just *remind* us of the limits of reason. His mode of informing us about such a condition is *new*.
16. Here is another fragment concerning "interest": "The individual is the only thing of interest, therefore all classical is not individual." (Novalis 1981, 447) What does that mean? That Classicism is not "interesting"? Or incapable of creating interest because it lacks individuality? But Novalis says, Classicism is not individual *because* it lacks interest, which is the opposite of what we would expect. But that can only mean that the individual is the goal and interest is the means to achieve such goal.

Abbreviations for Kant's Works in the text:

CB: *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*
CPR: *Critique of Pure Reason*
GM: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
P: *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*

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Same-Sex Marriage and Equality … Again
The Collectivist Argument

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Abstract:

Williams accepts that McDonough's Logical Argument (MLA) that homosexuals have always had the same marriage rights as heterosexuals, namely the right to marry one eligible adult of the opposite gender, is correct *at the individual level*, but holds that it is wrong at the "collective" level because the homosexual couple *qua* couple is not treated equally with heterosexual couples. The present paper argues that Williams' counterargument fails. First, Williams' argument from analogy, that the right to marry is relevantly analogous to the right to assemble, fails. Second, Williams fails to give any meaning to the view that the homosexual couple *qua* couple marries, which, therefore, turns out to be a misleading way of saying that the individuals that make up the couple marry, which returns one to the individual level at which, Williams admits, there is no inequality. The paper then argues that Williams' "collectivist ascent", coupled with the appeal to equality, commits one to a species of polygamy so extreme that actual polygamists would reject it. Finally, the paper argues that Williams' claim that MLA is inconsistent with an appeal to equality to justify same-sex marriage misunderstands MLA. MLA only argues against the attempt to justify same-sex marriage by simple logical *inference*. It is not inconsistent with the view that same marriage can be *made* an equal right via the democratic process.

Keywords: Same-sex marriage, collective rights, individual rights, polygamy, democratic process

Williams (2011, 589) argues against McDonough's (2005) Logical Argument (hereafter MLA) that same-sex marriage (hereafter SSM) is not an equal rights issue because homosexuals have traditionally had exactly the same right to marry as heterosexuals, namely, the right to marry one other eligible person of the opposite sex. MLA is a response to the editorial in *The Economist* (2004) that the case for SSM begins with equality pure and simple: "Why should one set of loving, consenting adults be denied a right that other adults have and which, if exercised, will do no damage to anyone else". MLA does not argue against SSM. Since it is only directed against one argument, the *Economist's* argument from "equality pure and simple," MLA admits that one might justify SSM by some other means. Williams sees MLA as important because the appeal to equality is the most popular argument for SSM. He mentions Garret (2009a) and (2009b), Mohr (2005), and

several SCOTUS rulings, that appeal to the right to equal treatment under the law. Williams remarks that since he has seen no replies to MLA, it is important to show that it fails (590). In fact, there have now been multiple replies to MLA by Held (2007), (2009), and (2013), Rajcek (2008), Reitan (2014), Drabek (2014), and Chambers (2017) - and McDonough (2019) has replied to them. However, Williams employs an intriguing strategy entirely different from the other critics of MLA, specifically, the view that the right to marry should not be viewed as an individual right but as a *collective* right akin to the right to assemble. Call this Williams' "collectivist ascent"! Like MLA, Williams does not purport to provide any substantive argument for or against SSM. Williams is only making a logical point about MLA (594).

The paper argues that though Williams' "collectivist" argument is intriguing, it also fails. § I summarizes Williams' "collectivist" argument. § II argues that Williams' argument fails to refute MLA. § III argues that on a natural reading, William's "collectivist" *necessitates* that the most extreme sort of polygamy is also justified § IV argues, contra Williams, that MLA is fully *consistent* with the justification of SSM by appeal to equality.

I.) Williams' Argument

Williams admits that it is tempting to dismiss MLA out of hand because it obviously treats people unequally. Williams considers the example of a government policy that allows every resident "the same" right to a transfusion of any of the available blood types: either A, B, or AB blood. Williams argues that MLA is committed to hold that this policy gives all residents the equal right to receive a blood transfusion where it is just unfortunate that people with type O blood miss out (592). Since persons with blood type O are just as deserving as others to get a transfusion, and since, on this policy they are "not permitted" to get one, this is "unjust" (592). However, Williams abandons this argument because there is a major dis-analogy between the inability to get blood transfusions and the inability to marry the person of one's choice. The former can cost one one's life but latter does not.

Williams proposes the following better example and argument. Suppose nation N extends to its citizens the right to assemble, but with a proviso. All citizens are equally entitled to assemble but not with members of their own "ethnicity." Call N's policy on the Right to Assemble, NRA and the argument Williams bases on it "Williams' Argument from NRA" or WNRA! On NRA, a Muslim is entitled to assemble with a Sikh, a Buddhist or a Hindu, but no Muslim would be entitled to assemble with another Muslim, no Sikh with another Sikh, and so on. This "thought experiment", Williams claims, shows that "McDonough's understanding of equality implies, absurdly that the right to assemble [according to NRA] is not a violation of equality" (592). For, although, on NRA, Muslims, Sikh's and all other ethnicities are "equally entitled to assemble with members of other ethnicities, and all citizens of N are equally prohibited from assembling with members of other ethnicities," on a deeper level, NRA "does not entitle Muslim*s* or Sikh*s* to assemble [all italics, Williams]" (592). The italicized "s" on the end of "Muslim*s*" and "Sikh*s*" is crucial to Williams' point. For the two "levels", the more superficial level and

the "deeper" level, are, respectively, the level of individual rights and the level of group rights. Although NRA allows each *individual* Muslim, each individual Sikh, and so on to assemble with *individual* members of other ethnicities, NRA "denies *all* ethnicities *any* right to assemble [all italics Williams']" (592). Since NRA does not entitle even a pair of Muslims, or a pair of Sikhs to assemble with each other, it prevents "every ethnicity from itself assembling" (592-3). Since "assembling is an intrinsically *collective* action because one cannot assemble by oneself", Williams claims that "the right to assemble is best seen as an intrinsically collective right ... that belongs to a social unit or collective ... not to the individual constituents of the collective *qua* individuals" (593). Thus, if X is an intrinsically a *collective* action, X involves rights not possessed by the individual members of X. Call this Williams' "collectivist ascent"! But, this "collectivist" right to assemble is analogous to the right to marry,

> I can no more marry by myself than I can assemble by myself. Marriage is an intrinsically collective institution, as assembling is an intrinsically collective action. ... [and] both proponents and opponents of same-sex marriage see marriage as an institution that *couples* enter [Williams's emphasis]; so strictly speaking, 'married' more accurately describes couples than individuals (593).

From this Williams infers that although on MLA, which he accepts at the individual level, same-sex *individuals* in traditional societies have always had exactly the same marriage rights that homosexual individuals have to marry one eligible adult person of the opposite sex, it is still true that "same sex couples ... are denied the [same] right to marry" that is enjoyed by opposite sex couples in traditional societies (593). Since the inequality cannot be found at the individual level, Williams makes a "collectivist ascent" in order to find it at the higher level. No individual *qua* individual is wronged by traditional marriage, but the homosexual couple *qua* couple is treated unequally.

Williams recognizes that some may object to his claim that the description "married" applies more properly to couples than to individuals. Although one typically says that that Jim, not that Jim-Lucy, is married, when we say that someone, e.g., Jim, is married "it is understood that that he or she is married to someone" (593). Thus, "it makes more sense, *strictly speaking* [emphasis added], to see individuals exercising their right to marry or assemble, not as individuals, but as members of a collective" (593). One *must* make this collectivist ascent because marrying, like assembling, always involves a collective. Thus, in traditional societies, the homosexual *couple*, Bill-and-Bob, do not have the *same* right to marry that the heterosexual couple, Jack-and-Jill do. MLA fails at the level of collective rights.

II.) Reply to Williams

Williams core argument, WNRA, is based on his NRA-example that permits *individual* Muslims, Sikh's, etc., to assemble with anyone *not* in their "ethnic" group but does not permit any of them to assemble with members of their own ethnic group. However, he begins his discussion

by stating that it is tempting to compare MLA with the view that the government policy that allows everyone "the same" right to a transfusion of blood types, A, B, AB, does, in one sense, treat everyone equally even though it effectively, "bars" people with type O blood from receiving blood transfusions. Williams argues that this government policy is "unacceptable," but abandons it because of certain dis-analogies and attempts to develop a better example, NRA, and argument, WNRA, to combat MLA.

Despite the fact that Williams quickly abandons his "argument from blood types," the present author feels Williams gives up on it too easily and for the wrong reason. That is, the fact that the right to get the right blood transfusion is about life and death but the right to marry is *not* relevant to the *logical* point that is at issue. Although the present author believes that this argument also, in the final analysis, fails, but it is *far* more interesting than Williams realizes. However, since Williams abandons the argument from blood types, it is not further considered here.

Consider now Williams' main argument! According to WNRA, NRA gives all citizens the equal right to assemble with the proviso that they cannot assemble with members of their own ethnicity. A Muslim is entitled to assemble with a Sikh, and so on, but not with another Muslim. Note first that Williams states NRA in terms of ethnicities and then gives an example that involves, not ethnicities, but religions, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, etc. This might be a small point except that there is more *emotive* power to a policy that prevents different *religions* from assembling than one that prevents different ethnicities from assembling, e.g., a policy that prevents Muslims from assembling may be more emotional than one that prevents Caucasians from assembling. However, this minor point need not be pursued further here.

There are two main parts to WNRA. In the first part, Williams draws his first set of conclusions about the right of various religions to assemble from his description of NRA. In the second part, he claims that there is an analogy between NRA and MLA's position on equality in order to show that MLA fails. There will, accordingly, be two parts to the present critique of WNRA. Consider William's first set of inferences from NRA!

Williams main conclusions from NRA is that though it allows individual Muslims, individual Sikhs, and so on the *equal* right to assemble, it prevents *all* Muslims, *all* Sikh*s* and so on, each taken *collectively* as groups, from assembling at all! MLA does not allow *any* right to Muslim *groups* qua groups, Sikh *groups* qua groups and so on to assemble. Since Williams finds this intolerable, and since he takes it to follow from MLA, MLA is refuted. But first, is NRA really intolerable, and second, if it is intolerable, is this *because it treats different groups unequally*?

In fact, a social science fiction thought-experiment can be used to illustrate *conditions* in which such a policy makes sense. It is the year 2050 and a certain state N is plagued by massive inter-religious violence so great that the very survival of N itself is threatened by the decimation of its population. It is agreed by the various state and religious leaders that the root cause of the violence is that the different religious groups do not really know each other. Muslims assemble only with Muslims, Sikh's with Sikh's, and so on. As a consequence, each group harbors bizarre

false superstitions about the other groups. N, therefore, issues an edict that for 6 months, at which point it may or may not be renewed, depending on conditions at that time, each citizen in N is permitted to assemble only with members of other groups, not with members of their own. Thus, for the next six months, a dinner party composed of 5 Muslims or 5 Sikh's is not permitted, but a dinner party of one Muslim, one Sikh, one Hindu, one Christian, and one Jew, is permitted. The present author suggests that in these kinds of circumstances, this policy is not intolerable but has a certain plausibility. *Policies must be judged relative to factual conditions on the ground*. However, since Williams only states the policy in the abstract, he mistakenly infers that since it would, *given present conditions* in New York, be intolerable, that it is intolerable *per se*. But this is a mistake. One can imagine conditions in which this kind of policy might make sense.

Next, assuming that, in *current conditions* in 2020 in New York, NRA is seen to be intolerable, is it intolerable because it treats Muslims, Sikh's and so on, *unequally*? The answer is, No. For, even if NRA would be intolerable in contemporary New York, it would not be because it treats any group unequally. For NRA denies the right to group-assembly for all the religions *equally*. Williams purports to show that NRA is intolerable because MLA "implies ... absurdly that the right to assemble that N extends to its citizens is not a violation of equality" (592), but WNRA only attempts to show that it treats the different groups intolerably, not that this intolerability derives from a violation of equal treatment. In fact, if NRA would be judged to be wrong for contemporary New York, it would be *because we value things other than equality*, e.g., the right to pray with members of one's own religion, to take care of family members, to help one's friends, and the like. If NRA is wrong for present day New York, it is because it gets the wrong *balance* of these *various* values – not because of any violation of equal rights.

The second stage of Williams' argument is based on his assertion of an *analogy* between the NRA's policy on the various religion's rights to assemble and MLA's view about a same-sex couple's right to marry. This is really the core of Williams' argument and this part might still have weight even if the prior part does not. The analogy is supposed to be between the Muslim or the Sikh groups on the one hand and the homosexual groups (couples) on the other. Williams claims that just as NRA allegedly discriminates against Muslim *couples*, MLA discriminates against homosexual *couples* because it permits heterosexual *couples* the right to marry but denies that *same* right to homosexual *couples*. For, in the final analysis, all the philosophical subtilities aside, MLA supports the right to marry for heterosexual couples, but "same sex couples are denied the right to marry" (593). Does not Williams' "collectivist ascent" capture this common intuition about the inequality between the two cases?

The first point that must be made about WNRA is that not only is it is based on the problematic notion of collective rights, but that it states an extremely weak criterion for constituting a relevant collective, namely, that the relevant action involves more than one person: "it is understood that that he or she is married to someone." There is, however, much discussion in the literature about what conditions must be satisfied if a collective to be of the right *sort* to

be granted collective rights (which conditions can, in fact, be quite complicated), and, second, about the question whether the notion of group rights is incompatible with the notion of individual rights (Jones 2016, §'s 6-9). Obviously, these thorny issues cannot be settled here, but, to take just one example to illustrate the point, some have argued that the best candidates for group rights are entities that possess some kind of "formal unity", like the US army, the Red Cross, university faculties or business corporations that survive changes in their members (Jones 2016, § 6). Indeed, the present author is sympathetic to the view that there are some conditions in which it is plausible to claim that *some* collectives, e.g., indigenous peoples, might be accorded special collective rights. For example, many indigenous peoples who have not had contact with the global community might be literally wiped out by diseases, like the flu, that are not a serious threat to advanced global civilizations themselves in which most members have developed significant immunity to these diseases. It can, therefore, be argued that such indigenous peoples have a *collective right* to be protected from people who want to build tourist hotels filled with lots of sneezing rich people in their native homelands. However, WNRA's criterion for being a deserving collective, that performing some action (marrying) necessarily involves at least two people, is far too general to justify a claim for collective rights. Although Jones (2016, § 3) says that "No one promiscuously ascribes rights to every kind of group", WNRA employs the *widest possible* criterion for granting collective rights, namely, that *all* collectives (that require people to do things together) deserve collective rights. Thus, on WNRA's criterion, a baseball team, a group of children singing together, and the couple composed of con-artists and their victims all deserve collective rights. After all, if one cons, one must con *someone*. The present author would, therefore, like to see a more sustained rigorous attempt to develop the view that homosexual *couples* (that is the "collective" Williams identifies), on the basis of very *specific* criteria, deserve to accorded certain collective rights. Note, by the way, that this would be different from the attempt to develop the view that homosexuals (as a group) deserve some kind of collective rights. In any case, WNRA is *far* too generous at granting collective rights. With that preliminary remark out of the way, let is proceed to WNRA itself!

First, William's claim that "same sex couples are denied the right to marry" is misleading. When, in everyday language, one says that A gets married, one means that A marries someone other than itself, thereby forming a new entity. That is, marriage involves a coming together of two antecedently separate entities, e.g., Jack and Jill, who, by getting married, produce a new union, the married couple, Jack-and-Jill, that is treated as a unit for certain purposes (community property, income tax, etc.). Since Williams treats the homosexual couple as a collective (the couple denied the right to marry), one must, following this logic of everyday language, identify two separate entities, each of which exists antecedent to the marriage that, with the marriage, produces a new entity, a new union, with new properties. So, what are the two separate entities that exist antecedent to WNRA's proposed homosexual marriage, which, by marrying, form a new union after the marriage? Unfortunately, there are no obvious choices here.

It is useful to illustrate this using a *concrete* example. Suppose the proposed homosexual couple who want to get married is John and Bob. The proposed two entities who are denied the right to marry cannot be John and Bob themselves because Williams' admits that MLA has shown that at the individual level heterosexual and homosexuals *are* treated equally. That is the whole motivation for William's "collectivist ascent". Suppose, therefore, it is claimed that the relevant couple is the *unmarried* couple, John-and-Bob. Williams has said that it is the homosexual couple qua couple, John-and-Bob, that is denied the right to marry. So who, or what, does it want to marry? For if marriage requires two *antecedently* existing *separate* entities that, with the marriage, produce a new union, and the unmarried couple, John-and-Bob, is one of those antecedently existing entities, the couple that wants to get married, who or what is the other one? Williams has not identified any antecedently existing separate entity for that couple *qua* couple, to marry. That option does not work. Perhaps one claims, therefore, that the homosexual couple *qua* couple marries itself (and that this happens somehow when the *individuals* John and Bob exchange vows). But this will not do because one still requires two separate antecedently existing entities to marry and with this option one only has one, the couple *qua* couple, John-and-Bob. The fact that it marries itself does not somehow turn this one couple into two antecedently existing *separate* entities. Finally, might one claim, in desperation, that it is the *married* homosexual couple, John-and-Bob, that is denied the right to marry? But this will also clearly not work. Since marriage requires two antecedently existing separate entities that, with the marriage, form a new union, and since the married couple John-and-Bob came into being with the marriage, that married couple, John-and-Bob, does not satisfy the requirement of separate *antecedent* existence.

The plain reason why every effort to find some antecedently existing separate entity for the homosexual couple *qua* couple to marry fails is that the talk about the homosexual couple *qua* couple being denied the right to marry is really only a *misleading* way of describing the fact that the two *individuals*, John and Bob, are denied the right to marry. Thus, Williams has not given any meaning to his claim that the homosexual couple *qua* couple is denied the right to marry. In order to do so, he would need to identify a separate antecedently existing entity for that couple *qua* couple to marry. In brief, Williams is faced with a dilemma. If he says that it is the couple *qua* couple, John-and-Bob, that wants to marry, he cannot provide the antecedently existing separate entity that this couple *qua* couple, is supposed to marry. And since there is nothing for this couple *qua* couple to marry, there is no basis for saying that the couple *qua* couple is being treated unequally or unjustly. If Rob has a deed that entitles him to Jason's Golden Fleece and demands that he be given the Golden Fleece, but there never was any Golden Fleece, then Jason is not being treated unequally or unjustly when he is denied the right to have the Golden Fleece. But if Williams says that for the couple *qua* couple to get married just is for the individuals who make it up to marry, then one is back to the individuals that, Williams admits, possess exactly the same marriage rights as heterosexuals. In this case, Williams' claim that, "strictly speaking," it is the couple *qua* couple that gets married turns

out to be a misleading way of saying that the individuals that make up the couple get married (Griffin 2008, 256-276). WNRA fails.

In summary, Williams' WNRA against MLA, built on his example, NRA, fails. First, one can imagine social conditions in which NRA would not be intolerable. Second, even if one considers NRA being applied in current conditions, say in New York, it may treat Muslims intolerably, but it would also treat Sikh's and Hindu's *equally* intolerably. Williams confuses between the claim that NRA is intolerable in certain circumstances and the claim that it is intolerable *because it violates some principle of equal treatment under the law.* Next, in the most important part of WNRA, Williams asserts an analogy between the right to assemble and the homosexual couples right to marry. First, however, Williams has provided no argument that the homosexual couple *qua* couple that, perhaps like indigenous peoples, constitutes the special *kind* of collective that deserves collective rights. His claim that if one marries one must marry someone adopts the *weakest possible* criterion for being such a collective, so weak that it includes baseball players and the couple composed of con artists and their victims. Second, his central claim that the homosexual couple *qua* couple is denied the right to marry is misleading. For, following everyday language, one must be able to identify some entity for the homosexual couple qua couple to marry. But no such entity can be specified. The view that the homosexual couple *qua* couple is denied the right to marry turns out just to be a misleading way of saying that the two homosexual *individuals* are denied the right to marry. But Williams has already admitted that there is no inequality at that individual level. Although the present author is intrigued by the notion of "collective rights" for homosexual couples, or, perhaps, for homosexuals as a collective, Williams has not yet provided those arguments.

III.) The Slippery Slope to Polygamy

Williams bemoans the fact that discussions of same-sex marriage often devolves into arguments of polygamy, that is, the introduction of a slippery slope argument that if one allows same sex-marriage then surely polygamy (and perhaps other horrors) is next (593). However, it is Williams' "collectivist ascent", combined with the appeal to equality, that makes the accusation of a slippery slope to an argument for polygamy inevitable.

In the previous section it is argued that since Williams has not identified any entity that a couple *qua* couple could marry, he has not given any meaning to his notion that the homosexual couple *qua* couple is denied the right to marry. However, the idea of the couple *qua* couple marrying is not nonsensical in itself. One can imagine a society, not ours, perhaps, but some "brave new world" in the "enlightened" future in which, not just individuals, but couples *qua* couples, can marry. One might fill out the parameters for the new types of marriages in this science fiction thought-experiment in many different ways, so only a few can be sketched here. Consider first the simplest type of case. In future society S, not just individuals, like Jack and Jill, can get married, but couples, like Jack-and-Jill, can marry. Who, or what, might the couple *qua couple*, Jack-and-Jill,

marry? In the simplest case, Jack-and-Jill might marry some individual, e.g., Jack-and-Jill might marry Susan. In this case, one can identify two separate entities that exist antecedent to the "marriage", the couple *qua* couple, Jack-and-Jill, and Susan, which, by marrying, create a new union, Jack-and-Jill-and-Susan, that did not exist prior to the marriage. Further, Jack-and-Jill-and-Susan *qua* triple might have legal rights, property rights, etc., that none of the antecedently existing individuals, Jack, Jill, and Susan, or couples *qua* couples, Jack-and-Jill, had.

The second more complicated kind of case is that S's rules permit couples to marry other couples. If this is permitted, Jack-and-Jill might marry Brad-and-Angelina. In this case, one antecedently existing couple *qua* couple, Jack-and-Jill, marries another antecedently existing couple *qua* couple, Brad-and-Angelina, to form a new union, Jack-and-Jill-and-Brad-and-Angelina, that has new rights, e.g., property rights, not had by any of the antecedently existing individuals or couples *qua* couples.

Once one goes down this collectivist road, however, of allowing couples *qua* couples to marry other individuals or other couples *qua* couples, there is literally no end to the exotic permutations of the marriage-institution that can be "logically" generated. For example, one can imagine that Jack-and-Jill *qua* couple only wish to marry Susan on the understanding that Susan is not permitted to marry Bob. That is only the beginning. One can also imagine that Jack-and-Jill *qua* couple marry Susan to form the triple Jack-and-Jill-and-Susan, but Susan goes on to marry Amy, with the result that Susan is part of two marriages, Jack-and-Jill-and-Susan and Susan-and-Amy, but Jack and Jill have no marital connection with Amy. The permutations and possibilities here are literally infinite. For once one *genuinely* gives meaning to the view that the couple *qua couple* is the "collective" unitary agency that possesses rights to get married, one is faced with the limitless potential for different exotic combinations of marital relationships, so extreme that actual polygamists would not accept it.

One could, of course, put a stop to this infinite regress with some *ad hoc* decision. Society S, recognizing the impracticability of these limitless permutations, and the potentially infinite amount of profitable new work for lawyers, might legislate that only traditional marriages between individuals and individuals and marriages between couples and couples are permitted. Call the marriages between couples and couples "first level marriages"! On this arrangement, only traditional marriages (between two individuals *qua* individuals) and "first-level" marriages between two couples *qua* couples are permitted. However, if S did establish such a law, it would then soon find itself challenged on the grounds that if Jack-and-Jill are permitted to marry Brad-and-Angelina to form a new quadruped marriage, Jack-and-Jill-and-Brad-and-Angelina, then Dave-and-Mary-and-Jeb-and-Felicia will be treated *unequally* when they are not permitted to marry Harry-and-Alice-and-Peter-and-Joan to form a new marital octuple marriage Dave-and-Mary-and-Jeb-and-Felicia-and-Harry-and-Alice-and-Peter-and-Joan. After all, Dave-and-Mary-and-Ralph-and-Felicia on the one hand and Harry-and-Alice-and-Peter-and-Joan on the other will, following the instructions laid out clearly in *The Economist*, claim that "the case for allowing [these two four-person marriages to marry] begins with equality pure and simple. Why should one loving, consenting set of adults

be denied a right that other such adults have and which, if exercised, will do no damage to anyone else?". *The Economist* editorial, from the beginning, referenced a "loving set of adults". It did not limit the "set" to couples. The argument for polygamy is implicit in the simplistic formulation in the 2004 *Economist* editorial.

To be clear, Williams does not propose such exotic possibilities himself. However, it is Williams' "collectivist ascent," coupled with the appeal to equality, that makes this *dialectical* advance into polygamous marriage inevitable. For it is a consequence of Williams' "collectivist ascent" that the couple *qua* couple is a new higher-level unitary entity with *new* "collective" rights to marry over and about the rights of the individuals involved, coupled with the appeal to equality, that leads to this chaos of polygamous possibilities. For since these new higher level entities, couples *qua* couples, have the right to marry, and since one can only marry an antecedently existing couple other than oneself, and since no one in this discussion has raised the possibility of marrying non-human entities, it follows that these new couples *qua* couples have the right, based on an appeal to equality, to enter into polygamous marriages. Further, since this same principle can, in order to satisfy the requirement of equal treatment to all, be applied again to these new higher-level collectivist marital groups, consisting, say, of eight individuals, and then, again to yet higher level collectives and so on *ad infinitum*, there is, in principle, no limit on the size of the polygamous marriages that must, *on grounds of equality*, be permitted. The potential proliferation of n-tuple sized marriages, for any n, is, of course, impossible to satisfy in the real world. No society could in *practice* possibly deal with such "logically" generated social chaos. It is necessary to think through the *unintended* logical consequences of one's well-intentioned principles.

It was pointed out in § II above that in the literature on collective rights many restrictions and conditions are suggested that must be satisfied if a given collective is to be considered eligible to be granted collective rights. This is, in part, because the "collectivist ascent", though, perhaps, justified in some cases (e.g., indigenous peoples), is a fraught with problems, e.g., the proliferation of practically unworkable exotic new species of marriage. The slippery slope to polygamy is only one of them.

IV.) Salvaging the Appeal to Equality

One of Williams' main claims is that MLA undermines the popular "appeal to equality" normally used in attempted justifications of SSM. In fact, MLA is entirely consistent with the appeal to equality in this and other ethical cases. In order to see why, note that Williams' several times in the paper refers to "McDonough's understanding of equality". In fact, McDonough has no understanding of equality (apologies to McDonough). For MLA is only directed against the appeal to a certain *abstract* notion of equality handed him by *The Economist* ("equality pure and simple"). MLA does not purport to provide any general analysis or theory of equality. MLA only opposes the creation of new rights via *illegitimate* "logical" inferences, but there *are* other legitimate ways to create new rights.

Wittgenstein (1958, 186) asked what we would say when someone G who had always added "2" like the rest of us (e.g., added "2" to "2" to get "4", added "2" to "96" to get "98" and so on), suddenly, when they got to "1000" began adding "2" to "1000" to get "1004", "2" to "1260" to get "1264" and so on - and, when asked why they were not doing the "same" as they had done before, answered, "but that is the *same*". Similarly, what would we say when, for three thousand years, people have nearly universally understood a marriage as a union of one man and one woman, but are suddenly told by someone F that henceforth one is to count a union of one man and one man, or of one woman and one woman, as a marriage – and when F is asked why s/he is not doing the same thing people have always done before, answers, "But that is the *same*. We are just treating the cases *equally*." How is one to resolve such questions? Wittgenstein (1958, 197) appeals to "regular use" or *established practices* to explain his mathematical *criterion* for how one is "to go on" adding. That is, he would, appealing to *established practices*, say that that G is *not* adding *correctly*. Note that there is something essentially *conservative* about Wittgenstein's view. If one follows that model in ethical cases, one should say that the proponents of SSM do not apply the word "marriage" *correctly* when they "go on" to describe a union of a male and a male as a "marriage". However, although Wittgenstein's appeal to his conservative criteria may be correct in mathematics, things are not that simple in ethics. For one *must*, obviously, permit the possibility of change in our ethical categories. One must, therefore, ask, where do our various categories, e.g., that "4" is the "sum" of "2" plus "2", that a "marriage" is a union of one man and one woman, come from? They do not, so to speak, "fall from heaven" on some luminous tablets.

Wittgenstein (25, 415), in his discussion of mathematical addition, refers one to "the natural history of man." However, that highly general remark does not give one much guidance outside that limited domain. Since, as human products, there is nothing *sacred* about our established ethical categories, they can be changed, and, in fact, there are ways we appeal to established practice, but in a more complicated way, to change our ethical categories. We do not look only at what people have done in "the natural history of man". We also look at established practices for determining what people ought to do. Specifically, in "liberal democracies", we appeal to a *higher-level* established practice, namely, "the democratic process". For, although many philosophers seem to think that the argument for SSM is an argument that we must make different *inferences*, as if it were a class exercise, it is, in fact, an argument that we should start to *live* in major different ways, and the appropriate means for that sort of change is the democratic process. This has already been done successfully in the case of SSM. In 2015, to everyone's surprise, Roman Catholic Ireland, when the authorities condescended to appeal to "the people" in a national referendum, legalized SSM by a compelling majority. Of course, there will be *countless* sorts of considerations that go into a "people's" decisions in such controversial cases, certainly nothing so simple as a single logical inference, especially one that is so "pure and simple" as the one originally proposed by *The Economist*.

The democratic process is not, however, held in high esteem in some quarters these days. It is slow. It is, like all human things, fallible. It may even go backwards at times. Worst of all, it

does not keep up with intellectual fashions. For, in a democratic process, one must actually try to convince "the people," or at least a broad swath of them, and that includes, not only the intellectuals, but also Tolstoy's (1978, 65-66) "the poor, the simple, and the ignorant, the pilgrims, the monks ...and the peasants". One might add the steelworkers, the taxi drivers, and the cashiers. Since it is not nearly so easy to convince such a diverse group of people to make such a controversial change in categories as it is to convince the students class, it is always tempting to try an end-run around "the people" by means of some newly discovered "logical" inference, preferably one so simple that even a child can see it (even though, astonishingly, no one in 3,000 years of recorded human history ever noticed it until prompted, recently, after the genesis of a political movement, by their teachers). But if the democratic process is fallible, so are human inferences, especially the ones that are so "pure and simple". As Camus (1956, 3) observed, with existential anguish, "philosophy ... can be used for any purpose". By contrast, since changing people's *hearts*, in a free and fair democratic process involves, not just intellectual exercises, but the sort of *wisdom* that only comes about as the result of extensive life experiences concerning *countless* matters that cannot be reduced to some single "simple" inference, it is very hard. But that is precisely why it can be trusted more than simple intellectual maneuvers. This is no argument against the contributions of intellectuals. The reasonings that emerge from philosophy and sociology classrooms can be a *necessary* and *wonderful* contribution to the culture. But the genius of democracy is that the wisdom of a vastly diverse group of people is a good counterbalance to the trendy intellectual fashions ("equality pure and simple").

Thus, MLA raises no objection whatsoever when the Irish *changed the categories* and *made* SSM an equal right in 2015. MLA only attempts to make a "little" logical point against the simplistic appeal to "equality pure and simple" (McDonough 2019). This consecration of SSM as an equal right in Ireland fell, not from heaven, but from the somber deliberations of "a people". Thus, for that fraction in the rest of the world that still believes, that is, *genuinely* believes, in democracy, the best way to ensure that *true* and *lasting* justice for our "gay" brothers and sisters is by achieving victory in the "rough and tumble" of the democratic process.[1]

Endnotes:

1. In 2004 Americans opposed same sex marriage by a ratio of 60% opposing it to 31% supporting it. By 2019 that ratio had virtually reversed with 61% supporting same sex marriage and 31% opposing it. "Attitudes on Same Sex Marriage: Public Opinions on Same Sex Marriage". *Pew Research Center: Religion and Public Life* Fact Sheet. May 14, 2019. URL: https://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/

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Condoning Wrongdoing

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Abstract:

It is widely acknowledged that condoning the wrongdoing of others can itself be worthy of moral blame. Accusations of someone's condoning the wrongdoing of others have become relatively common in public discourse. But it is not always clear what exactly is meant by these accusations or how the alleged condoning of others qualifies as morally blameworthy. I attempt to shed some light upon the notion of condoning wrongdoing, to contrast it with other related moral concepts, to explore the manner in which it can qualify as morally blameworthy, and to argue that in some instances it is not actually blameworthy.

Keywords: Condoning, Wrongdoing, Enabling, Facilitating, Condemning, Blameworthy, Inaction

It is widely acknowledged that condoning the wrongdoing of others can itself be worthy of moral blame. Accusations of someone's condoning the wrongdoing of others have become relatively common in public discourse (for example, in October, 2018 both Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi charged that President Trump condoned physical violence). But it is not always clear what exactly is meant by these accusations or how the alleged condoning of the wrongdoing of others qualifies as morally blameworthy. Here I will attempt to shed some light upon the notion of condoning wrongdoing, to contrast it with other related moral concepts, to explore the manner in which it can qualify as morally blameworthy, and to argue that in some instances it is not actually blameworthy.

The basic idea involved in condoning the wrongdoing of another is that one is aware that wrongdoing has taken place (and this would include the wrongful intent to commit wrongdoing), one realizes that the wrongdoing deserves blame, and that one finds no good reason to cast blame upon the wrongdoer in any manner. The wrongdoing might consist of a single act, a cluster of acts, or a pattern of actions over a period of time. Definitions from a variety of dictionaries include the following: To disregard or overlook, to give tacit approval, and to disregard without protest or censure. The most elaborate definition in the literature is provided by Murphy and Hampton who define 'condonation' as the acceptance, without moral protest (either inward or outward) of an

action which ought to warrant such protest, made possible, first, by ridding oneself of the judgment that the action is wrong, so that its performer cannot be a wrongdoer, and, second, by ridding oneself of any attendant feelings (such as those which are involved in resentment) which signify one's protest of the action (Murphy and Hampton 1988, 40).

Fundamental to the notion of condoning is that it is dependent upon the reality that someone has in fact engaged in wrongdoing. I am in no position to condone someone's alleged wrongdoing if wrongdoing has not actually taken place. When two people are rehearsing a violent scene for a dramatic production, I might not realize that a rehearsal is taking place, become convinced that one of them is guilty of wrongdoing, decide to say nothing, and I might judge that I have condoned the wrongdoing. But I would be mistaken, for it is not possible to condone wrongdoing that does not exist. It is possible that I am blameworthy for something else, deciding not to say anything when confronted with what I believe to be wrongdoing, but that is not the same thing as being blameworthy for condoning wrongdoing.

One must be aware that wrongdoing has taken place if one can truly be judged to have condoned the wrongdoing. If I am totally unaware that someone has caused harm, I am in no position to condone it, On the other hand, to insist that a necessary condition of condoning wrongdoing is that one knows that the wrongdoing has taken place is to insist on a condition that is too strong. In some situations true belief that the wrongdoing has taken place may suffice to place one in a position to condone the wrongdoing. (Although one must believe that wrongdoing has taken place to be eligible to condone it, one might not believe that what has taken place *is* wrongdoing. All that is required is that one believes that what has taken place would generally be considered wrongdoing by societal standards.) If I come to believe that one of my children has stolen something and my suspicion is true but I lack the right sort of evidence to know that it is true, I can arguably condone this wrongdoing by shrugging my shoulders and saying nothing. More on this example in what follows.

Normally condoning takes the form of inaction, and normally it takes the form of inaction that is deliberate. There are, however, cases in which condoning can involve overt action. In a supermarket another shopper is placing handfuls of candy in her purse. When she realizes that I am watching, I smile and make a gesture that conveys affirmation of her actions.

In this example she is made aware that I condone her wrongdoing, but it is not a necessary feature of condoning that the wrongdoer realizes that someone else condones his or her actions. I might observe the shoplifter from a distance, admire her audacity to do so in a public place, and condone her wrongdoing on the basis of the admiration. This is not to say that I have done anything morally blameworthy, for, as I shall later argue, not all instances of condoning someone else's wrongdoing qualify as morally blameworthy.

Griswold draws a distinction between two kinds of condoning (Griswold 2007, 46-47). One kind of condoning consists of accepting and not disapproving of conduct, and the other kind consists of disapproving of conduct but tolerating it. The first kind is exemplified by observing

a person parking illegally in a spot reserved for the handicapped when all of the other spots in the same lot are occupied. I accept the driver's conduct without disapproving of it. The second kind is exemplified by hearing a senior level executive in the firm where I work humiliating one of my co-workers in front of the entire department. I find this behavior appalling, but I tolerate it in that I do not stand up for my co-worker in front of everyone else.

Condoning someone else's wrongdoing is weaker than enabling someone else's wrongdoing Elsewhere (Mellema 2016, 46) I have defined the notion of enabling as follows. Suppose that moral agent A intentionally acts in such a way as to cause or produce harmful outcome O. Then moral agent B can be said to enable the production of O just in case A's acts would not produce O were it not for B's action, and B is aware that this action may contribute to O's occurrence. In this way B's action is a necessary condition of A's producing outcome O in the manner that A produces it. Condoning someone else's wrongdoing comes nowhere near this level of participation or involvement.

Condoning someone else's wrongdoing is also weaker than facilitating someone else's wrongdoing. Elsewhere (Mellema 2016, 55) I have defined the notion of facilitating as follows. Assume that a moral agent has decided to perform act A as a means to producing harm H. Then another agent facilitates the first agent's wrongdoing by increasing the antecedent likelihood that either A is successfully performed or that H is brought about by the performance of A, and doing so in a manner that is morally blameworthy. The basic idea is that one facilitates someone else's production of harm by making it more likely that the person produces the harm in question.

It is important to recognize that one can facilitate harm through one's inaction. A manager in a large financial institution learns that a co-worker has been dispensing insider information to selected clients and plans to do so again. The manager is in a position to alert federal authorities, senior officers in the organization, or to confront the co-worker, but does none of these. The inaction of the manager makes it more likely that the co-worker will dispense insider information in the future and hence qualifies as facilitating the co-worker's wrongdoing (wrongdoing which harms other shareholders).

Although facilitating someone's wrongdoing is a stronger notion than condoning someone's wrongdoing, there is some overlap between the two notions. One who condones another's wrongdoing does not normally do anything to make the harm more likely to occur. But neither does one who facilitates wrongdoing by way of inaction. It is the inaction that makes harm more likely to occur; the person does not *do* anything to make the harm more likely to occur (other than, of course, deciding not to do anything). Hence one who condones the wrongdoing of someone who produces harm might at the same time facilitate that person's production of harm. Accordingly, the manager in the previous paragraph not only facilitates the co-worker's production of harm but also condones what the co-worker does.

What is the point at which condoning someone else's wrongdoing itself becomes morally blameworthy? I believe it is at the point where one is morally expected not to turn a blind eye to the wrongdoing of another. Now moral expectation is a weaker notion than moral obligation or

duty. Whenever one has a moral obligation to perform an action, one likewise is morally expected to perform it. But the reverse is not true. On can be morally expected to perform an action and lack a moral obligation to perform it. Suppose, for example, that after paying for your purchases at a certain store, you are standing by the door waiting for the heavy rain to diminish. Suddenly a woman with her arms full of packages approaches with the intent of entering the store. It is very easy for you to open the door for her and, under the circumstances, you can be expected to do so. Not doing so does not qualify as the failure of moral obligation; it is the failure of moral expectation and would be at least mildly blameworthy.

Applying the concept of moral expectation to the topic of condoning wrongdoing, the following principle emerges: When and only when one is morally expected not to turn a blind eye toward the wrongdoing of another, one's condoning the wrongdoing is morally blameworthy. Suppose one is in a public park and observes a stranger fishing in a small lake nearby a sign that explicitly forbids fishing. It is reasonable to suppose that one is not morally expected to express displeasure to the person who is fishing. On the other hand, when I suspect that one of my children has stolen something, I can be morally expected to do more than simply shrugging my shoulders and saying nothing. If I follow this course of inaction, then my condoning what my child did (and recall that my suspicion is founded on truth) is morally blameworthy.

Social roles play a part in determining whether one can be morally expected not to turn a blind eye to someone else's wrongdoing. As a parent, I can be morally expected to be concerned about the consequences of my children's behavior (when they are young) to the extent that I not condone this behavior when it is more than slightly wrongful. If I were a paid employee of the park, I could be expected to approach the man who is fishing and request that he remove his line from the water. And if I were a teacher on playground duty, I could be expected to stop a child from bullying a smaller child.

When I condone someone else's wrongdoing by way of inaction, the inaction must be deliberate. Suppose that I observe someone's wrongdoing, I make a decision to reproach the person, but there is no opportunity to do so. In this example my failure to reproach the person is not deliberate and hence does not constitute condoning the person's wrongdoing.

One might suppose that reproaching someone regarding his or her wrongdoing is a sufficient condition for not condoning it. But this is not the case. Consider a situation where a child's misbehavior strikes his father as hilarious; perhaps the child makes a brilliantly witty but disrespectful comment to a pompous, obnoxious adult in a public place. The father feels obliged to reprimand his child, but inwardly he condones what his child did, delighted than an arrogant, insufferable adult was made to look foolish in front of others as the result of his child's wit.

This example shows that it is possible to condone someone's wrongdoing in one's heart. Although one reveals no outward signs of a condoning attitude or disposition, one inwardly is not in the least inclined to condemn the other's wrongdoing. Refusing to condone another's wrongdoing, on the other hand, is frequently a matter of both a person's outward actions and

interior feelings or dispositions. When I refuse to condone another's wrongdoing, I am typically motivated to take action to communicate this sentiment to the wrongdoer. If there is no opportunity to do so, as in the earlier example, other options are available. Suppose that a husband and wife in a restaurant observe an angry man shouting obscenities at the cashier on his way out the door. The husband and wife express agreement that his behavior is deplorable, and in this manner they make it evident that neither one condones what the man is doing.

Sometimes it is fear that prevents one from expressing displeasure concerning another's wrongdoing. If the wrongdoer is a stranger with a weapon, it might be highly imprudent to confront the person. But the failure to confront the person does not mean that one condones the stranger's behavior. Whether or not one condones this behavior is dependent upon one's feelings concerning the behavior. A condemnatory attitude or state of mind is almost always sufficient to guarantee that one does not condone the behavior in question, just as a feeling of approval concerning someone else's wrongdoing is normally a sufficient condition for ensuring that one condones it, assuming that one realizes that the other's behavior constitutes wrongdoing.

If a feeling of condemnation is normally sufficient to guarantee that one does not condone the behavior in question and a feeling of approval is normally sufficient to guarantee that one does condone it, what about feelings that are located in the intermediate zone between these two poles? Suppose that I observe another's wrongdoing, I am quite distracted by other thoughts, I barely have an opportunity to register feelings about the wrongdoing one way or another, thereby feeling neither a sense of approval nor a sense of condemnation, and I say or do nothing in reaction to it. Have I condoned the other's wrongdoing?

First, in cases of this type I might have no clear grasp of the nature of the wrongdoing in question, and I might not even recognize that what I am observing is wrongdoing at all. Under these conditions I am in no position to condone the wrongdoing. If I am at work and see two co-workers quarreling in a heated manner, I may suspect that wrongdoing has taken place but have no idea what it is. Thus, if I have barely had an opportunity to register feelings about the wrongdoing one way or another, it is possible that my awareness of the wrongdoing is not such that condoning is even feasible.

A second possibility is that, although I recognize that wrongdoing has taken place, I am uncertain as to the identity of the wrongdoing. Now in some cases it is possible to condone wrongdoing when uncertain as to the identity of the wrongdoer. Suppose that I know that one of my two children has broken a lamp in someone else's house. In this example it would be sensible to speak to both of them in order to learn which of them is guilty of breaking the lamp, and it would be irresponsible to throw my hands up in despair and say nothing. On the other hand, if wrongdoing has occurred in a public place and I am not sure of the identity of the wrongdoer, my failure to say or do anything does not rise to the level of condoning it.

On the basis of these considerations we might conclude that condoning wrongdoing does not take place unless one has a clear grasp and awareness of the nature of the wrongdoing and

the identity of the wrongdoer (with very few exceptions). In addition, if one barely notices the wrongdoing through no fault of one's own it is highly unlikely that one is in a position to condone it.

Sometimes one has a clear grasp of the nature of the wrongdoing as well as an awareness of the identity of the wrongdoing, but someone else is in a much better position to speak to the wrongdoer. In a store a child is angry and begins throwing merchandise on the floor. The child's parent is present and begins disciplining the child. If I have disapprovingly observed the child's behavior and also observed the parent's subsequent actions, I can be excused from saying or doing anything, and it would not be fair to accuse me of condoning the child's behavior.

Even if one qualifies as condoning the wrongdoing in cases where one does not approve of the behavior in question, it is far from clear that such condoning is worthy of moral blame. Recall that nothing is morally blameworthy when one condones another's wrongdoing, unless one can be morally expected to condemn it in some manner (including in one's heart). Frequently people condone the wrongful behavior they observe by others in situations where they are not expected no condemn the behavior. I observe a total stranger parking illegally. I am mildly amused and smile at the driver, indicating that I am not condemning what she did. But since I am not morally expected to chastise her, I am not blameworthy.

Second order condoning takes place when one condones someone else's condoning the wrongdoing of a third party. Imagine that a grandmother observes her daughter being treated horribly by the daughter's teenage son. He is treating his mother in a shockingly disrespectful manner, and his mother permits him to get away with it, thereby condoning his behavior. The grandmother, who by all rights should have a condemnatory attitude toward both her grandson's behavior and his mother's allowing him to get away with it, finds the situation amusing and in turn condones her daughter's condoning his behavior.

Sometimes a person causes somebody else to condone the behavior of a third party. Suppose that I am a mid-level manager in a financial institution and I come to learn that an employee in my department has engaged in questionable financial behavior. Before I have a chance to confront the employee, I am ordered by one of my superiors to ignore the situation, and I do as I am told. I do not particularly have condemnatory feelings toward the employee or what he did, and in the end I condone his behavior. In this set of circumstances I am no doubt not blameworthy for condoning the employee's behavior.

Condoning wrongful behavior can take the form of condoning the behavior of several individuals. Suppose that a large family lives in the house next door to mine, and it is obvious that their dog is suffering from starvation and neglect. Depending upon my reaction to the situation, it is possible for me to condone the wrongdoing. If so, I am condoning the wrongdoing of more than just a single individual.

It might be observed that my analysis sets a rather low bar for what counts as condoning the behavior of another. One might question whether someone condones the man's fishing in the park or the person parking illegally in a space reserved for the handicapped if one does not at least

register a negative attitude or feeling regarding such activity. This might especially be the case if there are others present who observe the activity and could potentially express disapproval. According to my analysis, the presence of other observers who condone wrongdoing has no effect on one's own situation. One who judges that I have condoned wrongdoing need not revise the judgment upon learning that others likewise condoned the same wrongdoing (it is different if someone else present *refuses* to condone it, as in the example of the mother who disciplines her child).

Here I reiterate the principle that condoning someone else's wrongdoing is morally blameworthy only if one is expected to at least feel disapproval. There can be multiple instances throughout the course of a day in which I observe wrongdoing, condone it, but escape being morally blameworthy for doing so. In these instances my condoning the wrongdoing is innocent of moral blame. Thinking of condoning wrongdoing as something that is frequently innocent from a moral perspective is not something that seems to have attracted attention in discussions about condoning wrongdoing, but it is a point that certainly deserves emphasis.

As to whether it is possible to condone one's own wrongdoing, I am inclined to judge that one can condone such wrongdoing if it occurred in the past. Suppose that someone tells me that I should be ashamed of what I did, and I respond truthfully that I am not in the least ashamed. Assuming that what I did was indeed a wrongdoing, I can be said to condone it. Whether my condoning it is blameworthy, of course, is another question altogether. What I do not think possible is my condoning a wrongdoing that I am planning for the future, for it does not yet exist.

In conclusion, there is a growing body of literature on the relationship between forgiving and condoning. More specifically, some have advanced the view that condoning can sometimes qualify as one type of forgiveness. Here I shall simply observe that this view has a certain appeal and the discussion it has generated is for the most part quite intriguing, but it lies outside the scope of this paper.

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Metaphysics in a Black Hole: Technology and the Unfathomable

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Abstract:

Voltaire stated in 1764 that "almost everything is imitation", a line of thinking which would endure throughout philosophy. Over 200 years later, a similar sentiment was made by Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle* in 1967, by which time imitation had, for Debord, become reality: "all that was once directly lived has become mere representation". The intermediary role that technology plays in our relationship with reality has been the focus of many philosophers, including Martin Heidegger, Don Ihde, Hubert Dreyfus and Albert Borgmann, all of whom are discussed in this paper. While scientific discourse often treats technology as a pillar of precision that promises greater access to an essential reality—as evidenced by the first image of a black hole in 2019—philosophers remain anxious about technology's alienating effects. From Galileo's telescope and the desire to replace the human eye, to the "appification" of everyday life, this paper explores the metaphysical tensions that plague science and technology as instruments for retrieving a "lost" reality, and the limits of depicting the world—and the universe—through technology.

Keywords: metaphysics, reality, technology, astronomy, black holes, photography, augmented reality, virtual reality, apps

"Fathomless dark creation"

On April 10, 2019, NASA made history by capturing the first ever photograph of a black hole, located in the Messier 87 galaxy, approximately 53.49 million light years from earth (Figure 1). Using a network of eight telescopes around the world—known collectively as the Event Horizon Telescope—the image revealed the distorted, fiery components of the black hole and its event horizon—the point at which light cannot escape. Many onlookers joked that the black hole resembled the Eye of Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings*. While it has no official name, language professor Larry Kimura bequeathed the supermassive black hole a Hawaiian name—*Powehi*—meaning "the adorned fathomless dark creation." The name has been welcomed by many scientists, especially since two of the project's telescopes were in Hawaii.

Although efforts had previously been made to capture the black hole (and indirect images of black holes did exist, such as the ones from Chandra X-Ray Observatory) the instruments to do so were not strong enough to produce a clear enough image. The Event Horizon Telescope,

however, gave a much clearer (and more disconcerting) image. Astrophysicist Andrew Strominger tellingly described the upgrade of technology: "It's like going from a cheap smartphone camera to a high definition IMAX cinema" (cited in Chen, 2019).

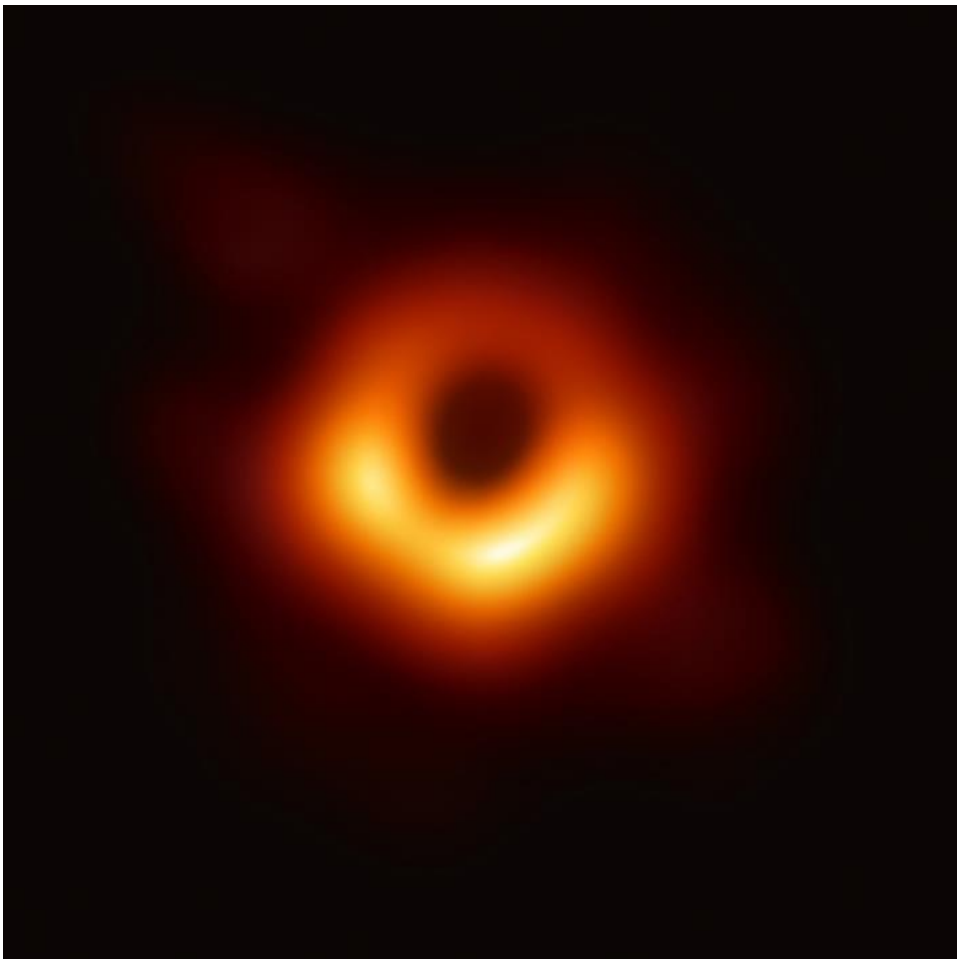

Figure 1: Black hole – Messier 87 (CC BY 4.0)

The image completes a holy trinity of monumental scientific images that includes Pale Blue Dot and Earthrise. Collectively, these images are more intrinsically metaphysical than they are strictly scientific; they tell us of our place in the universe, as well as the ultimate fate of the universe and the apparent fate of humanity. They serve to communicate our insignificance, while also reminding us of the fragility of being.

But the image captured of the black hole differs in a significant way from the other two photographs. Not only is it not a picture of earth from a unique viewpoint, but it is the image of something never before seen, something that logic states *cannot be seen*. Einstein hinted at the possibility of black holes in his work, but it took decades of research before their existence could be proven. Unlike stars and the moon, which we can see even without the aid of technology, black holes are fundamentally unseeable.

Sheperd Doeleman, the director of the Event Horizon Telescope, called the black hole "a one-way door from our universe" (cited in Reuell, 2019). He also claims that we are "entering the

era of precision, horizon-scale observations of black holes. We've never had that before, so we're now able to ask a bunch of questions we couldn't even conceive of before."

But this "era of precision" nevertheless opens up a perplexity of interpretation. The revelatory detail that such a photograph is said to provide ignores what precision cannot reveal, and forces us to ask questions that go beyond science. What is the actual purpose behind capturing an image of a black hole? Does such an image accentuate or demote our appreciation of its fearsome magnitude? For many, the picture solidifies what is, in effect, an impossible object. As with many flawed assumptions about photography, the image denotes a kind of infallibility, and there is a tendency to view photographs as impartial, completely accurate reproductions of reality. Beyond technical flaws, there are other representational issues with photography. As Fricke and Baker note: "Technically perfect photos may not show what is required and they may even be misleading" (2001, 277). There are, they contend, representational "distortions" (258) in photographs. Greg Siegel also writes that "photography's 'obvious advantages' can, on this view, be a dangerous lure [...] the positive efficiencies of mechanical reproduction are reduced to magical distractions, inutile perversions. Technological ease becomes an enticement to waywardness, an inducement to indolence" (2014, 207).

But Sebastien Smee reminds us that we are not, in effect, dealing with a photograph: "it's worth noting that this image isn't really a photograph. It is information recovered and transposed into visual data with the help of various "calibration and imaging schemes." Jeffrey West Kirkwood (2019) similarly notes that "the fuzzy orange donut that supposedly depicts the super massive black hole at the center of the Messier Galaxy 87 is certainly beautiful to look at. But what does it mean to create a picture *of* a black hole?" (39). He elaborates:

> Data collected from these many telescopes were algorithmically sorted and synchronized, after which a visual representation that could be called a "picture" was ultimately assembled. This is an image of a vast series of protocols, not an object. And appropriately, as if a brilliant bit of NASA-funded metacritical media theory, the celestial object to which the image corresponds is definitionally *impossible to depict* (39).

The desire to capture that which is impossible to depict, particularly something as infamously evasive as a black hole, appears to be a response to what Umberto Eco called society's fear of infinity. For Eco, we use lists to impose order on that which is infinite. Lingel et al, writing in 2016, three years before the M87 photograph, note that "black holes are certainly confrontations with the infinite" (5684). They are also "confrontations with narrative, articulating the boundaries of the explicable." They explain:

> Black holes and wormholes offer a lens for thinking about our relationship to technology and imagining the future in terms of metaphysical silence. Or perhaps, as portals of silence and transit, black holes and wormholes are instances of metatechnological silences — gaps that articulate what science fiction refuses to imagine (5685).

Yet the M87 image is understood as something that can alleviate the burden of imagination, specifically through the aid of technology. For Lingel et al, black holes "*refuse narration*" (5686). The M87 image is certainly an attempt to offer a particular narrative, but it is ultimately unclear what the actual nature of this narrative is, whether it is about achieving some kind of objective precision that alleviates the threat of infinity, or whether it is simply there to communicate the apparent progress of cosmological technology, a way of communicating humanity's triumph over the bewildering evasiveness that black holes and the cosmos at large pose.

The narrative that such an image advocates is one that Marshall McLuhan theorised decades earlier, that is, that the medium, the technology, is the message itself. It is not merely the content that is of interest to us (although the M87 image is certainly of interest for its disconcerting content), but the fact that this hitherto "impossible" object, what Timothy Morton might call a "hyperobject", has, at last, been "validated" through technology. Technology is, once more, the instrument that is understood as providing a conduit between the human mind and reality. The Event Horizon Telescope project is, in effect, an effort to demystify and force that which is unknown into the realm of human language and comprehensibility, to remove its dreaded ambiguity. By photographing a black hole, we not only declare humanity's triumph over nature, but are also imposing a narrative on that which, as Lingel et al notes, fundamentally refuses narration. Black holes have, for half a century, represented the fundamental hurdle of not only encountering but of *communicating* the inexplicable. For Smee, "what we're seeing—fittingly, given what we know about black holes—is not so much a presence as an absence. A dark space defined by an asymmetrical outline, an 'emission ring.'" In this sense, black holes constitute a metaphysics of *absence*, in contrast to Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida's notion of a metaphysics of *presence*. Smee reminds us that "at a fundamental level, the image is telling us more about what we still don't know than what we do know."

Galileo's Worldview

The relationship between science and reality is often predicated on the notion that scientific instruments can effectively and conclusively capture enigmatic celestial objects. The invention of the telescope in the 1600s, for example, ushered in a new method of observing the universe that fundamentally restructured what it meant to possess knowledge of the world and the cosmos. Jovana Đurović explains that Galileo saw his telescope as a profound and uninterrupted way of viewing the universe that was based on reason and which contributed to the science of empiricism: "In 1610, a decade after introducing the telescope, Galileo writes instructions for its use, in which he ascribes the instrument a very radical status: namely, that it does not assist or improve the human eye—*it replaces it*" (2014, 20). She observes that Kepler and Galileo "introduced abstract, mathematical language as another mediator of nature" (20). The telescope, she explains, was understood as displacing the eye, and thereby theoretically dispenses with human interpretation (20).

The notion of replacing the human eye with technology accords with McLuhan's belief that technology eventually becomes an "extension of man." Indeed, he too describes the telescope as an extension of the eye in *Understanding Media*. To this end, such developments raise inevitable questions about the nature of our reality with respect to the tools that mediate the world for us: is knowledge of the world *always* mediated? What would it mean to experience the world *without* these intrusions? Can a meaningful relationship with reality be conceivable without these instruments? Is an uninterrupted experience of reality something that we ought to covet in the first place? And if an experience of the world is made possible only through technology, is our experience of reality irrevocably inferior, and does this insight invalidate our understanding of the world?

For Tyler and Evans, "our experience of the world is *always* mediated via our uniquely human perceptual system, physiology and neural architecture" (2003, 23). Just as it may be impossible to experience the world outside of the purview of human culture, technology performs a necessary and somewhat inescapable role in our understanding of the world. As Verkerk et al argue, "scholars up to now draw a picture in which technology is something we cannot escape" (2015, 344). Anthony Miccoli (2010) describes this particular anxiety as "posthuman suffering", stemming from the inescapable grasp of technology in our metaphysical relations with the world. He writes: "The posthuman concedes that without the supplement of technology, the human is limited in its physicality. Thus, the only way to achieve a greater compatibility with information (both the information that constitutes the human itself and the world we inhabit) is through more advanced technological systems" (57). He writes that "intrinsically *knowing* the self is contingent upon the supplement of the technological other. We cannot know ourselves—nor can we reach our full embodied, human potential—without some kind of technological other to help us 're-connect' with ourselves." Indeed, posthuman suffering extends to the limits of observing the physical world; the human cannot perceive the intricate craters of the moon or the fiery event horizon of a black hole *without* the aid of the telescope. Posthuman suffering, therefore, is the recognition of one's inadequacy when it comes to knowledge of the world. Technology becomes necessary and, therefore, inescapable.

Miccoli's view alerts us to the inevitable role that technology plays in mediating and portraying aspects of reality. A metaphysics of humanity, then, becomes one that is dependent on technology to exist. But philosophers have long been concerned about *the extent* to which we rely on technology to perform reality for us. As Verkerk et al put it, philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Don Ihde (1990) believed that humans "inhabit a world with which they are in contact *through* technology" (344). Heidegger, they note, "was very pessimistic about the intermediary role of technology because, according to him, technology causes us to see our social environment solely as something that still has to be cultivated. The intrinsic value of reality completely eludes us" (344).

In an interview with *Der Spiegel* magazine in 1966, and published five years after Heidegger's

death at his request (due to its controversial content on his involvement with the Nazi party) Heidegger argued that "technology tears men loose from the earth and uproots them" (cited in Wolin, 105). He explains how he was frightened when he "saw pictures coming from the moon to the earth", before claiming: "The uprooting of man has already taken place. The only thing we have left is purely technological relationships. This is no longer the earth on which man lives" (105-106). Ihde had similar misgivings about the particular use of technology in regards to metaphysics: "To see the moon through a telescope is to see it close up but also to lose it in its position in the sky. Lens technology transforms the very sense of space that I experience, in a significant modification of both bodily and world space" (50).

For both Heidegger and Ihde, the idea that telescopes offer an "authentic" view of celestial objects is illusory, since the instruments which claim to offer objectivity are ultimately marred not by what they show, but by what they do not or *cannot* reveal. Although such instruments have been embraced as infallible tools of truth based on "precision", in many ways they hinder our understanding of the essential nature of impossible objects. As Ihde explains:

> The spectrographic picture of a star no longer "resembles" the star at all. There is no point of light, no disk size, no spatial isomorphism at all merely a band of differently colored rainbow stripes. The naïve reader would not know that this was a picture of a star at all – the reader would have to know the language, the alphabet, that has coded the star (91).

Ihde's observation leads us to ask what, exactly, does it even mean to really *behold* a star, to truly experience a celestial object? For many scientists and astronomers, the artistic or philosophical view of the world is metaphysically imprecise and presents an existential want; scientific data is understood as possessing the numerical certainty that speculative philosophy and imagination lacks. But it is not enough to say that these scientific renderings bring us closer to reality, because such claims reduce an authentic experience of the world to its mathematical components. If truth is merely reducible to data, then science does indeed hold the answer to truth, but such distorted images are as insufficient as the familiar, exaggerated stars that are illustrated in children's books.

From Disenchantment to Disengagement

Although Ihde identifies essential errors in the link between technology and truth, he also observes that "not all optical technologies *mediate* such perceptions" (90). He reminds us that technology itself corrects an already-diminished view of reality: "Imagine using spectacles to correct vision [...] What is wanted is to return vision as closely as possible to ordinary perception, not to distort or modify it." However, he also notes that lenses are today modified to reduce glare or enhance colour. The ability to enhance, not merely *correct*, reality, illustrates a significant shift that explains much of the contemporary inclination to *enhance* reality beyond a certain existential threshold. These enhancements are not based on correcting a diminished view of reality, but instead are there to *accessorise* reality, as if reality had become a product itself in need of add-ons and

accoutrements to "repair" reality. Indeed, what is interesting about the world of virtual reality is that is does not necessarily take place in ultra-phantastic worlds. Instead, the virtual expands upon a recognisable reality, enhancing what is already known and familiar.

Hubert Dreyfus, whose works on Heidegger led to him being dubbed "Dreydegger", was particularly sceptical about the amount of time we spend in virtual worlds, as well as the capabilities of computers. In *Being-in-the-World*, which serves as an analysis of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Dreyfus writes: "As we enter the final stage of technology, we experience everything including ourselves as resources to be enhanced, transformed, and ordered simply for the sake of greater and greater efficiency" (338).

Dreyfus's concerns about technology are also addressed in his book *On the Internet*. Originally published in 2001, before smart phones and social media had become ubiquitous, *On the Internet* looks at early virtual reality worlds such as Second Life which, he writes, should provoke concern amongst philosophers: "Second Life also offers the possibility of spending one's time in a virtual world that may be more exciting than the real one. That raises the question of how much of one's life should be spent enjoying an admittedly unreal world" (95). Dreyfus was particularly concerned about the preference for virtual worlds: "The ever-increasing number of people who spend an average of four hours a day in Second Life don't seem to be tempted to return more than is necessary to their everyday lives" (96).

"The drawbacks of our world are obvious", he writes. Virtual worlds, he writes, offer the kind of invulnerability that doesn't exist in reality, and they furthermore insulate us from the threat of banality. We gravitate towards diversion and away from confrontation:

> We now face a clear choice between a captivating life of diversion, which existential philosophers like Pascal consider empty and inauthentic, and the authentic life they favour in which one is called to face up to the vulnerability of all one cares about and yet, at the same time, find something meaningful to which to dedicate one's life (97).

Dreyfus also observes that such worlds are seen by many as a means to recover a sense of enchantment. Dreyfus discusses Max Weber's notion of "disenchantment" (*Entzauberung*) to illustrate the appeal of virtual worlds, which are seen by some as an appropriate remedy to the mass disenchantment that modern science wrought. For Weber, science replaced religion as the paradigm of reality, ridding the world of its mystical qualities and causing feelings of disenchantment. Dreyfus sees virtual worlds as potential methods to "re-enchant" the world.

But while Second Life may fulfil a certain need to regain a sense of enchantment, games like Pokémon Go illustrate that augmented realities are arguably more popular than virtual ones, since they enhance reality in a way that is appeasing and not as disorienting as virtual reality, since it is enmeshed around the known, familiar world. Through the use of a smart phone, users can decorate reality rather than escape it entirely. Users are not wholly immersed in a virtual reality, but, importantly, use technology to enhance aspects of reality much like the telescope did in the

1600s. As Graham et al put it: "Real but not quite real, virtual but contextualized, *augmented realities mediate reality*. This mediation is not limited to games and SF; it will permeate day-to-day" (187). Indeed, we are not simply witnessing a culture addicted to gaming, an anxiety which was prominent in the 1980s and '90s, but are instead witnessing the appification of everyday life, so that even the most menial experiences are enhanced by technology in such a way that does not resemble gaming at all, but which is there to make reality tolerable for a tech-raised generation. As Amber Case puts it: "The appification of everything seems to be a response to the pervasiveness of smartphones – as if the only way to create a satisfying user experience is to integrate it with the iPhone as much as possible" (The Appification of Everything). The smart phone has become a device through which not only do we mediate reality, but increasingly experience reality: the smart phone interface *is* reality, in the sense that the realities that matter most to us appear to take place in the augmented worlds of apps and social media. We do not merely retreat into our devices for entertainment value, as we did in the '80s and '90s, but turn to our devices to fulfil every single task, monotonous or otherwise.

An iPhone commercial from 2009 popularised the phrase "There's an app for that", a phrase which suggests that apps, like the telescope, are being used to *replace* the human eye. Apps like SkyView and Star Walk, for instance, enable users to view constellations and celestial objects through the cameras on their phone, even when the user is inside. SkyView® Lite advertises itself as "a beautiful and intuitive stargazing app that uses your camera to precisely spot and identify celestial objects in sky, day or night." With the aid of augmented reality technology, users can use their phones to identify galaxies, constellations and satellites, even when they are not visible to the naked eye. Star Walk, meanwhile, promotes itself with the tagline: "Explore the sky like you've never done before."

These apps accessorise the sky with enlarged 3D graphics of planets, satellites and completed constellations which users could not see with the naked eye. In other words, these apps perform the night sky for us, filling in the details that we cannot possibly see. This gives users the impression of completion, giving the sky an added theatrical dimension that suggests the naked sky itself is lacking.

Chris Maxcer, in his review of Skyview, calls the app "pretty freaking cool", and promotes the app as a novel way to view the sky. Yet he also observes:

> When you're in the forest, for example, far away from the light of cities, the night sky can come alive all on its own. I'm pretty sure the next time I'm out, I'll spend more time looking at it without SkyView, but I also know I'll pull out the app and augment my reality a bit. Especially if I see a satellite zooming across the sky. I'd definitely like to catch one of those fast ones with SkyView (Maxcer 2011).

Maxcer's point about augmenting his reality attests to the preoccupation we have with augmenting the mundane. But while augmented reality is used to accessorise reality, virtual reality sees the complete immersion of the user in a virtual world.

Discussing virtual space apps, Damjanov and Crouch (2019) argue that "while travel in outer space means surrounding yourself in a 'bubble' of mediating technologies, touring in VR is an immersion in a technologically created digital environment. In this sense, VR technology could be a suitable substitute for real space travel" (123). However, they also note that "VR space tours are nevertheless consistently concerned with their own presentation of performance of a 'real' experience." Space apps like Hello Mars—a VR simulation of a Mars landing—alongside Discovering Space 2, are all "marketed as in some way 'realistic' experiences". But "this authenticity", they note, "is produced through their design – the hardware and software that they rely upon becoming a necessary part of the equation, influencing questions of perception, imitation, and reality" (123).

Such apps tell us that imitation is increasingly acceptable not as a mere substitute for the real, but as the *preferred method of experiencing reality*. Damjanov and Crouch argue that "these mimetic environments are increasing in sophistication, becoming more precise, more accurate, but also more able to trick the eyes and the mind, and at the same time, they are becoming more accepted as legitimate sites of social practice and authentic interaction."

Indeed, reality is increasingly understood as falling short of our appetites for curated splendour, whetted by the dazzling accoutrements of our devices which are now being used to fill in for that with which we cannot realistically engage. Albert Borgmann (1984) calls this particular condition a form of "disengagement", claiming: "It is clear that the further technological liberation from the duress of daily life is only leading to more disengagement from skilled and bodily commerce with reality" (151). Borgmann's critique of technology focuses on what he calls the "device paradigm", wherein we lose touch with reality due to our reliance on our devices, which mediate reality.

Like Heidegger, Borgmann sees technology as offering a diminished or secondary experience of reality. He claims that such technologies fail to illuminate our lives and will only signify the "atrophy of our capacities." Although Borgmann's views on gaming—that it is used only for the "spread of pornography"—are particularly antiquated, his views on the intermediary role that technology plays in our day-to-day engagement with life are widely shared by philosophers and writers.

Will Self (2018), for instance, described our preoccupation with screens as the "tyranny of the virtual", arguing: "It strikes me that we're now suffering collectively from a 'tyranny of the virtual,' since we find ourselves unable to look away from the *screens* that mediate not just print but, increasingly, reality itself" . The smart phone screen inspires the same kind of revelatory frenzy as the telescope lens, except it does not presume to offer an objective view of reality in the way that the telescope does. In fact, it provides just the opposite. Users of Skyview, Star Walk and Hello Mars are perfectly aware that these augmented and virtual technologies *recreate* space. They are not in any way "deceived" by the technology into mistaking it for reality, and nor are they under any illusion that these apps bring them closer to reality. While philosophers

like Dreyfus and Borgmann were concerned with the extent to which users were "fooled" or duped by virtual realities, a more concerning development has emerged that sees users willingly adapting to a curated reality—through their devices—*that they know is false*. The more insidious threat appears to be a world in which the desire for a more "authentic" connection to reality is not merely illusory, but is simply dismissed as redundant in favour of these distractions that take us further from reality, provoking not only disengagement, but an estrangement from one's reality. Social media has already shown us that we have come to prioritise and cultivate our virtual lives over our real ones.

Hidden Realities and Unfathomable Objects

Juliet Mitchell writes that "there is no such thing as a simple response to reality" (1974, 12). "External reality", she writes, "has to be 'acquired'. To deny that there is anything other than external reality gets us back to the same proposition: it is a denial of the unconscious" (12).

There are various metaphysical theories predicated on the notion that reality is always in some measure *hidden* from us, on either a quantum or spiritual level, and for many, science proves the most reliable method to uncover these hidden realities. As Heidegger observes: "Something *other* reigns. But this other conceals itself from us so long as we give ourselves up to the ordinary notions about science. The other is a state of affairs that holds sway throughout all the sciences, but that remains *hidden* to the sciences themselves" (1977, 156).

Plato is perhaps the philosopher most associated with an ideal reality. Throughout his works he frequently referred to an abstract world of perfection, what he called the ideal world of Forms. In contrast to Aristotle, who believed our senses communicate a sound reality, Plato distinguished between appearance and reality, and claimed that the people, objects and sensations we encounter every day are but mere shadows of the real entities in the ideal world of forms. It was here that unchanging, universal truths could be found. For Plato, the ideal world of forms is not accessible externally, but can only be truly grasped internally, via the mind, leading to true knowledge of reality. As Plato writes in *Theaetetus*: "the mind in itself is its own instrument for contemplating the common terms that apply to everything" (2003, 104).

Similarly, in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel addresses the fundamental issues of cognition as an instrument, and an "absolute" truth: "For, if cognition is the instrument for getting hold of absolute being, it is obvious that the use of an instrument on a thing certainly does not let it be what it is for itself, but rather sets out to reshape and alter it" (1977, 46). Hegel also observes that cognition itself exists as an intermediary: "If, on the other hand, cognition is not an instrument of our activity but a more or less passive medium through which the light of truth reaches us, then again we do not receive the truth as it is in itself, but only as it exists through and in this medium." Hegel, in this sense, shares Plato's view of reality being an imitation of an ultimately inaccessible truth. To this end, Hegel believed that science could only take us so far in dismantling the rubric of reality. Science, he argues, "is itself an appearance" (48). It exists alongside other modes of

knowledge. He insists that "science must liberate itself from this semblance", and that "when confronted with a knowledge that is without truth, science can neither merely reject it as an ordinary way of looking at things, while assuring us that its science is a quite different sort of cognition for which that ordinary knowledge is of no account whatever" (48-49).

For Nietzsche, both science and religion served only to further separate humanity from reality. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche writes: "Is the resolve to be so scientific about everything perhaps a kind of fear of, an escape from, pessimism? A subtle last resort against—*truth?* And, morally speaking, a sort of cowardice and falseness?" (1967, 18). In *Beyond Good and Evil*, however, Nietzsche, like Aristotle, makes the unconvincing claim that "all credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth come only from the senses" (1989, 88), a line of thinking which fails to acknowledge the limits of sensorial accuracy, as Tyler and Evans previously noted. They remind us that our experience of the world is *always* mediated by the limits of human perception.

Much current scientific discourse operates on the assumption that greater precision in our technological instruments will automatically bestow a greater authenticity onto the subject of enquiry. But Hegel insisted that no one discipline has a monopoly on reality, and that reality and truth cannot be found through science alone. There are those phenomena and ideas that science cannot grasp and that technology cannot represent sufficiently enough to completely demystify the cosmos.

The M87 black hole is an imitation of that *which cannot be represented*. The black hole eludes scientific capture, and however "sophisticated" these technologies prove to be, ultimately the black hole remains an incomprehensible object, forcing us to abandon the illusion that unfathomable objects can always eventually be exposed through technology.

For Voltaire, almost everything is imitation, but the image of the black hole dispels the illusion of a perfect image. The image is as precise as it is unclear, and no amount of precision will solidify the existential palpability of the black hole. Indeed, while the image of the black hole has been described as "beautiful" by many journalists, possessing notable artistic attributes of colour and abstractness, both Smee and Kirkwood remind us that it is less an artistic rendering of an elusive object and more a final product based on an assemblage of data that, if anything, takes us *further* from its essential form. The black hole resists any form of expression that we possess, scientific, artistic or otherwise.

The preoccupation with "infallible" data, moreover, dismantles one's metaphysical arsenal to the extent that we come to understand reality as a mere extension of technology and scientific imaging, further distancing us from the thing-in-itself. As Mustapha Khayati put it: "The fetishism of facts masks the essential category, the mass of details obscures the totality" (2006, 408). The black hole is not merely a scientific object composed of facts that are reproducible in data. Science can tell us *what* a black hole is, and technology can offer useful insights into the cosmological nature of a black hole, but its metaphysical magnitude is not reducible to any one system of knowledge, and nor is it rendered knowable through technology.

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The Subjective Import of Moral Knowledge

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Abstract:

Experience teaches that "knowledge" is more than facts garnered from physical inputs or truth derived from rational discourse. Knowledge is a human construction as we constantly typify what facts nature and society present to us, deciphering them through our own personal and cultural narratives. In itself, this should widen the scope of what knowledge embodies and put us on guard about the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive knowledge. Acknowledging that knowledge is personally and communally represented means that knowledge, empirical and normative, is often justified by the suppositions lying deeply within our cultural histories. These suppositions are the presumptive force employed to authenticate, confirm, corroborate, and substantiate knowledge claims, descriptive and prescriptive. Vindicated by enculturated habits, hewn through tradition and practice, and heralded as the pathway to truth, adjustments and assessment in our thinking is difficult. Yet, when knowledge claims are brought into the public square and undergo communal exposure, adjustments in our thinking is often required. Dialogic communication becomes a necessary means of reassessment and clarification. Consequently, all knowledge bears the imprint of subjective understanding, claims of self-evident principles defining the *a priori* starting places of our conclusions, and the social/cultural perspectives in which rational discourse and normative prescriptions are formed and applied. With an inclination to objectify the sensory and rational (rational empiricism) and cast moral knowledge into the bin of the unstable and impulsive, we often ignore the skewed and hermeneutical nature of both. In this regard, to release moral knowledge from restrictive and reductionist interpretations, a thoughtful reconsideration is required. But, let's not jump to the conclusion that all that we think and believe are on an equal footing, factually or morally. We should not forget that we are cognitive creatures involved in thinking, reasoning, remembering, recommending behaviors thought of as moral, and building our lives through insightful and creative re-examination.

Keywords: civility, connections, culture, descriptive, dialogic process, enculturation, ethnocentrism, ideological principles of orientation, interpretation, knowledge, overbeliefs, postmodernism, qualification, reassessment, representation, social construction of knowledge

Introduction

Lying on the blurred edges of what is thought of as knowledge and dangling precipitously within humanity's moral consciousness and with personal and collective sensitivity are the often ignored and misrepresented values that bind the common notion of "humanity" as a moral community.[1] These

values – secular and sacred – represent our moral dispositions or the lack thereof, including the collective and personal ethical ideals and visions frequently expressed theoretically but even more so through everyday communal interactions. Although moral knowledge has been repeatedly dismissed as subjective, intrinsic, and theoretically unstable due to its inability to be harnessed by logic and mathematical precision, many have forgotten the prophetic words of Ludwig Wittgenstein who, questioning much of the mathematical precision of his earlier writings, said, "What we are after in philosophy is 'the understanding that consists in seeing connections'."[2]

These human connections are definitive of moral possibility. They are admittedly personal, capricious, and changeable requiring that we lift the veil of our moral assumptions, especially those lying deeply within our cultural histories, and seek a deeper and more universal moral awareness. These connections and concomitant presumptions are fertile and dynamic, often resting comfortably beneath the encrusted topsoil of our cognitive awareness and the reactions to the miscellany of events of our lives. But, as Kurt Baier has said, "As long as those presuppositions are partially hidden by the unconscious emotions that led to their adoption, we cannot think about them for the simple reason that we think *with* them."[3] Unfortunately, but true, culture is an elusive phenomenon, mostly habitual and often misconstrued, definitive of our values and character. Disclosing these tightly held beliefs, often generalized and without detailed or factual reconsideration, is difficult; being open to the insights and opinions of others even more so. Consequently, morality is a taking stock of personal and communal, experiences – what is perceived and what is considered important. This begins within the moral consciousness and is later evaluated, articulated, and "represented" to others through reason and collaborative experiences. Because conscious as well as unconscious moral insights are found in personal and well as communal judgments, *representation* is a normative quality, cognitively basic, informing and prescribing as well as recognizing and recording, and often revealing a hidden moral grammar.

With no apology for being subjective and as with any other form of discourse – scientific, political, or social – moral discourse begins with certain assumptions hewn from experience and designed to better the lives of everyone. These assumptions are often the unstated and self-evident principles, not only of moral conversation but of moral behavior as well, shaped from the gravel of personal experience and communal exposure. Without them, moral conversation swings thoughtlessly in the arms of ethical relativity and its handmaiden, rational ethical egoism, the view that if my behavior is rational and aims at my own greatest good, then my behavior is right and good, e.g., moral. Thus, looking after my own interests will best promote universal human welfare. This is a functional disposition, often narcissistic, and at times ignoring our human commonality weakening our ability to lift moral awareness to a more inclusive view of humanity as community.

1. Thinking in Terms of Relationships

1. A. The Strain of Self-Interest

Rational ethical egoism is a belief difficult to dispute as personal value is about the formation

of human character. Without attention, our values become self-vouching and self-fulfilling. As children we learn to think with the value impressions received from parents, teachers, religious affiliations, and friends. As these become ingrained and definitive of personal character, they are tightly stitched into our moral fabric and revealed to others in claims of self-authenticity.[4] More often than not, when vouching ourselves to others we are asserting our personal autonomy, dignity, and self-worth. To this reflective attention needs to be given for to be moral is not just about self-esteem, self-worth, and self-interest; it's also a social undertaking which recognizes the self-esteem, value, and dignity of others. This was explained by Kurt Baier as the point of view of morality which looks and treats everyone as "....equally important centers of craving, impulses, desires, needs, aims, and aspirations; as people with ends of their own, all of which are entitled, prima facie [on the surface; without extenuating circumstances], to be attained."[5] In retrospect, respect for self and others, personal and institutional integrity, and a commitment to fairplay and justice are learned behaviors which become the presuppositional substance of moral knowledge the chief aim of which is to promote human dignity and the exercise of civility in our daily lives. To becoming more universal and functional, these value commitments require rational scrutiny and public disclosure.

Obviously, being moral or at least asking others to treat us morally is in our self-interest. Most people don't wish to be thought of as unethical or immoral as this notably weakens human communication and is thought by many to be a negative character trait prohibiting positive interactions among individuals, businesses, and political leaders. Being moral is a communal affair requiring balance in goals of self-interest and those that are beneficial to others. This often causes an inner tension and sometimes a breakdown in human relationships. This was realized by our ancient progenitors and led to the formation of what is commonly called the "Golden Rule," an ideal where both love of self and, likewise, for others, was acknowledged and prescribed to reduce the conflict between selfish and unselfish behaviors.[6] Kurt Baier has commented,

> Throughout the history of philosophy, by far the most popular candidate for the position of the moral point of view has been self-interest. There are obvious parallels between these two standpoints. Both aim at the good. Both are rational. Both involve deliberation, the surveying and weighing of reasons. The adoption of either yields statements containing the word 'ought.' Both involve the notion of self-mastery and control over the desires. It is, moreover, plausible to hold that a person could not have a reason for doing anything whatsoever unless his behavior was designed to promote his own good. Hence, if morality is to have the support of reason, moral reasons must be self-interested, hence the point of view of morality and self-interest must be the same. On the other hand, it seems equally obvious that morality and self-interest are very frequently opposed. Morality often requires us to refrain from doing what self-interest recommends or to do what self-interest forbids. Hence morality and self-interest cannot be the same points of view.[7]

Baier further said,

> Let it be granted then, that principles of behavior can be recommended to everybody if they successfully promote the best possible life for everybody, and that the best possible life for everybody cannot be achieved in isolation but only in social contexts in which the pursuits of each impinge on the pursuits of others.[8]

1. B. Relationships: The Connective Tissue of Moral Knowledge

Simply expressed by Fritjof Capra these connections are the human relationships binding life to life unfolding variably as we go about our day to day activities. As pointed out by Capra, thinking in terms of relationships is essentially moral thinking:

> I call this new science 'the systems view of life' because it involves a new kind of thinking – thinking in terms of relationships, patterns and context. In science, this way of thinking is known as 'systems thinking', or 'systemic thinking'. Thinking in terms of relationships is crucial for ecology, because ecology – derived from the Greek oikos, meaning 'household' – is the science of the relationships among various members of the Earth Household.[9]

Capra says we are suffering from a crisis of perception,

> It derives from the fact that most of us, and especially our large social institutions, subscribe to the concepts of an outdated worldview, a perception of reality inadequate for dealing with our overpopulated, globally interconnected world. This worldview divides and separates us into religions, races, and cultures. Ultimately – as quantum physics [has] showed so dramatically – there are no parts at all. What we call a part is merely a pattern in an inseparable web of relationships.[10]

Using our experienced and learned social understandings, we have become skilled at relying on the empirical and not only in science and industry, but in our everyday lives as well. We also know that within each of us are fertile moral possibilities roaming freely within the social connections definitive of our lives and asking that we extend our moral conversations and our civility to a much wider audience than just our immediate social or political group or just to ourselves. And although subjective, the substance and importance of such moral knowledge and understanding cannot be disputed. Thus, thinking in terms of relationships is presuppositional and rests at the core of moral knowledge and moral behavior. Although moral knowledge is thought to be unstable and thus unfit to be thought of as "real" knowledge, we are certainly aware, given the political and social climate of 2020, that human life is itself unpredictable, built on the habits and cultural values representing cultural diversity spread unevenly around the world.

For centuries, convinced of its necessity, philosophers have tried to fit these insights into theoretical formulas and theologians into their credos. Their logical formulas and religious creeds have provided the presuppositional substance – predetermined and unconditional – as foundations for moral truth and meaning. But as we know, life unfolds in unclear and indefinite ways. Sadly,

but true, we cannot fit our values into a fixed rational or religious formula; life just doesn't operate in this way. Even more difficult is widening our moral horizons beyond self, family, or the narrow confines of religious belief. Moral understanding is an affair of the cognitive mind and human sentiment. This cannot be disputed; but, for sake of clarity and understanding, we must allow our rational and pragmatic insights temper our self-centered values within our communities, workplaces, and political affiliations in an effort to consistently expand our moral awareness and its applications.

And we will be biased, but being moral asks that we work to overcome our prejudices. This is a primary function of morality, of moral knowledge. Social isolation and social fragmentation can be destructive. Feelings of national, gender, racial, or religious exceptionalism more often than not negate our moral vision. Recognizing "humanity" as a moral community, we should make an effort to communicate widely and across barriers, and then come together in moral unification. This seems a natural predilection of a rational mind implied by the moral "ought" which defines its prescriptive nature. Under this umbrella we often fluctuate, seeking clarity and the courage to stand firmly, and recognize the dignity and moral significance of others, all others. When social cohesion and civility are eroded, trust and social isolation are often the results. Extending our moral understanding to others doesn't mean giving up what we believe is of value, but requires collaboration, seeking a common understanding that unites rather than divides, and viewing others, like ourselves, as humanly significant. In itself, moral awareness is presuppositional and foundational, a subjective gathering of experience and understandings the purpose of which is to lift the horizon of our moral knowledge and behavior.

Jean Paul Sartre[11] made it clear, "Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world; he is responsible for everything he does. It is up to you to give [life] a meaning." This is a challenge; a moral responsibility. Sartre believed that we alone are responsible for everything that we really are, and by not exploring the myriad possibilities life presents to us, we alone are responsible for restricting our freedom. "We are left alone without an excuse. . . . Everything has been figured out, except how to live," he said. Yet, Sartre's exposition doesn't tell the entire story as we are forever connected to each other in families and communities. We are not alone! Relationships give life meaning and are foundational to moral knowledge. The freedom to which Sartre referred doesn't exist absolutely, and if it does, only rarely. But be aware, as George Bernard Shaw said, "Nothing can be unconditional: consequently nothing can be free."[12] This doesn't negate the fact of human choice, only accentuates our social and communal connections and concomitant moral obligations. Our decisions, personal and collective, expose the imprint of our mores (ethos) and common humanity. These insights lie at the foundation of moral knowledge, perhaps intuitional and capricious, but are products of human communal living.

1. C. The Postmodern Reaction

Also, we may react, questioning whether "moral knowledge" is "real knowledge" and whether the prescriptive dimension of morality has an authentic place in the empirical chain leading to truth

and meaning. Looking back, although reason, logic, and the empirical were thought of as the only paths to knowledge, the postmodern movement[13] shook loose this assumption and with it the idea that "knowledge was exclusive of anything non-factual." "Postmodernism" garnered the name "fragmentationism" as what is and what is not "factual" now bore the weight of collective reassessment. As Wittgenstein insightfully suggested, collaboration discloses our human connections. This began a new turn in what was considered to be "knowledge," and it was more than a linguistic turn; it was a turn in how we view others all the while engaging them with respect for their personal histories offering them dignity and the opportunity to share their ideas and opinions. Gradually, but surely, moral knowledge was being lifted from its post-Enlightenment encapsulation as its subjective importance was becoming more apparent.

Thus, in the 2nd half of the 20th century and in many fields – including art, architecture, literature, and philosophy – the soft underbelly of the empirical and logical, as the exclusive interpreters of knowledge, yielded to exposure. Its conclusions as well as its methods were questioned.[13] No longer was knowledge the exclusive domain of science or empirical philosophy. What is and what is not factual was brought under scrutiny with the conclusion that all reality is "interpretation."[14] This was also a major assumption, generally appropriated, of the many reactions to the Gettier problems.[15] During the past sixty years critical opponents[16] of "scientism" have repetitively upheld knowledge as more inclusive than exclusive and related constitutionally to intuition and personal judgments. Knowledge is acknowledged as a social construction requiring collaboration, prudence, and collective wisdom to officiate heretofore slanted assumptions. These intuitions and judgments are the presuppositions – a priori starting places – thought of by many as self-evident, and guiding both theoretical and pragmatic discourse, scientific or moral. It's not that "factual" knowledge is considered unimportant, but that all factual inputs bear the weight of explanation and analysis rendering knowledge – all knowledge – partial, subjective, open-ended, and dependent on human communication.

All knowledge, moral and scientific, is strained through the sieve of analysis and interpretation necessitating collective insight to strengthen its clarity and communal applications. This is a burden we are today witnessing in both the scientific and political responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Notably, when the dialogic process falters, confusion abounds. This we can't deny. To be effective, collaboration – the dialogic process – seeks clarity and will be respectful of others and open to reassessment and adjustments. Reassessment[17] and seeking the input of others is perhaps the most justifiable path to truth and meaning. The question is, as Baier said, "...whether we can master this process of revising presuppositions in such a way that it may go forward with greater boldness and assurance, freed from all needless obstructions."[18] What is normally called "factual knowledge," derived from sensory inputs and experimentation, are not exempt from human interpretation. Thus, to decry moral knowledge as "non-knowledge" – as personal, cultural, and prescriptive resisting empirical verification – is a subjectively skewed assumption prejudicing the knowledge-status of our common values.

2. The Comprehensive Nature of Knowledge

2. A. Knowledge Inside and Out

According to John Horsfield,

> Reasoning is associated with thinking, cognition, and intellect. The philosophical field of logic studies ways in which humans reason formally through argument. Reasoning may be subdivided into forms of logical reasoning (forms associated with the strict sense): deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, abductive reasoning; and other modes of reasoning considered more informal, such as intuitive reasoning and verbal reasoning. Along these lines, a distinction is often drawn between logical, discursive reasoning (reason proper), and intuitive reasoning, in which the reasoning process through intuition – however valid – may tend toward the personal and the subjectively opaque. In some social and political settings logical and intuitive modes of reasoning may clash, while in other contexts intuition and formal reason are seen as complementary rather than adversarial. For example, in mathematics, intuition is often necessary for the creative processes involved with arriving at a formal proof, arguably the most difficult of formal reasoning tasks. . . . Logic is done inside a system while reason is done outside the system by such methods as skipping steps, working backward, drawing diagrams, looking at examples, or seeing what happens if you change the rules of the system.[19]

Consequently, when closely examined, we discover that knowledge includes not only facts, but information, skills, insights and intuitions, and ideas gained through experience. Some will disagree with this widening definition of "knowledge"; thus, when discussing "the subjective import of moral knowledge," we could be prodding those with a more empirical mindset into what E.A. Burtt called "an extremely healthy state of skepticism about many of the traditional foundations of their thinking."[20] Even as this occurs, the value of logic, critical thinking, and scientific validation and predictability cannot be disputed. Correctly understood, these skills are internal to a system, but the choice to use them and evaluate their efficiency requires a human context including the often unexposed habits and beliefs guiding human discourse and life. Notably, empiricists, especially utilitarian moralists,[21] have strayed widely from Wittgenstein's later writings by diminishing the intrinsic and imaginative mind and what is considered naturally important to human social interactions. And although Wittgenstein is not being elevated as a definitive model, his insight and willingness to reconsider his earlier views prompt our attention.

Acknowledging the interpretative dimension of knowledge doesn't diminish the importance of reason and consistency. This is not a free pass; moral knowledge and its expansion should not be viewed haphazardly and with the understanding that it is absolute. As a social construction, it must be defined in a way that permits unbiased examination and is compatible with common and historical usage. That is, moral knowledge should itself look to reason and consistency for clarity and understanding. Like any other kind of knowledge, moral knowledge is the process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in information and understanding, missing elements, and disharmonies, identifying difficulties; searching for solutions, making guesses, or formulating

measures for improvement and possibly modifying and retesting them; and finally communicating the results. This is a human process as human needs are involved at each stage. If we sense some incompleteness or disharmony, tension is aroused. We are uncomfortable and want to relieve the tension as did Wittgenstein. This is a process of creative and flexible problem solving in the "new normal" now defining our world. Psychologist E. Paul Torrance has said,

> Since habitual ways of behaving are inadequate, we begin trying to avoid the commonplace and obvious (but incorrect) solutions by investigating, diagnosing, manipulating, and making guesses or estimates. Until the guesses or hypotheses have been tested, modified, and retested, we are still uncomfortable. The tension is unrelieved, however, until we tell somebody of our discovery. There are many other reasons for favoring this definition. It enables us to begin defining operationally the kinds of abilities, mental functioning, and personality characteristics that facilitate or inhibit the process.[22]

Torrance's explanation reveals knowledge to be a multiplex of mental and social processes and not tied completely to one method, *a priori* assumption, or another. Knowledge, all knowledge, reveals a flexible dimension informing its dialogical origins. Engaging in this process reveals the importance of human social connections definitive of the ethical life and exposing underlying assumptions and beliefs all of which require investigation and open-ended communication. Clearly, we all have loved and hated, used our emotions to unveil our values, and tapped our insights for clarity searching for paths of consultation and reconciliation. This is a movement of the moral consciousness (insight) working out non-humiliating ways to deal with friends and colleagues, all the while respecting their personal and collective dignity and implying personal and social integrity. The complexities are apparent, and the claims of being subjective and capricious are strong, but intuition, insight, creativity, and imagination cannot be disregarded as common aptitudes of the moral consciousness vital to ethical understanding and living morally. They are situated at the heart of moral knowledge.

2. B. The Descriptive/Prescriptive Divide

Yet, yielding to the Enlightenment's commitment to science and following the lead of Wittgenstein's early writing,[23] philosophers moved ahead in the 2nd half of the 20th century to elevate rational empirical knowledge and artificially divided "knowledge" into two broad domains: the descriptive and the prescriptive. Appropriately recognizing these two broad functions of knowledge and favoring the more stable – the rational-empirical – their efforts were not disingenuous. Yet, they failed to acknowledge the cultural and social underpinnings of both, lifting the rational-empirical to the pinnacle of what "knowledge" should be while ignoring the normative nature of their own contributions.

Generally assumed was that descriptive knowledge is objective, compliant with the methods of science and supported by the belief that "physics fixes all facts." [24] The scientific method became a model of objectivity forgetting that "facts," gleaned from experience or research, include the

stamp of interpretation and their social implications. Prescriptive or what is called "normative" knowledge was thought of as subjective, acquiescent to personal opinions, unsubstantiated facts, and cultural traditions. Much of that is true, but not necessarily so, recognizing that knowledge – factual and moral – have differing functions. In itself, this doesn't diminish the subjective importance of moral knowledge. That moral knowledge functions in the world is plainly demonstrated by the organization of nations, world health organizations, functioning cities and communities, and families living amid diversity and with respect for the laws that govern society and the goals definitive of the moral point of view.

Plainly, the descriptive/prescriptive division reflects the successes of science, our commitment to it, and the fuzzy logic often found in moral reasoning. Yet, commonsense says that something has gone awry ignoring that knowledge, all knowledge, is a social construction[25] bearing the imprint of our subjective commitments, interpretations of facts conveyed, and continually shaped by personal, social, and cultural values. Both the prescriptive and descriptive carry the weight of personal and collective interpretation and, thus, are not isolated phenomena but handmaidens in the work of moral knowledge creation. Of course, this may be a case of swimming against the tide as the empirical still dominates what is thought to be "knowledge." This was the case of the later Wittgenstein about whom Ray Monk comments,

> His work is opposed, as he once put it, to "the spirit which informs the vast stream of European and American civilization in which all of us stand." Nearly 50 years after his death, we can see, more clearly than ever, that the feeling that he was swimming against the tide was justified. If we wanted a label to describe this tide, we might call it 'scientism,' the view that every intelligible question has either a scientific solution or no solution at all. It is against this view that Wittgenstein set his face.
>
> In his later work, Wittgenstein abandoned the idea of logical form and with it the notion of ineffable truths. The difference between science and philosophy, he now believed, is between two distinct forms of understanding: the theoretical and the non-theoretical. Scientific understanding is given through the construction and testing of hypotheses and theories; philosophical understanding, on the other hand, is resolutely non-theoretical. What we are after in philosophy is 'the understanding that consists in seeing connections'.[26]

These connections, embodied in our cultural past, yield to a wider view of knowledge, especially moral knowledge. As Terry Eagleton says,

> The idea of culture, then, signifies a double refusal: of organic determinism on the one hand, and of the autonomy of spirit on the other. It is a rebuff to both naturalism and idealism, insisting against the former that there is that within nature which exceeds and undoes it, and against idealism that even the most high-minded human agency has its humble roots in our biology and natural environment. The fact that culture (like nature in this respect) can be both a descriptive and evaluative term, meaning what has actually evolved as well as what ought to, is relevant to this refusal of both naturalism and

> idealism. If the concept sets its face against determinism, it is equally wary of voluntarism. Human beings are not mere products of their environs, but neither are those environs sheer clay for their arbitrary self-fashioning. If culture transfigures nature, it is a project to which nature sets rigorous limits. The very word 'culture' contains a tension between making and being made, rationality and spontaneity, which upbraids the disembodied intellect of the Enlightenment as much as it defies the cultural reductionism of so much contemporary thought.[27]

As noted by Eagleton, the devaluing of the prescriptive dimension of knowledge began when the descriptive and normative aspects of culture began to be separated. Sensory knowledge, based on perception articulated with mathematical or logical precision (rational empiricism), was elevated as the source of all knowledge while insight, intuition, and collective human judgment were "lowered" to what was called the "intrinsic." With that, philosophy fell into a morass of language analysis with the assumption that truth and knowledge must fit a pre-subscribed analytical form. Historically, this was a comfortable hypothesis, but real life just doesn't fit this pattern. Little wonder that there was a reaction from many quarters, commonly called "postmodernism," which expressed a general distrust of grand theories and ideologies. This was a movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power. Postmodernism may in fact been an over-reaction, but put in perspective, it was a revolt against scientism or philosophical absolutism coupled with the suspicion that freedom, subjectivity, and creativity as engines of human progress were being neglected. It's not that facts based on sensory information and expressed propositionally are unimportant, but, that the interpretation of facts, insights, and opinions and their allied assumptions were now being advanced as the actual import (substance) of knowledge, particularly moral knowledge.

2. C. Knowledge Complexities Revealed

As this exposure became more complete, it was clear that experiential knowledge is full of all kinds of assumptions, biases, and misconceptions. According to William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland,

> The truth is that science is 'a method' of inquiry into our world. It is a method of discovery and, as such, is subject to certain a priori assumptions about the world, our minds and truth in general. The practice of science thus rests on certain *philosophical* assumptions. Without implicit acceptance of these assumptions, science cannot proceed.[28]

Psychologists Joseph R. Royce also reminds us that there are levels of awareness indigenous to the cognitive domain bringing into play the various ways facts, experiences, and information are interpreted. Royce says,

> The suggestion that men [humans] need to become more aware poses the question of their capacity to 'take in reality. The implication is that they live their lives in terms of highly restricted reality images, that there is much of which they are not conscious.[29]

Royce concludes, "Although the 19th century defined psychology as the study of the normal, adult, conscious mind, we are similarly ignorant about so-called conscious processes." Given our ignorance of many of these "so-called conscious processes," we should be wary of any theory of knowledge or cognitivity claiming to be faultless or superior to others. Likewise, any and all theoretical definitions of "morality" should not be accepted at face value either, for what is perceived, thought of, or insightfully reconsidered often remains opaque and vague when taken into the public square. E. A. Burtt reminded us of this problem decades ago saying,

> Facts of observation do not always speak an unambiguous message with a clear voice. . . . What is and what is not a fact? Which facts are and which are not relevant to a given problem? are questions whose answers are not simple and obvious. The answer depends on the criteria taken for granted by whoever happens to be observing the facts involved.[30]

In the second half of the 20th century, especially among analytical philosophers, empirical-rationalism became the sole avenue to truth and knowledge, science became scientism. And remembering Wittgenstein's insight, we can grasp the meaning of Michael Franz's words, who commented,

> Scientism is the ideological perversion of science through reduction to a single method, a method which does indeed have much to offer in the way of enhanced certainty and power – but which also, if declared to be the only legitimate mode of inquiry, entraps the practitioner within the closed and flattened world of an ideology.[31]

2. D. Questions Remain

And so we can ask, as did Susan Haack, [32] "What's distinctive about human mindedness?" "What's the relationship between natural and social reality?" and "What has philosophy to learn from the sciences and they from it?" Haack concludes, "More generally, none of the sciences could tell us, and if so, why, science has a legitimate claim to give us knowledge of the world, or how the world must be, and how we must be, if science is to be even possible."[32]

From this discussion is garnered the understanding repeatedly ignored from both sides of the descriptive/prescriptive divide that "knowledge" is a miscellany of external inputs and internal adjustments often colored by cultural habits, assumptions, beliefs, and purposes; a human enterprise of discovery seeking meaning and purpose in the world. Surely, it is blatantly false to assume that logical consistency somehow controls the world of sense-perception and that facts must behave according to the requirements of our rational explanations. On the other hand, it is also misleading

to claim that intuition and belief in all their variance have an undisputed claim on knowledge, especially moral knowledge. Certainly, knowledge, including moral knowledge, is a living and growing affair, often unyielding to measurement, scientific objectification, or even personal experience, and bearing the weight of collective assessment. Neither faith nor reason nor the justifications adopted supporting the conclusions of either always speak in a clear and unambiguous voice. To assume so is to allow our assumptions control the conclusions we set forth as unconditional, absolute, and unbending.

One has to be careful here, for certain assumptions, based on human experience, guide the ethical enterprise. Also, history has demonstrated the blemishes of applied ethics in democratic societies and in so-called moral religions. For example, racism and genderism, both destructive of democracy's moral purposes, are the often hidden habits and suppositions undisclosed in laws and/or religious formulas guiding the democratic process. This, in itself, exposes the need for continual moral maintenance and dialogic civility. As Mamerito Nturanabo says,

> The ethics of a society is embedded in the ideas and beliefs about what is right or wrong, what is a good or bad character; it is also embedded in the conceptions of satisfactory social relations and attitudes held by the members of the society; it is embedded, furthermore, in the forms or patterns of behavior that are considered by the members of the society to bring about social harmony and cooperative living, justice, and fairness. The ideas and beliefs about moral conduct are articulated, analyzed, and interpreted by the moral thinkers of the society.[33]

Thus, in both politics and religion, as well as in our community practices, habits and traditions are entrenched – consciously or unconsciously – revealing our biases and prejudices. We usually don't think about them and when pushed to their reconsideration, rationalizations are frequently offered but usually that's as far as it goes. All of this seems to be a "soulless" enterprise denying the social structure of knowledge, be it scientific or sacred, yet, revealing its many-sided nature. We are habitually caught in a logical trap, assuming the answers to our moral problems and permitting our assumptions guide our discussions. As Charles S. Pierce commented, "It is no longer reasoning determining what the conclusions shall be, but the conclusion telling us what the reasoning shall be."[34] About this we should continually be on guard for homogenized language and homogenized thought reinforce each other in a circular fashion even when the circle is small and personal.[35] Suffice it to say, we are not as objective or logical as we assume to be. That is to say, both religion and science, not unlike ethics, often yield heavily to personal, social, religious, and/or political exploitation.

Summary and Conclusion

Looking for respect and a place in the scientific world, analytical philosophers after Wittgenstein sought "knowledge-precision" expressed verbally and cast aside anything that was imprecise and did not fit into a preconceived logical mold. Logical precision and language analysis

(analytics) became the accepted methods of truth and meaning. In 1965, psychologist Joseph R. Royce[36] alerted us to this situation and the uncertainly of knowledge saying that any type of knowledge – referred to generally as sensory, rational, belief-oriented, or intuitive – represents the imprint of personal, social, and cultural rationalizations. Facts and related propositions are important, but the effort to roll all knowledge into a precise descriptive or propositional package ignores how facts are received, rearranged, culturally tainted, and construed. We are, as it were, enculturated creatures and to ignore the assumptions varying across and within cultures, assumptions necessary for deciphering information and applying such in one's everyday world, is to ignore the susceptible nature of knowledge and its hidden meanings.

We have also learned from Roy Woods Sellars[37] and again from E.A. Burtt[38] that our assumptions (presuppositions, beliefs) are the given, the intuitive given, we present to reality that in turn modify reality and often become reality itself. Needless to say, there are many beliefs and assumptions – overbeliefs – guiding our lives. These are a part of our cultural and personal histories. We seldom give thought to these as they are the many unconscious components controlling our thinking. Overbeliefs provide supporting contexts concerning the nature of the world, our place in it, our essential inner nature, our history and institutions, and the framework through which we express and interpret our ideas and their interrelatedness. They are what Henry David Aiken called, "ideological principles of orientation"[39] providing perspective, substance, and assurance to both our thinking and our living. Usually, we are hesitant to reassess them and many times we use them to block substantive dialogue with others. Because they are contextual and/or cultural, often lying quietly behind what we say and do in a penetrating unawareness, they require continuous evaluation and reconsideration. They are the presuppositions (assumptions) we bring to adulthood harvested (many times unconsciously) from our cultural past and existing in the solidified topsoil of our values and behaviors. Presuppositions as culture are the "there" that is "there" but not-yet fully or intentionally realized and openly stated, but sometimes emerge in our conversations with others. For many, getting down to their roots for examination and clarity is difficult and often a troubling task. Most are just unwilling to assess what is considered essential and meaningful in their lives. Assessing one's values is a painful and uncomfortable task.

Indeed, knowledge is a complicated assortment of prescriptive and regulatory insights and understandings often yielding to empirical formulation, but, most notably, susceptible to ingrained customs, cultural and social. To ignore this is to deny our essential humanity leaving baron in our mental soil the untilled habituations that comprise our diversity. Consequently, all knowledge – epistemological and moral – is partial and contingent on or condition by the methods chosen. There is a subjective element in all claims to know or to know absoltely.[40] To question the subjective import of "moral knowledge" misunderstands that moral knowledge, like any other form of knowledge, is dialectic, and that we should prize and support the importance of the relationships involved in communication, collaboration, and the reconciliation of our differences. Moral knowledge,

especially, is dependent on the dialectical process for growth and expansion.

E. A. Burtt warns us of the dangers of our deeply ingrained habits and assumptions saying,

> The main danger in using reason is the temptation to identify the essence of reason with some particular set of presuppositions about it. . . One forgets that any theory of reason reflects underlying motives which, when they become the object of clear awareness, may need to be revised. . . Insight saves us from permanent bondage to some limited framework presuppositions – presuppositions about reason as about everything else. Most of us find it impossible to crawl out from under this culturally institutionalized blanket; our habits and assumptions have become deeply ingrained. Indeed, our traditions bind us to the past and unite us, but also put fences around our thinking. Breaching these obstacles is nearly impossible for some and for many, an insufferable alternative.[41]

Burtt is referring to "culture," which as Terry Eagleton says is the most complex form of self-awareness, but also the most richly unreflective signifying a kind of social unconsciousness. As we have mention, Burtt says it's difficult to think about our culture and values for we normally are thinking by means of them. Eagleton also points out,

> What culture does, then, is distil our common humanity from our sectarian political selves, redeeming the spirit from the senses, wresting the changeless from the temporal and plucking unity from diversity. It signifies a kind of self-division as well as a self-healing, by which our fractious, sublunary selves are not abolished, but refined from within by a more ideal sort of humanity. The rift between state and civil society – between how the bourgeois citizen would like to represent himself and how he actually is – is preserved but also eroded. Culture is a form of universal subjectivity at work within each of us, just as the state is the presence of the universal within the particularist realm of civil society.[42]

Without understanding our common humanity morality loses its meaning and cannot exist. This understanding is foundational to moral knowledge. To be effective, morality, like science, requires an ongoing dialogic process designed to uplift moral knowledge from its values confusion and fragmentation.[43] With this insight we are able to reject reductionist attempts that pigeon-hole knowledge into one form, method or another and embrace the insecurities of the world in which we live all the while seeking among ourselves a fresh horizon of moral awareness and behavior.

Morality is indeed concerned with what we ought to do. It is also concerned with what is "valuable in itself" and "what we should aspire to be" and "how we should aspire to live our lives," with what Charles Taylor[44] refers to as a "different vision of the qualitatively higher." And our moral aspirations are not isolated phenomena; the language of social and moral discernment is the language of conversation and dialogue. Charles Taylor reaffirms this insight saying,

> This is the sense in which one cannot be a self on one's own. I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors: in one way in relation to those conversation partners who were essential to my achieving self-definition; in another in relation to those who are now crucial to my continuing grasp of languages

of self-understanding – and, of course, these classes may overlap. A self exists only within what I call 'webs of interlocfution'.[45]

Agreeing with Taylor, the full definition of the moral person will always involve some reference to a defining community. And again, this stresses the importance of the dialogic process. We learn the language of moral discernment by being brought into an ongoing conversation with others. And this will not be, nor is it always, a procedural ethic designed to fit predetermined or pre-sized epistemological theories, over-determined religious ideologies, or even more pragmatic and utilitarian doctrines with their "homogeneous universe of rational calculation."[46] Moral knowledge is, in effect, an affirmation of ordinary life with all its scars and blemishes and not only a searching for the roots of respect and integrity, but reaching far beyond to a moral horizon, which is an ascent to a universal affirmation and respect for life, well-being, and the flourishing of others.

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Experimenting with Poverty & Performing Benevolence: Morality and Social Reform in Stephen Crane's New York City Sketches and *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*

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Abstract:

This article analyzes the belief system of the Bowery people in Stephen Crane's city sketches and *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* and considers how the values imposed on them by the performance of morality in both the theatre and the mission church clash with their lived experiences and actively shape their lives. Through scenes which present a performance of grief and a spectacle of insincere emotions, Crane effectively criticizes the false morality of certain characters, like Maggie's mother Mary Johnson, while at the same time causing his readers to contemplate the plight of the poor. Mary seems to be mimicking the rhetoric and the ideology of benevolence of many female moral reformers. Middle-class morality significantly influences the values of these characters and seeps into Bowery culture through the religion of the mission church and through the entertainments found in the theatres and music halls that the characters visit. Middle-class culture sought to counter the disorder and crowd behavior of the lower class and the reform movement specifically targeted urban areas, subscribing to the belief that private virtue led to public virtue. Crane is critical of how both the mission church and the theatre promote moral poses without really seeking to do anything to help people. I argue that Crane emphasizes the effects of the performance of morality over the harsh physical environment as a determining force in the lives of the poor in America's emerging cities during the nineteenth century.

Keywords: nineteenth-century American literature, benevolence, morality, class, Stephen Crane, New York City

In the nineteenth century, America experienced rapid changes, including a shift of its population from rural to urban spaces. The effect of these changes on the daily lives of many Americans was reflected in the literature produced during this era, which often focused on urban life. Along with the population explosion in cities came an increased concern over morality, driven by organized groups of reformers. Because this was also the golden age of journalism, newspapers,

reporters, and editors dominated civic space by the late nineteenth century as readership and circulation skyrocketed. Writers like the reporter-novelist Stephen Crane examined both the harsh urban environment of America's emerging city landscape and the sentimental morality of the middle-class, which was heavily influenced by the reform movement. Technological and economic innovations were a factor in the transformation of journalism from a craft into an industry as a mass audience began to read newspapers during this time and, according to Howard Good, reporters took on a "wider and more controversial role in the life of the nation" (Good 1986, 13). This shift of power resulted in an era of violent strikes and class conflict; the economic suffering and social unrest felt by many was captured in both the journalism and fiction produced during this period.

Journalistic influences on creative writing occur in both stylistic techniques and the use of reporters as characters, and in a larger sense, newspaper journalism helped to shape the production and politics of American fiction. In particular, Stephen Crane's newspaper work significantly influenced his literary career as a reporter-novelist. Many nineteenth century writers believed, at least initially, in the idea of starting their writing career as a reporter and then transitioning into a literary career. However, several of these writers later came to disparage their journalism backgrounds as a waste of or distraction from their literary talents. Michael Robertson contends that starting in the 1880's, William Dean Howells and Henry James portrayed newspapers in conflict with the novel, and James even established the "myth of the artist destroyed by journalism," which later competed with the notion of the "artist nurtured by journalism," seen most clearly in the career of Stephen Crane and other reporter-novelists; these examples demonstrate "journalism's powerful role in the making of modern American literature" (Robertson 1997, 210).

Shelley Fisher Fishkin explores the continuities and discontinuities between American writers' journalism and fiction, concluding that for many writers, their journalism experience helped form the core of their greatest imaginative works by forcing them to be precise observers, teaching them to respect fact, and influencing their style (Fishkin 1985, 3-4). Fishkin explains that during the 1830's there were technological and demographic developments that created a new, cheap, and different kind of newspaper, in addition to a new concentration in these penny papers on reporting facts (Fishkin 1985, 13). In the 1850's through the 1870's there was a dual desire for greater accuracy in reporting and entertainment which led to the manufactured story and newspaper stunts that was common in yellow journalism. By the 1890's mass-circulation journals were overshadowing more traditional papers, and journalism helped authors create new styles of writing and new characters and subjects that had never been seen before in American literature.

Many of the practitioners of Howells's realism (Crane and Dreiser, among others) were reporters and editors who saw pivotal changes in America during this time period, including the rise of factories, the growth of the slums, an intensification of labor strikes, and the deepening gap between the wealthy and the poor. Fishkin contends that the success of many of these writers occurred when they returned to material they had first come to know as reporters. Furthermore, the influence of journalism on writers of fiction has produced, as Fishkin describes, "a distinctively

American pattern of literary creation" in which the press played a special role in "exposing the gaps between rhetoric and reality, between illusion and fact" and these writers could often more effectively question in their fiction the views they challenged in their journalism (Fishkin, 1985, 216-217). Even though Howells and James were apprehensive about the intersections between journalism and fiction, the younger generation of writers, including Crane, considered their newspaper work as a resource and preparation for their creative literature. Robertson argues that "none illustrates more clearly than Stephen Crane the shift from an antagonistic to a symbiotic relationship between journalistic and literary careers" (Robertson 1997, 4). Crane's early journalism at the beginning of the 1890's allowed him to, as Robertson describes, "experiment with narrative conventions, to explore his preoccupations with human character and the natural world, and to craft a distinctive ironic voice" (Robertson 1997, 73). He continued to develop those elements as he explored new literary outlets in New York City.

In a book on the intersections between journalism and realism, Thomas Connery argues that "Crane's writing for newspapers and magazines became part of a rich collection of written and visual depictions, stories, and sketches that documented life in the 1890's and early twentieth century, and included striking first-person participatory journalism" (Connery 2011, 164). This social reform aspect was also prevalent in the fiction of American authors between 1880 and 1920, and it was especially evident in works of literary realism. That genre in particular allowed authors to probe into the social, economic, and cultural issues of their day and presented a type of literature to readers that pushed them towards critical examination and action rather than escapism, which had dominated earlier American fiction. By pushing readers, especially women and those in the growing middle class, beyond the usual melodramatic and sentimental literature, realist authors sought to expose the grittiness of modern American life, most notably in the rapidly growing urban areas. The larger impact of this shift reveals an alteration in the objectives of American literature; by directly confronting the issues of poverty, racial and ethnic prejudice, economic disparity, and class conflicts, these writers were able to use their fiction to urge social action and reform.

Specifically, the literature of realism served as a link to and vehicle for social change. It represents the idealized values of personal autonomy in tandem with the collective duty to participate in civic affairs. By presenting realistic depictions of American life, writers aimed to enlighten readers about the ills of their society and spur them on towards social change. This period also saw a shift in the way many people perceived reform, towards a model that recognized the need for society to change the circumstances (including environmental and social forces) in which people live in order to change behavior. Reform-minded writers increasingly portrayed this progressive stance in their fiction. Many of the novels produced during this time were more than mere fiction, but instead in a larger sense were part of a movement for social change. Crane is often seen as the leading author of this type of realist and progressive literature, but the writing done by minority groups, including immigrants and women, was also instrumental in pushing the movement forward.

Among the younger journalists like Crane who wrote fact and fiction at the turn of the century, many focused on exposing the misery of the city, with a particular emphasis on the poor living and working conditions of the city's most unfortunate citizens. Muckraking, stunt reporting, and investigative reporting set the foundation for works like Jacob Riis's cutting-edge photographs and writing in *How the Other Half Lives* (1890). These new styles of literature helped open the eyes of many in regards to how awful the slums were and how deplorable the working conditions of the factories were for these exploited people.

The increased significance of journalism between 1880 and 1920 had a profound effect on the content and form of American literature during the period, and there were blurred boundaries between the genres of poetry, fiction, essay, and news, all of which often appeared alongside one another in periodicals. The genres of realism and naturalism were greatly influenced by journalism's emphasis on careful observation, and the scientific approaches of many reporters contributed to the shaping of these two literary genres. Robertson describes Crane as a writer "unconcerned, both professionally and artistically, with the distinctions between literature and journalism, artist and reporter, high culture and low that were so significant to Howells and James" (Robertson 1997, 56). Realism, as a reaction against sentimentalism, focused on the experiences of ordinary life, realistic details, and objectivity. As a subset of realism, naturalism also chronicled the everyday realities of life at the turn of the century, but there was a notable deterministic element associated with this fiction that portrayed the biological and social forces beyond the characters' control. Donald Pizer calls *Maggie* "a novel primarily about the falsity and destructiveness of certain moral codes" and sees Crane as a naturalistic writer "in the sense that he believes that environment molds lives. But he is much more than this, for his primary concern is not a dispassionate, pessimistic tracing of inevitable forces but a satiric assault on weaknesses in social morality" (Pizer 1984, 120). Crane, Dreiser, Frank Norris, and Jack London were all influenced by their earlier journalistic careers and produced fiction that fits into the naturalistic and realistic genres. Crane is also sometimes referred to as a "literary journalist" due to his journalistic research style and approach. Additionally, Crane is one of the best known stunt-reporters of the late-nineteenth century, producing sketches such as "Experiments in Misery" and "Experiments in Luxury" in 1894. This type of experimental piece is described by Robertson as a common newspaper device during the 1890's in which a journalist would report on some uncommon experience and were generally aimed at reforming social ills. One of the most famous of these reporters was Nellie Bly whose 1887 stint in New York's public asylum led to a series of articles later published as *Ten Days in a Madhouse*.

In a biographical sketch, Bernard Weinstein suggests that the "missionary zeal" and "devotion to social causes" displayed by his parents impacted Crane's thoughts about "poverty, social inequity, and moral responsibility," causing both a "rebellion against their bourgeois values and an affirmation of their ethics" (Weinstein 1972, 13). Crane's father was a minister and his mother was a temperance-speaker. For a while Crane left his middle-class roots and lived in a bohemian community in New York to observe the poor living around him. Keith Gandal describes Crane's time spent in the

Bowery as an escape from the "dull and oppressive" culture he grew up in (Gandal 1997, 11). His assessment of middle-class sentimental morality and the reform movement was likely influenced by Crane's own family background and upbringing. The Crane family, Robertson contends, would have been familiar with the works of Christian reformers like Charles Loring Brace and the Reverend Thomas DeWitt Talmage, which contained commentary on the issues of the New York slums in the 1870's and 1880's (Robertson 1997, 78).

In both his journalism and his fiction, Crane explored the ruptures in the middle-class system of morals, using sharp irony in his critiques. *Maggie* was written before Crane's New York City sketches, so a linear connection between his journalism and his fiction cannot be simply constructed but there are important commonalties between his fiction and his journalism. Crane is one of the few writers who did not "abandon journalism once he had published a successful novel . . . He continued to write for newspapers throughout his career [including] feature articles on New York City, travel journalism, war correspondence, even sports reporting" (Robertson 1997, 4). Although *Maggie* was initially published in 1893, it didn't gain critical attention until its second, revised edition was published in 1896 after the success of *The Red Badge of Courage* in 1895. In reviews critics set the stage for the notion that Crane's writing developed through a process of observation in the New York slums, reports in the newspapers, and finally fiction based on that material. The relationship between his journalism and fiction is much more complicated than that. Nevertheless, it is notable that both his fiction and his reporting lack what Robertson refers to as "overt moralistic commentary" (Robertson 1997, 78). Unlike standard slum literature, Crane does not condemn drinking, violence, and sexual misconduct. On the contrary, he negatively portrays characters who are self-righteously moral. Crane's disjointed and disorienting style was common in journalism of his era, but he carried this unconventional approach over into his fiction, avoiding moralizing and sentimentality in favor of a "morally neutral visual perspective" of city life (Robertson 1997, 85).

Although Crane's fiction cannot be seen as a direct progression from observation to journalism to fiction, the complex relation between the two is still useful for understanding Crane's writing. *Maggie*, along with other works like Jacob Riis's pictorial documentary *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), had, as Gandal describes, a "mixed agenda of spectacle with charity and surveillance" (Gandal 1997, 17). However, unlike Riis, Crane uses few racial and ethnic stereotypes, instead focusing on the determining forces of morality.

In the 1890's the socioeconomic gap in New York City was huge, and Crane explores these tensions in his writing of this period. As Robertson asserts, Crane's city sketches "bridge distances that were geographically insignificant but socially and cognitively vast" (Robertson 1997, 81). Within a historical context, 1894 is considered the most brutal year of the depression after the stock market crash of 1893, and this worsening plight of the poor is examined in Crane's "experiment" sketches. A comprehensive biography of Crane by Paul Sorrentino contains a description of how direct, personal experience "became the basis for not only journalism but fiction as well" for young

writers like Crane even while more traditional, older writers found the approach to be extreme (Sorrentino 2014, 125). Crane's experience of joining a line of bums and unemployed to wait for a cheap meal and bed makes its way into his sketch "The Men in the Storm" which ran in the *Arena* in October 1894. Even though "The Men in the Storm" was published in October 1894, which was six months after the "Experiment" sketches, there is evidence that Crane experienced the blizzard which blanketed the Bowery with nearly eighteen inches of snow for over thirty hours starting on February 26, 1894 (Sorrentino 2014, 123). For these three stories, Crane left behind the comfortable middle-class existence of his family and briefly immersed himself in the poverty of the New York City slums in order to better understand their situation in a more personal way.

Crane uses repeated imagery in "The Men in the Storm" to capture their plight. "The Men in the Storm" there is a shift in narrative perspective early on which discards the complacent observer from the middle-class and plunges the reader into the crowd's interior. In this way, Crane discards the notion of a stable narrative point of view. Although it can be seen as a work of social protest due to its inherent challenging of the divisions created by the American economic system, the sketch rejects the tone of moralistic condemnation that was commonly seen in other texts in journals like the *Arena*, published by the Christian socialist Benjamin O. Flower.

The snowstorm is described in detail with the blizzard that "began to swirl great clouds of snow along the streets .... Until the faces of pedestrians tingled and burned as from a thousand needle-prickings" and the people "huddled" and "stoop[ed] like a race of aged people" and no one is spared from the "dreariness of the pitiless beat and weep of the storm." However, Crane then divides people into those who were hurrying off to their cozy homes and "hot dinners" and those who had to stand cold and hungry in the storm for food & shelter – showing the contrast between the affluent and the poor. Crane's repetition of imagery in the description of the group of homeless men exposes their isolation and vulnerability to the reader. The men in the story are often reduced to animals through Crane's language, but Robertson argues that the determinist perspective is presented as only a temporary point of view. The storm turns the men into nothing but "a heap of snow-covered merchandise" and they are often described in terms of their clothes or body parts in the examples "a heap of old clothes" and a "collection of heads." Connery highlights this experience as one that is dehumanizing for the men described and this is reflected in Crane's use of the phrases "mass," "collection of men," "a compressed group of men," "bodies of men," "a collection of heads," "a mob," a "thick stream," and "sheep" – all of which deemphasize them as individuals (Connery 2011, 182). They become less human and less civilized as they wait, as depicted in the following lines: they are "grim," telling "uncouth" jokes and laughing "ferociously like ogres." As a mass of brute force, they push against the building, "panting and groaning in fierce exertion" but upon entering the building, Connery notes, they become complacent and human again; Crane's journalistic training helps him capture this scene of the plight of the unemployed but he goes beyond the fact when he turns it into a cultural interpretation of the loss of their individuality due to their situation.

Similarly, Crane explores the facts of poverty and homelessness in his two "experiment" sketches but they are distinguished from other newspaper accounts on the subject due to "intense, striking metaphors and imagery" and what Connery calls the "interplay between perception and reality and its role in society's creation of identity" (Connery 2011, 183). In this context, Crane explores the fluidity of a person's identity as influenced by environment in "An Experiment in Misery" and "An Experiment in Luxury," which appeared in consecutive Sunday editions of the *New York Press* in April 1894. Together they reveal how, as Connery contends, "a person's *behavior* and *thinking* are shaped by the environment," as evidenced by the young man conducting the experiments who begins to think like a tramp or a millionaire (Connery 2011, 184). Crane questions whether it is possible to "feel" what a homeless person feels and his character ultimately concludes that at the very least his point of view has "undergone a considerable alteration." The strength of Crane's experiment pieces was the contrast between the perspectives that he gained by dressing like a homeless person in the first situation and then attending a formal dinner at the home of a Fifth Avenue millionaire in the second. What's unique is his lack of moralizing and sentimentality. As Robertson describes, Crane "uses a conventional newspaper form to conduct experiments in perception and identity" (Robertson 1997, 96). Because these pieces came out during the frenzy caused by the march of Coxey's Army of unemployed men on Washington D.C., they have additional cultural significance. Unlike other newspapers who disparaged Coxey's group, Crane did not portray the notion of the tramp as a threat to morality, but instead sought to convey to his audience the experiences and feelings of the tramp.

Although Crane was familiar with the reform efforts of the 1890's, his writing does not contain direct commentary on the sources of poverty or propose ideas for reform. Instead, Crane is interested in experimenting with point of view in his sketches. His writing differs from other texts that examined the poor which primarily took on the the ideological approach of Christian moralism, which Robertson defines as "the belief that poverty resulted from the moral failings of individuals, predominantly intemperance and idleness" (Robertson 1997, 91). Chauncey M. DePew and T. DeWitt Talmage represent the time period's attention to both individual effort and religious redemption, and nineteenth-century urban reformers "shared a belief in the need for moral regeneration" with reform programs that included ideas about how to "cure" the "disease" of urban poverty, the most notable being Charles Loring Brace's strategy to remove poor children from the slums to send them to live on western farms (Robertson 1997, 91).

In the frame to the story in "Experiment in Misery," the conversation between the young man and his friend sets the stage for the experiment. The friend says that the youth can tell nothing of the tramp's condition unless he experiences it himself, noting that "it is idle to speculate about it from this distance." After dressing the part, the young man quickly experiences negative reactions from those he passes on the street and this causes him to lose his confidence and become dejected. Robertson suggests that the youth becomes controlled by his surroundings and the passive verbs used to described him at that point in the story emphasize his "passivity and the corresponding power

of his surroundings" (Robertson 1997, 99). When he connects with another man from the "other half" and spends a sleepless night in the Bowery, his perception begins to transform, revealing new ideas about social inequality.

The subsequent experiment also causes a revelation about identity and perception. In "An Experiment in Luxury," the youth's perceptions fluctuate from superiority and complacency to an expanded point of view that questions class divisions. At the beginning, the mansion and visible signs of wealth make him "feel that he was a better man than many – entitled to a great pride." Later this point of view shifts as he idly chats with his friend "with no more apparent responsibility than rabbits, when certainly there were men, equally fine perhaps, who were being blackened and mashed in the churning life of the lower places." The youth wants to understand the "eternal mystery of social condition" and ultimately Crane's sketch suggests that these divisions are created by ideology and rigid moralistic beliefs that impede social progress.

Crane also probes the effects of these moral codes in *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1893), in which the title character grows up in the slums of New York City. Through scenes which present a spectacle of grief and insincere emotions, Crane criticizes the false morality of characters like Maggie's abusive mother Mary Johnson, while at the same time causing his readers to contemplate the plight of a poor girl like Maggie. Rather than presenting Maggie as a character who is merely a pawn of her environment, the main tragedy of *Maggie* centers on what Gandal refers to as a "clash between traditional and Bowery ethics . . . [as] Crane explicitly challenges the universality of Protestant morality" (Gandal 1997, 22). Notions of purity and moral integrity are not part of the ethics of Maggie's generation in the Bowery. Crane doesn't judge his characters according to middle-class morality but rather is interested in exploring the ethical codes of the Bowery in which his younger characters operate. Gandal splits the main characters into three groups, including "uninformed violators" like Maggie, "superstitious believers" like Mrs. Johnson, and "hypocritical advocates" like Jimmie (Gandal 1997, 53). Within this context, I argue that Crane emphasizes morality over environment as a determining force and uses this to critique the performance of sentimental morality during the nineteenth century.

According to historian Paul Boyer's study of the stages of America's moral response to the city, the common ideology of all reformers centered on the idea that the city should replicate the moral order of the village, in which citizens are knit together in cohesive communities by shared moral and social values. At mid-century, the middle class became more and more concerned about the danger the slums posed to society through the revolutionary violence displayed in riots and gangs (Boyer 1978, 89). As Boyer asserts, the middle class looked down on the poor as having "defects of character" and saw the slums as the site of the "plague" that would "infect" the rest of society (90). Reformers during this time saw a clear connection between environment and morality – a person's failings might initially drag them down to the slums but the physical conditions deepen his moral degradation and might be passed on to his children (93). The zeal of moral reform and "civic-uplift" hit a new high in the late nineteenth century and urban middle-class America became even more

caught up in the movement, spurred on by groups like the National Union for Practical Progress, which included Frances Willard of the Women's Christian Temperance Union on its advisory board (163). Crane criticizes this zeal for moral reform and the pressing of middle class ideals upon the urban masses, but tempers it with a sense of concern for Maggie's predicament.

Fundamentally, Crane is not concerned so much with the physical environment of the slums as he is with the moral belief system of the people who live in the Bowery and how, as Pizer describes, their values both clash with their experience and actively shape their lives (Pizer 1984, 145). Although Maggie's mother Mary is a violent drunk, she envisions herself as a good parent and pious Christian. Mary is clearly hypocritical to the reader, but she doesn't see it herself. Due to this mindset, she is able to ignore the fact that she regularly beat her children, while accusing Maggie of abusing and treating her mother poorly, and with no irony wonders "When a girl is bringed up deh way I bringed up Maggie, how kin she go teh deh devil?"

Mary subscribes to a sentimental morality drawn from middle-class values that emphasize the home, virtue, and respectability. The morality of the Bowery is deeply tied to the approval of others, but for Maggie, morality revolves around an internal belief system, putting her at odds with those around her. She does not feel like she is going against morality by becoming involved with Pete and in fact, Maggie sees him as a "knight," indicating that both hold values different from those of the middle class, which the older generation in their community attempt to enforce. This division between opposing moralities causes tension between parents and children. Gandal asserts that Crane portrays this "extreme separation so that Maggie can fall through the cracks . . . [since] she does not know how to be conventionally virtuous because she was never told; she is drawn to the values of her generation, but she does not seem to possess the spirit to embody them herself" (Gandal 1997, 57).

In his overview of the ironic structure of the story, Joseph Brennan asserts that Mary is "brutal yet hopelessly maudlin, irresistibly aggressive and invulnerably self-righteous . . . [embodying] all the evil forces of this society that work Maggie's and eventually its own destruction . . . [H]er outrageous physical strength [symbolizes] the devastating moral and psychological might by which she smashes the minds and souls of her children" (Brennan 1979, 181). Furthermore, as Marston LaFrance argues, Mary is a "moral monster" who delights in brutality, destruction, and sentimental self-pity (LaFrance 1972, 38). The story forcefully dramatizes the central thematic irony of the self-righteous condemnation of a good woman by the very society responsible for her downfall (Brennan 1979, 184).

Through characters like Mary Johnson, Crane is attacking the middle-class morality that she mimics. Crane's critique is that Mary's performance is a sham, and he is critical of the romantic way that morality was often "performed." By portraying Mary as a contradictory figure whose life experiences do not match the moral positions she espouses, Crane draws attention to the sentimentalism of the reform movements led primarily by middle-class women who became involved in benevolent and moral reform societies that sought to suppress vice in urban areas. Reform organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) dedicated much of their time to regulating the morals of American society.

This idea of community standards of morality is portrayed in the scenes in *Maggie* where Mary plays the role of moral judge in front of the audience of neighbors. She fits into Gandal's description of Crane's dichotomy between characters who are performers or spectators, and this is particularly evident when she implements "conspicuously theatrical measures" during her confrontation with Maggie (Gandal 1997, 111). Mary dramatically points her finger and jeers at Maggie when she comes home after Pete abandons her. Maggie's brother Jimmie recoils from her, "express[ing] horror of contamination" (56). The neighbors gather to witness the scene as if it is entertainment and children "ogled her [Maggie], as if they formed the front row at a theatre" (56). The women whispered in the doorway as Mary addressed them like a "glib showman" (56). Crane effectively expresses his criticism through his theatrical language of Mary's performance of morality.

Crane's use of the mother-figure as an instrument of criticism is especially significant given that the ideology beneath much of women's social activism in the late nineteenth century revolves around the conflation of femininity and morality. According to Lori Ginzberg, many female reformers used the "ideology of benevolence" to fight for their causes, and the depiction of piety and moral virtue as inherently female qualities was widely accepted in the nineteenth century. In her book on democracy and public life in the city, Mary Ryan challenges the positive association between femininity and morality, arguing that the role many women played as public female icons ("living female allegories") actually turned them into spectacles, rather than positive symbols (Ryan 1997, 246). Women of the middle and upper classes performed a ritual of charity – Ryan calls them "impersonators of benevolence" – and this ritual "spelled out an elaborate social and political theory: They honored free enterprise, self-help, class harmony, and female altruism all at once" (Ryan 1997, 249). This "ceremonial performance of gender," according to Ryan, did not further women's rights or feminism; it wasn't until much later that women would escape the representation of females as some "transcendent other" or projection of ideals and begin to fight against gender division (Ryan 1997, 251).

Mary's performances of morality seem to fall within this category, as she plays the role of the virtuous female in the scenes she performs for her audience of neighbors. Notably, her audience is also made up primarily of other women who react with the same smug self-righteousness towards Maggie. One mother snatches her child away from Maggie "casting a terrible look of indignation at the girl" (56). Another mother picks up a child in Maggie's path "as if rescuing a human being from an on-coming express train" (56). In his essay on tragedy and melodrama in *Maggie*, Thomas Gullason describes the tenement neighbors in theatrical terms, referring to their function as a sort of chorus like those in classic Greek tragedies. In their role as chorus, the audience of neighbors is meant to interpret the action, take sides, criticize, and moralize, but Crane's chorus is notably hypocritical in their damnation and lack of pity (Gullason 1979, 250). These women epitomize Crane's critical portrayal of female reformers myopically concerned with morality, while ignoring justice and fairness in their treatment of girls like Maggie.

At the end of the story, Crane illustrates sentimental morality to its fullest in the scene where Mary weeps over the baby booties of the dead Maggie:

> The mourner sat with bowed head, rocking her body heavily to and fro, and crying out in a high, strained voice that sounded like a dirge on some forlorn pipe. 'I kin remember when she weared worsted boots an' her two feets was no bigger dan yer thumb...' (67)

This exaggerated sentimental picture of a mother grieving over the loss of her child is followed by the scene of "forgiveness." As if she was acting in a play, Mary reacts to the other women's cries to forgive her daughter by shaking "in an agony of grief" while "hot tears seemed to scald her quivering face" and finally in a voice "like a scream of pain" she agrees, "'Oh, yes, I'll fergive her! I'll fergive her!'" (69).

The contradictory nature of Mary provides Crane with a means to analyze the sentimental morality of the middle-class. Karen Halttunen links the expression of sentimental culture to the "cult of mourning." Mary and her audience of tenement dwellers publicly enact a scene of Christian piety and social benevolence. Middle-class sentimentalists feared that the ritualization of mourning could be deceptively performed by those that were not really sincere, and this is exactly what Mary is doing in her scene of grief. A common feature of sentimental mourning was the veneration of mementos or reminders of the deceased, such as Maggie's baby booties. These items were supposed to be cherished and wept over in privacy but Mary uses them as a prop in her performance. Halttunen explains that the sentimental view emphasized the "power of domestic love" over death (Halttunen 1982, 130). Crane parodies this by portraying discontinuity between Mary's previous cruel behavior towards Maggie and her sentimental response to her daughter's death. She appropriates this expression of morality when it is useful to her.

The emphasis on powerful rhetorical strategies also applies to Mary's performances. In her book on nineteenth-century temperance rhetoric, Carol Mattingly examines the effectiveness of the arguments of women reformers, which was so successful because of its carefully composed ethical appeal. Crane applies this rhetoric to Mary through her persuasive performances in front of the judges at court and the neighbors at the tenement. During her regular visits to court, she "besieged the bench with voluble excuses, explanations, apologies and prayers" (19). She employed ethical appeals in her arguments to escape punishment; her familiar act of "flaming face and rolling eyes" effectively won her influence in the court as she "gradually [rose] to that degree of fame that she could bandy words with her acquaintances among the police-justices" (19). Mary also effectively uses rhetoric in her performances of grief and gains the sympathy of all of the neighbors. Throughout the story, Crane manipulates language in his ironic use of words and concepts like "respectability" and by doing so he reduces them to what Joseph Brennan calls a "hypocritical sham, a convenient justification for cruelty, irresponsibility, and indifference" (Brennan 1979, 175). Crane comments on the power of rhetoric most vividly in his depictions of Mary.

Just as Mary's rhetoric wins her power within her circle of neighbors, the reform movements of the nineteenth century, can also be linked to an increase in female power and influence. Catherine Gilbert Murdock argues that the temperance campaign helped define the simultaneous battle for women's suffrage (Murdock 1998, 4). The debate motivated women's political participation because women realized that it would be impossible to pass prohibition laws without political involvement. The concept of femininity was complicated by this issue as temperance women promoted the image of woman as "pious, pure, domestic, and submissive: the 'true woman' who obeyed her father or husband while quietly swaying him with her inherently moral nature" (Murdock 1998, 17). However, women became increasingly aware that their piousness alone would not get legislation to pass. The founding of the WCTU gave the movement a more organized front and got many women involved in politics. Mattingly concludes that a major component of the success of temperance was the effectiveness of their rhetorical appeals (Mattingly 1998, 163).

Within this context, Crane's deliberate characterization of Mary as both a drunk *and* the central moral judge in the story is striking. The distinctly unfeminine Mary, who abuses her family during her drunken rages, is clearly not the description of a woman who has an "inherently moral nature." Mary's rhetoric and performance are instead influenced by the middle-class culture she observes and mimics.

A politicizing of urban morality occurred in the nineteenth century, and as a result, the reform movement took on a more explicit class and ethnic coloration, strengthening the desire to impose middle-class ideals upon the urban masses (Boyer 1978, 172). Historian Paul Gilje argues that middle-class morality was closely tied to the rise of the market economy, which valued private property and aggressive entrepreneurs (Gilje 1987, 205). There was a sharp contrast between middle-class culture and what Gilje calls the plebeian moral economy, which emphasized the unity of the individual and the community. These differences led to an inevitable clash that often involved violence and taking grievances to the streets; the rapidly growing market economy, combined with the influx of immigrants during the nineteenth century, caused greater distance between levels of society (Gilje 1987, 206). The reform movement specifically targeted urban areas, subscribing to the belief that private virtue led to public virtue.

The Bowery people came into contact with middle-class culture through urban entertainment found in the theatre, music halls, and museums. Even Maggie is temporarily influenced when Pete takes her to see a show and she is enthralled: "Her cheeks were blushing with excitement and her eyes were glistening...No thoughts of the atmosphere of the collar and cuff factory came to her" (27). At the theatre, Maggie and the rest of the audience "hissed vice and applauded virtue" (31). Ironically, she believes that the theatre "made her think," even though the melodramas she watches are not relevant to the reality of Bowery life. Robert Dowling asserts that "the fiction of the stage begins to distort the very reality it loosely represents" (Dowling 2003, 53) and Pizer affirms this notion with his idea that there is a difference between the values *imposed* on the Bowery and reality (Pizer 1984, 144). The theatrical performances that Maggie and Pete attend are moral-reform dramas

that contain the typical aspects of popular melodramas (the hero rises from poverty in the first act to wealth and triumph in the end). Middle-class values are acted out on the stage and absorbed by the audience.

Similarly, middle class culture penetrates the Bowery through the music hall in scenes juxtaposed against each other. One scene that Maggie and Pete see involves the singing of the star-spangled banner, which rouses a cheer from the audience while "eyes gleamed with sudden fire, and calloused hands waved frantically in the air" (27); another scene includes a dancer in a costume of "some half dozen skirts" whose performance is described as "[giving] to the Bowery public the phantasies of the aristocratic theatre-going public, at reduced rates" (26). Dowling argues that in performances like these, middle-class morality is introduced to the audience of lower-class people, and this interweaving of Bowery behavior and Victorian culture influences their value system.

The sentimental morality of the Bowery is also very closely connected with the sanctimoniousness of Bowery religion, and Crane is critical of both. The mission church, like the theatre, promotes moral poses without really seeking to do anything for the people it is supposed to help. Mid-nineteenth century reformers focused on evangelical "revivals" and the primary outreach in the slums continued to center around the city missions; by 1865 there were 76 missions in New York City alone, but they were considered largely impersonal (Boyer 1978, 80). It is through these venues of entertainment and religion that the Bowery receives their notions of morality. In one scene, Jimmie enters a mission church where a minister is preaching to a Bowery audience. As he sermonizes about sin, the minister addresses the audience directly using "you" rather than including himself by using "we"; the minister is saved but the Bowery audience is damned because they are not a part of the acceptable Christian culture (Dowling 2003, 56-57). The minister's audience grows "impatient over the pictured depths of their degradation" (15) as they tolerate the minister's sermon while they wait for the soup-tickets that are so necessary to their survival.

A scene near the end of the novel again shows the moral ambiguity of some of the church's representatives when Maggie meets a clergyman on the street and he avoids assisting her:

> The girl had heard of the Grace of God and she decided to approach the man. His beaming, chubby face was a picture of benevolence and kind-heartedness. His eyes shone good-will. But as the girl timidly accosted him, he gave a convulsive movement and saved his respectability by a vigorous sidestep. He did not risk it to save his soul. For how was he to know that there was a soul before him that needed saving? (60)

Dowling calls these influences of morality the "grotesque imposition of middle class mores onto the slum's inhabitants" (Dowling 2003, 58). Within this context, it seems that Crane's criticism is not of slum life, but rather the harm done by an artificial morality imposed on that life. Clearly Mary embodies the influence of the middle-class morality that is impressed upon the Bowery by the missions and the melodramas, which teach her to judge and detach herself from any responsibility to others. Maggie, on the other hand, is influenced more by her own internal beliefs, which seem more aligned with a truly Christian spirit of generosity and kindness. In this sense,

she clearly does not perform morality in the way her mother does. When she thinks about her relationship with Pete, she says "she [does] not feel like a bad woman. To her knowledge she had never seen any better" (45). It is the artificial sense of morality practiced by Mary and others in the Bowery that drives Maggie to her downfall. Since Maggie is not consciously going against traditional morality, it becomes evident that Crane is more interested in her loss of confidence rather than a battle with temptation. Gandal contends that "self-doubt replaces temptation self-hatred replaces sin [and] a struggle to be virtuous has been replaced in *Maggie* with a battle for self-respect" (Gandal 1997, 102). When Maggie takes action and leaves with Pete, she is scorned by her family and community. This lack of support in the name of moral codes that Maggie does not understand ultimately leads to her demise.

In both his journalism and his fiction, Crane explored the ruptures in the middle-class system of morals, using sharp irony in his critiques. Crane's description of Maggie as a girl who "blossomed in a mud puddle" tests the link many reformers saw between morality and environment. The "positive environmentalist approach," as Boyer defines it, was a more subtle approach to reform that aimed to remold the city's physical environment in order to elevate its moral tone; it coexisted alongside other more coercive crusades of reform that treated the city as a "menace" to be subdued (Boyer 1978, 175). Tenement reform and the conscious planning of urban environments with parks, municipal art, and playgrounds were sponsored by more progressive reformers who studied the social needs met by saloons and brothels, offering the working class viable alternatives (Boyer 1978, 221). The city beautiful movement grew out of this impulse, promoting a more livable and attractive environment that would inspire a surge of civic loyalty and reverse the decay of social and moral cohesiveness (Boyer 1978, 264). As Boyer asserts, this group of reformers was focused on using the "benevolent manipulation" of the physical and social environment as a technique of urban moral control.

For Maggie, the effects of the physical environment play a less significant role than the middle-class morality that influences the Bowery through the theatre and the mission church. Crane draws upon melodrama to evoke compassion and to express his criticism of the sentimentalism of the moral reform movement. Mary practices this sentimental morality in her judgment of her daughter, even though her own life experiences are at odds with this ideology. Her performance is an act of superficial sentimentality that allows her to judge but distance herself. Crane is critical of this performance of morality because of its empty meaning and he complicates and redefines the concept of morality through his novel. In doing so, Crane stretches the boundaries of literary naturalism by exploring the theme of morality as a determining force, and thereby leaves his own distinct mark on the literature of his era.

The characters in Crane's socially engaged sketches and stories are continuously shifting and revealing new perspectives to the reader, probing beneath the surface and confronting the fluidity of identity and perception. In his sketches especially, Crane presents a strong sense of social injustice yet he wrote with irony that created an unsentimental distance. His sketches in 1894 display

an astute awareness of the effects of environment on people and reveal Crane's social conscience that was developed out of his direct experiences. Crane's critique of hypocritical middle-class moral codes in *Maggie* took the form of a prose style that Sorrentino aptly describes as "replete with jarring diction and sensory impressions [that render] character, theme, and setting" (Sorrentino 2014, 109). The sentimentalizing and moralizing that was so common in other works of his era was missing from Crane's work, portraying an innovative, starkly realistic portrayal of slum life that remains among the most captivating examples from American literary history.

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Women Deconstructing History in Search of their Own Voice and Identity

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Abstract:

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* focuses on immigrants' life experiences in the postwar British society. The novel is said to herald a new voice of multiculturalism and is often compared to the construction of hybrid identity that writers such as Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi explore in their works. In her portrayal of an evolving multicultural British society, Smith takes a broader approach as she introduces characters from different ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds to show how people from diverse backgrounds adapt and negotiate their identities. While I pay attention to questions of race, identity, multiculturalism, hybridity, and migration, I seek to examine in detail the place of history in nation building, especially in relation to the way history is deconstructed and rearticulated by women in their construction of a rhizomatic womb-space. I contend that an exploration of women's history or *herstory* in Smith's novel is not only important because it provides an alternative history that speaks of women's experiences but more so because of the new world and social relations that it constructs as it emphasizes journeys, (dis)connections, ruptures, and displacements as possible modes of identity formation for women rather than the stable core or continuities that history promotes.

Keywords: Herstory, multiculturalism, rhizomatic womb-space, identity negotiation, hybridity, space, social relations, migration, and emplacement.

Introduction

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* focuses on immigrants' life experiences in the postwar British society. The novel embodies a cross-cultural and cross-generational reading of a multiracial and multicultural British society as it speaks of the challenges both immigrants and non-immigrants, first and second-generation characters, women and men, face in an ever-changing English society. Unlike Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, which focuses on the initial contact between first-generation immigrants and white English "natives," Smith takes a broader approach to the complex nature of the British multicultural society both during World War II and many decades after the *Windrush* experience. She introduces characters from different ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds represented by the families of the Iqbals, Joneses, and Chalfens to show how people from diverse

backgrounds adapt and negotiate their identities in a multicultural British society. These families are made up of many generations of immigrant men and women, young and old, Jamaican, Bangladeshi, and German/Polish people, all trying to recreate their identities. In other words, these three families show the complex relationship evident among immigrant communities in England and the transformations they bring to bear as they work towards social integration. Thus, the inter-racial tensions arising from racism, discrimination, segregation, gender inequality, and unequal job opportunities portrayed in *Small Island* before and after WW II are undermined as these immigrants, in one way or the other, forge new relationships as they are brought together by different circumstances and events that unfold in their society. The stories that the characters embody inform the reader that everybody, irrespective of class, gender, and nationality, is struggling to adapt to the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural realities of the time. Thus, questions of identity, belonging, boundary negotiation, search for roots, and displacement are articulated to explain the challenges the immigrant communities face in their quest to build a multicultural society. This paper explores the challenges immigrants, especially women face in their quest for identity negotiation and integration into British society as well as their contribution towards building a multicultural British society. It also explores the various ways women are deconstructing the dominant history to create their own stories/her-story. I am particularly interested in the future that Irie envisions and nurtures in what I refer to as her rhizomatic womb-space—a social, creative, ideological, and biological space through which women conceive, nurture, and offer new social relations built not on the either/or dichotomy that gender, class, race, and nationality evoke but on fluid identity formations and social relations.

The publication of *White Teeth* in 2000 was said to herald a new voice of multiculturalism and was often compared to the construction of hybrid identity that writers such as Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi explore in their works. In critical analyses of the novel, many scholars have paid particular attention to Smith's portrayal of a British multicultural society. Michele Braun posits that *White Teeth* is acclaimed by many scholars as "a progressive vision of a multicultural Britain" (Braun 2013, 221). Similarly, Perez Fernandez argues that Smith's novel is considered the epitome of multiculturalism. In response to what she considers as the normalization of a multicultural life in Britain, Fernandez notes that "*White Teeth* does not only inscribe what could be, the life of Smith's 'generation' of ethnically diverse individuals in London, but it also attempts to normalize and validate those experiences as a part of common-day life in Britain" (Fernandez 2009, 146). The normalization of hybridity that Fernandez identifies is also similar to Laura Moss' view that "Smith is part of a generation of writers who have written about hybridity—racial, cultural, and linguistic—as part of the practice of everyday life" (Moss 2003, 11). As Moss notes, the normalization of hybridity comes as a result of "current state of globalization, diasporic migration, and contemporary cosmopolitanism…in contemporary postcolonial communities" (Moss 2003, 12). Although Smith acknowledges tensions arising from immigrants' quest for social integration, she envisions a future where race will no longer be a definitive term for national belonging and identity formation but people, irrespective of gender, nationality, race, will come together to build a more relational British multicultural society.

Many other scholars who are interested in the question of identity and the reconstruction of Englishness have done so either by highlighting on issues of race, science, history and culture that undergird the narrative. Ashley Dawson, Josie Gill, and Mindi McMann explore the impact of science on identity construction by focusing on Marcus Chalfen's FutureMouse project and the possibility that science—in this regard, genetics—not only controls one's understanding of human behavior but also becomes a basis upon which identity is constructed. Gill explores the interconnection of science and fiction and argues that Smith "uncovers the myths about genetics which circulate in contemporary culture" (Gill 2013, 20). In other words, he notes that the past impacts the future both in positive and negative ways. Dawson focuses on the intersection of genetics and race. According to Dawson, "*White Teeth* focuses on the extent to which one's cultural and biological pedigree affect identity and belonging in contemporary Britain" (Dawson 2010, 151). He sees Chalfen's genetically customized FutureMouse project as "a site for experimentation into heredity" (Dawson 2010, 152) and an attempt to control human identity, behavior, and future through racial engineering. Dawson contends that although question of race is not overtly articulated in the novel, Smith's portrayal of Chalfen's FutureMouse project indicates the hold biological determinism has had on the popular imagination. Similarly, McMann traces the long history of cultural and racial changes in England, through what he refers to as "a black box." According to McMann, "a black box is a gap in a chain of mechanisms, when something happens but isn't explained" (McMann 2012, 625). As he further explains, in terms of identity, this gap stands in for the tensions that revolve around identity renegotiation. In the case of *White Teeth*, the fear has been about immigrants losing their black cultural heritage as they come into contact with the English culture. Focusing on second-generation characters, McMann shows how these children struggle with cultural assimilation as well as the fear such assimilation creates in the minds of their parents.

While I pay attention to questions of race, identity, multiculturalism, hybridity, and migration, I seek to examine in detail the place of history in nation building, especially in relation to the way history is deconstructed and rearticulated in the novel by women. Although Paul Gilroy underscores the importance of history in the (re)construction of identity, he notes that history remains unacknowledged. Gilroy argues that, "though history remains marginal and largely unacknowledged, surfacing only in the service of nostalgia and melancholia, it represents a store of unlikely connections and complex interpretative resources. The imperial and colonial past continues to shape political life in the overdeveloped-but-no-longer-imperial countries" (Gilroy 2005, 2). Ironically, both the imperial and colonial pasts that Gilroy alludes to are all male-constructs that have continued to shape the identities of men in both the developed and underdeveloped countries. However, not only are women rendered invisible in these master narratives, the narratives do not provide a basis for feminine identity formations as they speak of dominance and conquest. This is not surprising as history has always been presented as a male construct thereby rendering women outside of or marginal to history.

In this paper, I shift focus away from history constructed by men to underscore different ways history can be reconstructed and re-appropriated for the reformation of individual and national

identities. I do this by exploring the different ways female characters challenge the dominant history as they come up with their own narratives of history or *her-story*. As Susan Friedman notes, the goal of writing women's history "was not to discover the true history, but rather to construct the story of women's experience out of a feminist paradigm or perspectives" (Friedman 1998, 202). The aim, therefore, is to "engage in the deformation of phallocentric history and the reformation of histories that focus on or integrate women's experience and the issue of gender" (Friedman 1998, 202). In this regard, I contend that an exploration of women's history or *herstory* in Smith's novel is not only important because it provides an alternative history that speaks of women's experiences but more so because of the new world and social relations that it constructs as it emphasizes journeys, (dis)connections, ruptures, and displacements as possible modes of identity formation for women rather than the stable core or continuities that history promotes. Thus, the construction of Irie's rhizomatic womb-space evolves partly from the deconstructed history and all the cultural, national, ideological, and social factors that contribute to its writing as well as the silencing of women's voice in its narration. In this regard, the rewriting of history, reconstruction of identities at both the national and individual levels, empowerment of women, and formation of new social relations undergird Irie's construction of a rhizomatic womb-space. In her rhizomatic womb-space, Irie conceives a new world where fixed identities such as race do not matter because they are complex and delimiting, and where women voices are no longer silenced but are needed in the reconstruction of identities and retelling of history. Irie's rhizomatic womb-space is therefore both biological—as she conceives a child that she envisions will be an embodiment of the changes that she seeks to create—and social, as she uses it to foster different ways of living, ideas, and social relations. It is also ideological in that she wants people to think beyond fixed identities such as race, class, root, nationality, and gender to other possible forms of social relations that allow fluid identity formations.

Rhizomatic womb-space

The rhizomatic womb-space is a term I coined from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of rhizome, on the one hand and from Ancient Greek philosophy of the wandering uterus/womb, on the other hand. It is constructed with the aim of revising dominant histories and cultures as well as creating other new spaces for minority voices to be heard and minority stories to be retold. The rhizomatic womb-space pushes for new social formations and relations that are informed by multiplicity, divergence, and connectivity. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari explain in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, the rhizome gives room for multiplicity and interconnectivity and establishes a non-hierarchical relationship where different unrelated things are connected. The rhizome resists fixed points of emergence and rootedness. According to them, when a rhizome is broken in one location, it emerges elsewhere with multiple openings and growths. In this regard, a rhizome does not produce a single trait but leads to other connections, thereby creating multi-dimensional assemblages that can come from one of its old lines or a completely new line. Thus, the rhizome defies any rigid classification as it seeks to disrupt even the root that produces it. In connecting

the concept of the rhizome to the Ancient Greek philosophy of the wandering womb as seen in the works of Plato and Hippocrates, my goal is to show how women have not only resisted their subjugation but have also redefined themselves through migration and other cultural and social relations.

In Ancient Greek philosophy, the womb was seen as a living animal that was capable of moving about in the female body as a result caused a lot of discomfiting problems to the female body and mind. In Plato's *Timaeus*, he describes the womb as a living animal desirous of childbearing, which is distressed when it is not fruitful, hence its wandering in the female body:

> The so-called uteruses…in women—there being in them a living animal desirous of childbearing…whenever it is fruitless for a long time beyond its due season, being distressed it carries on with difficulty and by wandering in every direction throughout the body, by fencing off the passages of breath, and by not allowing (the body) to catch its breath, it throws it (the body) into the extremes of helplessness and provokes all other kinds of diseases. (qtd in Faraone 2011, 3)

Not only does Plato describe the womb as a living animal desirous of childbearing, he also portrays it in a negative light—as capable of causing pains in women when it is not sexually satisfied and as one that can only be satisfied through its connection to the male. He frames the female body as dependent on men and one that derives satisfaction and completeness only in relation to men. In Hippocrates' account of the wandering womb, he focuses on the different places the womb can attach itself and the various pains that come because of its wandering:

> If the uterus seems to sit under the diaphragm, the woman suddenly becomes speechless … and she experiences suffocation; she grinds her teeth and, when called, does not respond. When the womb strikes the liver or abdomen … the woman turns up the whites of her eyes and becomes chilled; some women are livid. She grinds her teeth and saliva flows out of her mouth. These women resemble those who suffer from Herakles' disease (i.e., epilepsy). If the womb lingers near the liver or abdomen, the woman dies of suffocation. (qtd in Faraone 2011,4)

Apart from Hippocrates's elaboration on the pains that the wandering womb causes women, he also considers the female body as physiologically cold and capable of producing fluids, which must be purged. To stop the womb from wandering, therefore, different recommendations were made ranging from getting married, if the woman is single to keep the uterus moist through constant sexual intercourse as well as to stop it from attaching itself to other moist parts of the body; and if married, the woman was encouraged to become pregnant. If the womb has wandered, it was recommended that baths, uterine infusions, and a series of physical manipulations and bindings of the abdomen be applied to force the womb back in place.

Contrary to the notion that the wandering womb affected women negatively by causing them hysteria, I have reconceptualized the womb as a productive space and used it to show the many ways women renegotiate their identities at different positions they find themselves in society. It is my

contention that the wandering womb, even in its representation in the Ancient Greek period, is a subversive object that not only resists control and fixity but also creates its own pathway as it wanders in search of moisture and satisfaction in other parts of the female body. In other words, the wandering womb defies any notion of fixity, origin, and root as it moves about in search of its own identity and positionality. Significant is the fact that when the womb "wanders" from one place to another, it does not only occupy a new position but also connects to other parts of the female body and adapts to new locations. In this regard, it becomes rhizomatic as it creates multiple identities for itself because it is not one part of the female body that is connected but multiple unrelated parts that meet at each point of contact.

Re-appropriating the concept of the wandering womb, I set forth to explore how women, though displaced, can begin to redefine their identities by breaking barriers, charting their own course, connecting with different people, and taking new social positions in their new social milieu. I argue that, like the wandering womb, women who migrate reconstruct their identities in relation to routes and through various connections and contacts they make rather than through roots. The rhizomatic womb-space, therefore, is a radical feminine space through which women not only critique those values that inhibit one's self-fulfillment but also offer new social relations, renegotiate their identities, and envision a new world built not on the "either/or" dichotomy that gender, class, race, and nationality evoke but on fluid identity and multiple connections. Thus, like the wandering womb that detaches itself from its original location to create a new space for itself, I contend that although women are displaced in various ways, their displacements offer them an opportunity to create new identities and spaces for themselves in their new social milieu.

The construction of rhizomatic womb encourages multiculturalism, change in perception and a critique of dominant ideology, history, and traditions that promote fixed identity formation and limit women to the domestic sphere of childbearing and rearing. Not only does it challenge the traditional ways of doing and defining things, it also gives room for new social formations and diversity, especially in terms of people's relationship with those from other ethnic, cultural, and national boundaries. Unlike the traditional concept of womanhood upon which the concept of wandering womb was situated in the Ancient Greek philosophy, women situated in a rhizomatic womb spaces transcend their traditional gender roles that confine them to the domestic space to engage in other roles in the public spaces. They consider not marriage and children as their greatest achievements but their ability to foster new social relations and nurture new ideas geared towards inclusion, tolerance, and diversity. There is also a conscious effort to bridge the gap between the private/domestic space and the public space as they make the family a microcosm of the nation. Thus, the rhizomatic womb-space becomes a metaphor for women's movements, journeys, rootlessness, displacements, pains, quest for change, and ruptures. In this regard, the construction of the rhizomatic womb-space becomes a journey in itself (both physically and mentally) that requires the individual characters to reposition themselves socially, linguistically, culturally, spatially, and ideologically in terms of identity renegotiation and social integration. In other words, it is a

journey that demands that people give up those negative values that undermine their self-potential as well as confine them. This, in essence, means that women must strive to move away from their places of displacement to new areas of emplacement.

As a theoretical construct, the rhizomatic womb-space is defined as a site of radical openness that pushes for new social formations and relations that are informed by multiplicity, divergence, connectivity, and quest for change. It is a social, creative, intellectual, and ideological feminine space that is interested in questions of identity, gender, (un)belonging, and the critical interventions that women make in their immediate families and nations at large. It is also a biological space that explores mother-child relationship and how women have been able to redefine the sociocultural and political landscapes through childbearing and rearing. In situating characters in a rhizomatic womb-space, therefore, what is important is not race, class, gender, or nationality but making connections, giving voice to the voiceless, redefining women's social (re)positioning, and fostering new social relations geared towards creating a conducive environment for people as well as breaking not just one new ground but multiple ones as people begin to question and critique the binary oppositions that set them apart, create new spaces for minority voices to be heard and minority stories to be retold. However, rather than the traditional approach, the construction of rhizomatic womb-space requires a new approach that rejects the either/or dichotomy that underlies identity formation and social relations as it privileges a multiple and diverse approach to sociocultural issues. The message undergirding the construction of rhizomatic womb space is simple, it is all about change in perception, inclusion, (re)orientation, ideology, and social relations. No more shall the future be left in the hands of one group or history be dependent on one voice but everybody irrespective of class, nationality, race, and gender has a stake in the community and nation at large and is capable of constructing a rhizomatic womb-space as well as fostering new social relations. The construction of a rhizomatic womb-space, therefore, requires constant renegotiation of identity, devising alternative ways to traditional approach to life, social and ideological repositioning, connection, reevaluation of history and root and fostering new social relations.

Analysis

In *White Teeth*, the initial task of deconstructing racial identity and history rests on Alsana, Samad's teenage wife. Alsana is aware that as an immigrant and a woman, she faces double displacement—one from her host community and the other from the dominant culture and history. The dominant history, as she notes, is one that upholds men's acts of heroism by first making women invisible. Alsana is also aware that the dominant history has always provided men a platform upon which they construct their masculine identities. However, in view of the challenges before her, it is not by accident that Smith offers her the opportunity to deconstruct the dominant history upon which men construct their identities. In an early chapter that portrays men's participation in World War II entitled, "The Root Canals of Alfred Archibald Jones and Samad Miah Iqbal," the narrator indicates, "it is all very well, this instruction of Alsana to look at the thing close up; to look at it dead

straight between the eyes; an unflinching and honest stare, a meticulous inspection that would go beyond the heart of the matter to its marrow, beyond the marrow to the root" (Smith 2000, 72). Looking at the war narrative "close up" as she has been instructed to do, Alsana tells the reader that the dominant history upon which Samad and Archie construct their masculinity is all "shitty lies!" (Smith 2000, 69). She asks, "if they are heroes, where are their hero things? Where are the hero bits and pieces? Heroes—they have things. They have hero stuff. You can spot them ten miles away. I've never seen a medal...and not so much as a photograph" (Smith 2000, 69). Thus, by pushing for proof of their heroism, Alsana "puts history through a sieve, winnows out the lies....She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths" (Anzaldúa 1999, 104). Aware that the war history that these men represent is partial as women are not adequately represented in it, Alsana distances herself from it in order to create her own personal history. Thus, by critiquing history, Alsana opens a space—in this regard, a radical space of enunciation, from which she seeks to reconstruct a new historical narrative as well as reconstruct her own identity. In her relationship with Samad and other men, therefore, Alsana does not allow their ideas to overshadow hers. She constantly makes them realize that she has a voice of her own and can speak for herself. In one of such occasions that Samad tries to impose his ideas on her, Alsana strongly opposes that. She tells Samad that they have both followed different routes and as such have different identities and ideologies: "I do not serve what you worship, nor do you serve what I worship. I shall never serve what you worship, nor do you serve what I worship. You have your own religion, and I have mine...[You] will whistle [your] tune and I will whistle mine" (Smith 2000, 189).

Alsana's vision is not only to deconstruct the dominant history but also to build bridges that connect people of different races, genders, and historical periods. It is through Alsana that Smith conceives of a marriage between the past and the present that does not exclude anyone based on race or gender. It is also through Alsana that Smith begins to articulate a multicultural British identity built on tolerance, accommodation of minority groups and voices, and respect for different cultures. In her discussion with Clara and Niece of Shame (her lesbian niece who, by virtue of her sexual orientation, is designated a shame to the Black community, hence her name, Niece of Shame), she tells them that her twins "will always have daddy-long-legs for fathers. One leg in the present, one in the past. No talking will change this. Their roots will always be tangled" (Smith 2000, 68). In other words, she envisions a fluid identity for her children rather than a fixed one—an identity that is not rooted in the past but transcends it as her children embrace the transformations taking place in the present, which they anticipate will shape the future. Unlike Samad who advocates for cultural purity, Alsana objects racial and cultural purity. Rather, she argues that racial purity is an illusion. According to her, "you go back and back and back and it's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy tale!" (Smith 2000, 196). Instead of upholding racial purity, Alsana envisions a crisscrossing of different roots as she notes that the future identity does not depend on one's ancestral roots but the different routes and cultures that one has been exposed to.

Similarly, Alsana contends that a multicultural and hybrid identity is only a mirage if people do not respect other people's cultures, religions, and beliefs. She exemplifies this by burning the things that her son, Millat, holds so dear when she sees him on television burning Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verse*. According to Alsana, "everyone has to be taught a lesson.... Either everything is sacred, or nothing is. And if he starts burning other people's things, then he loses something sacred also" (Smith 2000, 197). She also argues that no one person, culture, religion, or tradition should be considered more important than the other and that people should learn to tolerate one another. As Martha Addante notes, Alsana's message of tolerance is "born out of an understanding that people are 'involved' as a result of their multiple journeys—routes—which have led them all to the imperial centre" (Addante 2008, 80). Alsana illustrates this spirit of tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity and difference when she tells Samad how her small group works for the interest of everyone. According to Alsana, "when my little group get together, if we disagree about something, we can sort it out. Example: Mohona Hossain hates Divargiit Singh. Hates all his movies. Hates him with a passion. She likes that other fool with the eyelashes like a lady! But we compromise. Never once have I burned a single video of hers.... I live. I let live" (Smith 2000, 195). Accordingly, Alsana contends that, "to be involved in British life, to be British, requires acceptance of collectivity, diversity, and tolerance" (Addante 2008, 80). This spirit of tolerance and acceptability that Alsana represents is at the heart of the new British society that Smith envisions.

Like Alsana, Hortense Bodwen also fights against patriarchy and silencing of women, especially in the public sphere. Her sense of displacement and domination comes from the larger society represented by the church she belongs to. As a member of the Jehovah's Witness church, she is aware that women are displaced and denied freedom of expression as men not only control the church but also the production and distribution of knowledge. In her interaction with Ryan Topps, (a man she not only introduces to the church but accommodates in her house after the demise of her husband) he makes it clear to her that as a woman, she must remain silent in the house of God and that men have received the divine mandate and authority to manage and control the church. As Topps tells Hortense when the latter thinks it is appropriate to dress properly for a church event, "you must avoid interpretin' scripture by yourself, Mrs. Bowden. In future, discuss it wiv myself and my colleagues. Ask us: is pleasant clothing a concern of the Lord's? And myself and my colleagues among the Anointed, will look up the necessary chapter and verse" (Smith 2000, 321). Not only do Topps and his colleagues consider women inferior, they also think that women do not have the power to produce and distribute knowledge, hence the need for them to remain silent. However, reacting against the inferior position that she has been relegated to based on her gender, Hortense tells Mr. Topps that she hears from the Lord too and should be given an opportunity to teach the word of God. According to Hortense, "sometime I tink I could be one of dem dat teach, you know? Even though I am a woman...I feel like the Lord talk to me in a special way...It jus' a bad habit...but so much in the de church change recently, sometimes me kyan keep up wid all de rules and regulations" (Smith 2000, 322). Hortense's admittance of the wrongness in speaking as a woman

comes from her internalization of the Christian values and social codes that inhibit women from occupying the public sphere and speaking publicly too. Such teachings, as one observes, are usually disseminated and enforced by men to maintain their control over women. This fact is buttressed in Topps' insistence that men are naturally endowed with the power to teach others—others in this case being women: "In this life there are them that are teachers and then there are them that are pupils.... But you must learn to leave such fings to them that 'ave the direct line, Mrs. B., the direct line" (Smith 2000, 329). His invocation of the social stratification is an indication of a supposed natural endowment where men are meant to lead women and are equated with power and knowledge and women are forced into silence and passivity.

However, Hortense's recognition of her silenced and marginalized position becomes a steppingstone towards her liberation. Her acknowledgement that society is changing shows her willingness to embrace the winds of change in order to reposition herself and rewrite that history of exclusion. For Hortense, the first thing to do as both a migrant subject and a woman is to decolonize her mind so that she can begin to think of new ways to represent herself in a society that works so hard to keep her down. She tells Irie, her granddaughter:

> Im not like dem Witness jus' scared of dyin'. Jus scared. I gat different aims. I still hope to be one of de Anointed evan if I am a woman. I want it all my life. I want to be dere wid de Lord making de laws and de decisions...I gat so tired wid de church always telling me I'm a woman or I'm nat heducated enough. Everybody always tryin' to heducate you; heducate you about dis, heducate you about dat.... Dat's always bin de problem wid de women in dis family. Somebody always tryin to heducate them about something, pretendin it all about learnin forty-four, no one gwan try to heducate me. Dat would be my job! I'd make my own laws an I wouldn't be wanting anybody else's opinions. (Smith 2000, 338)

Thus, in her self-decolonization mission, Hortense distances herself from the teachings on women's inferiority and subordination as disseminated through the church and western education. She identifies these teachings as one of the challenges the different generations of Bowden women have faced and distances herself from it. She recalls with sadness how her mother becomes a victim of sexual and racial violence in the hands of two British men who claim to be educating her. But as Hortense tells Irie, she is bent on stepping out of this culture that not only silences her but dehumanizes her. Like her male counterparts, she seeks to be in the public sphere and make her own law rather than be controlled by the teachings that privilege and empower men to the detriment of women. Unlike her mother, who blindly followed the teachings of her violators, Hortense seeks to write a new law where women are at the center and not mere followers of patriarchal doctrines. Her desire is to reclaim her voice and to be given an opportunity to be in leadership position just like her male counterparts and not to be subordinated. She sees dialogue as a channel through which she can make her case known to bring about changes in her society and the religious body.

It is not surprising that Irie borrows a new leaf from her grandmother in her quest to educate herself and transform the social relations that have kept the minority people down for so long a time.

Hortense not only encourages her granddaughter, Irie, to be an agent of change but provides her the materials with which to effect the change in society. As a mixed-race child of Archie and Clara, Irie is situated in an ambivalent space—in between two distinct and parallel cultural and racial identities—Jamaican and English, white and black. While this state of in-betweenness becomes a source of trauma to her, on the other hand, it can also be read as symbolic of the position of immigrants in Britain who are neither here nor there as they straddle two cultures—the culture of the homeland and that of the hostland. However, for Irie to be able to create a new identity for herself as well as construct her rhizomatic womb-space, she must overcome her mixed-race identity crisis.

Earlier in the narrative when Irie's identity is mentioned, Samad explains, "she had got her genes mixed up, Archie's nose with Clara's awful buckteeth" (Smith 2000, 124). Samad's reference to Irie's mixed genes characterizes her biracial identity as problematic to the British society at this historical moment as Irie is portrayed as a racialized Other even though she is a British citizen. It also points to the cause of her identity crisis in a society where racial purity is much valued and the desirable female body is white. Unlike her second-generation male counterparts, who fight against racism, Irie has an additional problem arising from her biracial and female body, which is neither recognized nor accepted in the mainstream culture. According to the narrator, "there was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection. A stranger in a stranger (sic) land" (Smith 2000, 222). As McMann argues:

> Anxieties about Irie circulate not around her hybrid identity, but around the fact she has a body that signifies blackness, not Britishness....While other characters...struggle with hybridity, we can see that Irie perceives her own body as something abject. The abject becomes that which must be jettisoned in order to enter the semiotic realm—or bluntly, in order to become part of society" (McMann 2012, 629).

Though a biracial child, Irie's physical attributes, which are predominantly Jamaican, displace her from her birthplace—Britain. As the narrator explains, "[T]he European proportions of Clara's figure had skipped a generation, and [Irie] was landed instead with Hortense's substantial Jamaican frame, loaded with pineapples, mangoes, and guavas; the girl had weight; big tits, big butt, big hips, big thighs, big teeth. She was 182 pounds and had thirteen pounds in her savings account" (221). It is in relation to this identity crisis that McMann, comparing Irie's challenges in Britain with those of second-generation male characters, contends that "unlike Millat and Magid, whose struggles with being British are the result of the tension between cultures and external desires, Irie's struggle between influences is literally in her genes. Like the twins, she must wrangle with external expectations of who she is...in this way, Irie more so than the twins, embodies racial anxiety in the novel" (McMann 2012, 629).

However, it is in Hortense's house that Irie begins her journey of self-discovery and reconstruction of new identity for herself and her unborn child. The familial history that she discovers while living with her grandmother, Hortense, helps her to imagine a new world beyond the one she finds herself in and seeks in her own ways to construct this world. In other words, her

coming to her grandmother's house creates room for a self-discovery of her identity and history and those of others—including the colonial history that her great-grand father, Captain Durham, represents. Her grandmother's house holds not only the secret of her past, which neither her father nor her mother has been able to tell her but "was an adventure. In cupboards and neglected drawers and in grimy frames were the secrets that had been hoarded for so long, as if secrets were going out of fashion" (Smith 2000, 330). Irie's discovery of her past marks the beginning of her journey towards reconstructing not only her identity but writing a maternal history—a history that foregrounds a new world order that she envisions:

> She had laid claim to the past—her version of the past—aggressively, as if retrieving misdirected mail. So this was where she came from. This all belonged to her, her birthright, like a pair of pearl earrings or a post office bond. X marks the spot, and Irie put an X on everything she found, collecting bits and pieces (birth certificates, maps, army reports, news articles) and storing them under the sofa, so that as if by osmosis the richness of them would pass through the fabric while she was sleeping and seep right into her. (Smith 2000, 331)

In laying claim to her past, Irie is able to resolve the tension arising from her bi-racial identity crisis. Her turning to her maternal roots is in relation to her quest to create a *her-story* since women have been displaced from the dominant history.

Irie's discovery of her own truth from her past also helps her in creating her rhizomatic womb-space—a space through which she seeks to nurture her daughter and the new British society to a new beginning. For Irie, Britain not only needs to recognize the presence and contributions of Africa in its national history but also must be willing to learn from its rich cultural heritage. Thus, in constructing a new British nation, she does not only look inward—to British cultural identity—but also looks outward—to Africa and beyond for inspiration. Her sitting at the Caribbean Sea at the end of the narrative indicates not just a return to the origin but also a desire for interconnectivity, new discoveries, and beginnings. It also shows her defiance to confinement and her desire for redemption and for inclusion of other histories that have contributed to the making of British history. As Stuart Hall contends, "there is no English history without that other history" (Hall 1996, 49). Irie's quest for connectivity and inclusion is also in line with Deleuze and Guattari's clamour for interconnectivity to different ideas, peoples, and concepts and their privileging of routes over roots. Deleuze and Guattari's rejection of roots indicates their opposition to tradition and fixed ideas and identities, hence their position that the rhizome has no beginning or end but a middle where something new begins. For them, the rhizome symbolically represents a site of enunciation and identity reformation—a point of intersection or melting point where new things and growths emerge. In this vein, the rhizome speaks of rupture, recombination, and (re)connections. In other words, rhizomatic constructions are route oriented as they are realized through flights, journeys, reformations, (dis)connections, (dis)placement and ruptures. In Irie's case, it is by distancing herself from her British root that enforces homogeneity and exclusion that she is able to construct her

rhizomatic womb-space for her daughter and for future generations. Her rhizomatic womb-space becomes a new site of multiple identities and new growths. Like the rhizome, Irie's roots and old ideology, once broken and deconstructed produce new growths and new lines of social relations and identity formations. Also, like the rhizome that when broken produces new growths, Irie sees her displacement as a necessary process towards constructing a new world for her unborn child and future British citizens, hence her return to her maternal root, Jamaica, for inspiration.

Irie considers her journey to Jamaica not only as the "beginningest of beginnings"—a beginning of a new world after the apocalypse—the destruction not just of the physical world but also the ideological world of reasoning that categorizes people based on racial, cultural and national identities—but also a discovery of a new world, just like Christopher Columbus's discovery of a new world. Her journey also signals an end of her dependence on Britain for inspiration as she seeks to connect to the world beyond her contemporary British society. She sees the Caribbean Sea and possibly Africa, therefore, as sources of inspiration at a moment in history when British society cannot provide her the mirror with which to see herself and the world around her. The British society that is portrayed is one that prides itself on homogeneity and as such refuses to wholly accept people of other cultures and nationalities, hence Irie's inability to see her image in the British mirror. For Irie, the journey to the Caribbean Sea establishes a new phase in her life as she returns to her maternal root to learn from it. As Irie states, she imagines Africa in general and the Caribbean in particular, as a fertile ground where new identity formations can emerge from:

> Where things sprang from the soil riotously and without supervision, and a young white captain could meet a young black girl with no complications, both of them fresh and untainted and without past or dictated future—a place where things simply were. No fiction, no myths, no lies, no tangled webs—this is how Irie imagined her homeland...And the particular magic of homeland, its particular spell over Irie was that it sounded like a beginning. The beginnings of beginnings. Like the first morning of Eden and the day after apocalypse. A blank page. (Smith 2000, 332)

When one sees Irie, her daughter, Joshua, and Hortense by the Caribbean Sea in the epilogue, it is in fulfilment of her dream of exploring the world to gain the much-needed experience to create her new world—a world without complications, fresh, and untainted. In other words, she conceives a world where people are simply allowed to live without undue interference with history. Thus, the new world that she envisions is one that takes into consideration other people's culture and also defies confinement. It is one that privileges openness, transcultural relationships, and multiple identities. Her vision of her homeland as a "blank page" where new forms of social and racial identities can be written informs Irie's construction of rhizomatic womb-space and it entails the destruction of old values that inhibit self-identity and criss-crossing of many constructive cultural identities.

Irie's unborn child symbolizes the new beginning that Irie envisions—not just in terms of the reconstruction of a new British identity but also in personal identity formation that is needed for the new nation that she conceives. She is "rhizomorphous" as she is an embodiment of different

identities, genes, roots, and histories. By connecting to these multiple identities or traits, Irie;s unborn child breaks the old homogenous British culture that identifies and divides people based on their cultural and ethnic belongings. Biologically, she is the daughter of either Magid or Millat and Irie as Irie has sex with the identical twins within twenty-five minutes interval. In terms of root, she is Jamaican, English, Bangladeshi and Jewish—by virtue of her connection to Joshua, her foster father. She is also a product of racial, colonial, British and familial histories. In fact, as Peter Childs explains, "in Irie's daughter all the families of the book are brought together, mixing British, Caribbean, Bagladeshi, and Jewish heritage" (Childs 2005, 223). But as Irie anticipates, her child will not be pinned down to any of these complex identities and histories but will weave them together for her own good. This is because neither roots nor histories matter nor constitute an important trait to her identity formation. As the narrator explains, "what [Irie] didn't know, and what she realized she may never know...was the identity of the father. No test on earth would tell her.... She thought of those elaborate fictional cartograms that folded out of Joshua's old sci-fi books, his Fantasy Adventures. That is how her child seemed. A perfectly plotted thing with no real coordinates. A map to an imaginary fatherland" (Smith 2000, 427). Irie's child's lack of paternal history is indicative of the fact that tradition, root, ethnic, cultural affiliations, and patriarchal dominance are not important in the new British society that Irie envisions. It also marks the beginning of a new era as well as the changes taking place in Britain with the dissolution of the old British society, especially in terms of repositioning women. It is a new era that witnesses the emergence of women's voice and new social identity.

Undergirding Irie's construction of a rhizomatic womb-space is the notion that rather than homogeneity, fixed identity, and historical past contributing meaningfully to the present conditions or situations, they become a burden and a source of trauma. However, this does not mean that the past does not impact on the present or even the future. It does. But rather than depend on the past and histories, emphasis should be placed more on different connections and routes that have shaped individual's identities. Similarly, rather than race, the choices before the inhabitants of the new sociocultural milieu, as Marcus Chalfen identifies, are not "between a blue eye [English identity] and a brown eye [black identity], but between eyes that would be blind and those that might see" (Smith 2000, 437). The blinded eyes, in this context, refer to those that still uphold racial identities and inequalities. However, for this new British society to be created, Irie recommends that the old structure must be destroyed or reviewed to retain only the positive values. It entails moving beyond any fixed identity for one to embrace other forms of identities that may come from different sources rather than one. Thus, when at the end of the narrative, a new era emerges through the collective efforts of the masses, one witnesses the emergence of women's voice and new social identity formations. In line with Irie and Smith's visions, the destruction of old cultural values makes it possible for women to move from their marginal positions to the center. For instance, on the New Year eve, O'Connell finally opens its doors to women—a place that has been exclusively men's domain as no woman is previously allowed at O'Connell.

Although Smith is aware of the challenges people face in their day to day lived experiences, she is

of the opinion that people can change their situations or identity rather than allow their realities to define them. Smith demonstrates this through the FutureMouse experiment where the life of a mouse is predetermined and controlled by Marcus and his allies. Just like the mouse escapes its biological determinism, she does not want people to be controlled by history or the past. The seven-year life-span of the mouse, as the narrator indicates, has been mapped into its body such that it can be controlled by Marcus: "One mouse only...No question about who is pulling the strings. No question of a journey, no question of greener grass, for wherever this mouse went, its life would be precisely the same. It will not travel through time...because its future was equal to its present, which was equal to its past....No second guessing, no what-ifs....Just certainty (Smith 2000, 405). However, when this mouse escapes from its cage at the end of the narrative, it disrupts its genetic determinism and the ability of its programmers to control it. As Childs contends, in Irie and "Smith's view, the future is not to be engineered like Marcus's mouse, predestined to die after seven years and predetermined to live according to artificial genetic programming, but enriched by cultural commingling, accident and chance (Childs 2005, 218).

It is not only Irie and Smith that are against people living a predetermined life, many other characters in the novel are reacting against the different ways their lives have been controlled in one way or the other. This is demonstrated in the gathering of different organizations and individuals during the launching of the FutureMouse project as they are not there to applaud Marcus but to stop him from carrying out his plans of biological determinism. Most of these people are disillusioned with their present situations and the kind of life they have been forced to live and as such see the caged mouse as reflective of their own inhibition and predetermined life-style—be it culturally, politically, economically, and socially. Thus, in speaking against Marcus' project, they are also expressing their own frustration and willingness to break their barriers in order to bring about change. As Fernandez argues, "the fact that all the characters head to the same point indicates that despite differences, plurality and diversity, there is a common goal, a common place for British society to go in the new millennium...the end of the century will see the beginning of a new era" (Fernandez 2009, 151).

The future that both Smith and Irie envision, therefore, depends on collective effort and the determination to redefine or change those sociocultural and political issues that impede a multicultural society. Significantly, it is the voices of women that are loudest in the clamor for a change and the building of a new British nation. The new national identity that these women are reconstructing is built on multiple identities garnered through routes rather than root and homogeneity. It is also one that is derived from critical appraisal of the old national identities and roots in a bid to open new cultural spaces that allow people to redefine their identities and live an uninhibited life. As the narrator notes during the FutureMouse project, not even the voice of Samad—a symbol of old cultural values constructed through roots and a symbol of patriarchy—could silence these women from speaking up against Marcus and his project. According to the narrator, as "the...women raise their voices, sending song up into the firmament...Samad watches it all and finds himself, to his surprise, unwilling to silence [them]. Partly because he is tired. Partly because he is old. But mostly because he would do the same, though in a different name" (Smith 2000, 439). Thus, when at the end of the narrative, Irie's "fatherless" child

"writes affectionate postcards to *Bad Uncle Millat* and *Good Uncle Magid*" (Smith 2000, 448 emphases in original) she makes a strong case for the recognition of women's contributions and roles in redefining and restructuring not only British national identity but the world in general. By referring to Magid and Millat as uncles and not her father, Irie's child rewrites history and patriarchal culture that gives men undue privilege over women. Also, not only does she write herself into subjectivity but also finds a voice to speak, to make decision, and to assess critically. In so doing, she opens a feminine space needed in the building a new British society where everyone is given equal opportunity to participate.

The rhizomatic womb-space these women create is a radical and hybrid one that takes into consideration the different routes and experiences that shape their identities as women. Not only do they question their silencing and displacement but also seek to create a relational multicultural British society as they break down old paradigms and structures that inhibit their self-development. As Anzaldúa notes "because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave—*la mestiza* creates a new consciousness" (Anzaldúa 1999, 102). Like Anzaldúa, Smith situates the la mestiza consciousness in a hybrid and rhizomatic womb-space—a space of cross pollination of races, genes, cultures, and ideologies. For Smith, women can no longer be left behind in events that lead to nation building; the time is ripe for them to tell their stories. In telling their stories, women lay claim not on history, since they are marginal to it, but on routes to show "the antithetical ways [through which] they are displaced" and emplaced as well (Addante 2008, 76). Although they are displaced, they seek ways to recreate their identities as they create a sense of belonging for themselves in their new host environment and a voice to speak. Contrary to Tracey Walters' argument that, "Smith has difficulty creating female characters (both black and white) that are more than one-dimensional character type…[and that her female characters] lack development because they are overshadowed by white male protagonists'" (Walters 2008, 125), one notes that Smith portrays women who break their barriers to create new identities for themselves and for their children; even Irie's unborn child is not only radical but also an embodiment of a multi-dimensional character type as her identity cannot be easily pinned down. Significant is the fact that Smith pays particular attention to how women move from the margins to the center as they deconstruct history, reconstruct their identities, and contribute to building a stronger multicultural society for everyone irrespective of sex, gender, class, race, ethnicity, and nationality. Herein lies the strength of the future British society that Irie and other women nurture in her rhizomatic womb-spaces.

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Narrative 'Trauma-Testimony' and Fragmented Identity in *Sometimes in April*

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Abstract:

This paper examines how trauma victims' sense of self is split and how personal identity is fragmented in the course of giving testimony of the traumatic events. The film 'Sometimes in April' is used as a case study based on its critical engagement with different elements of narrativity of traumatic events, and the subject of identity. The paper adopts the concepts of narrative construction of the self, selfhood, and identity following the works of scholars like Ricoeur, Schechtman and Taylor. It argues that the film 'Sometimes in April' is an alternative sociological space for the studying and understanding of narrative and identity construction of victims and witnesses to the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Keywords: Narrative, Identity, Testimony, African film, Trauma

Introduction

Traditionally, trauma refers to a physical and psychological phenomenon which constitute a violent disruption of the body's integrity. It is described as an intensely painful experience in which the mental and emotional after-effects can completely alter the sufferer's relationship and perception with the surrounding world. The unprocessed memory of the experience always remains engraved in the mind, leading to pathologies of memory, emotion and practical functioning. In the late nineteenth century, the concept began to be applied to psychological phenomena by pioneers like Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet in their work on hysteria. Psychological trauma refers to an experience that overwhelmed a person's normal means of mentally processing stimuli. Reflections on recent past traumatic experiences of contemporary Africa can be found in various narrative and discursive platforms; like written literatures, photographic documentations and archival materials. Film is also one vital platform for relaying these experiences, as it has the capacity to create out of images, sounds, geography and history the narrative of human suffering, reflection and healing. In this sense, films construct memory and regenerate historical consciousness through the

production of documentary and fiction film formats. The reflections from films, especially from the ones that portray trauma, offer witnesses the opportunity to re-integrate and task their consciousness. This is not necessarily to conserve history for posterity but essentially for witnesses "to tell their stories to the public, to be listened to, and to be acknowledged" (Blaney, 117). By this assumption, a film that projects the traumatic history of a people should be able to exude corporeal consciousness, engage the contexts of narrative, memory, identity, and testimony.

This paper analyses how the effect of trauma can alter the introspective valuation of the self, thereby affecting testimony and its narratives. Using Raoul Peck's 2005 film *Sometimes in April* (hereafter SIA), the paper argues that a traumatic body is an emblem of an embodied subjectivity in which identity figures as an emergent property, and which continually evolves under the impact of the environment and the adaptive transformational processes. This processing of trauma is attached to memories or events that resonate with the quality of what would otherwise be perceived as an unbearable emotion. A continual exchange between inner and outer environments, worlds, or simply spaces, is endemic to this processual self. Varela, Thompson and Rosch argue that this self emerges as a property of aggregates such as "feelings, sensations, consciousness and forms" (71). It is this sense of self rather than any substantive quality that becomes the basis of the multiple processes of transference that shape the experience of witnesses and the environment. This paper limits its scope to the filmic account, subjecting its fictional representation of the Rwandan genocide to frameworks of interpretation and contextual formulation. It purposively foregrounds the dramatic and filmic characteristics of the film with theoretical constructs that bear consonance with its narrative of real images, imageries, meanings and consciousness of the genocide. The conjoined word 'trauma-memory' is used to depict a testimony that is trauma-informed, as well as inherently controlled and narrativized via the shattered agencies and structures of the witnessing self. The term as used in the context of the paper, seeks to thin out the delineation between the two words 'trauma' and 'memory', so as to enhance the fictional web of corporeality depicted in the film. Since the film visualizes and emblematizes a holistic gaze of the genocide, the term readily suggests that the film is narratively structured in the voice of the victims, yet symbolized through the bodies of other actors in the genocide; i.e., perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, and all survivors. Most of the discourses on memory, testimony and trauma have been rendered by a variety of cultural practice, genres, and media such that the search for a more common theoretical ground for analyzing their overlapping, inter-agency, and also lines of separation have proved difficult. The film *SIA* is purposively chosen for this study, as it provides components which highlight a view that the psychic structure of trauma victims is relational to the interactive contexts of memory, testimony and narrativity.

Filmic Track of Memory vs. Historical Truth

In recent decades, the art of film as a visual culture has been an influential semiotic mechanism in relaying testimony and archiving historical narratives. Visual culture emerged, according to some views, as a response to the media convergence and global flows of images in the late 20th century

(Cartwright), centered on understanding how images function in a broader cultural sphere, and on how people use visual media to make meaning in everyday life. Jinks notes that; "Arguably, it is film's ability to engage (and manipulate) its viewers' emotions that gives it its greatest potential to convey meaning about the past, not by didactically imparting knowledge and interpretation (although they often do), but by encouraging audiences to 'feel' or 'experience' aspects of the past, and thereby to intuit knowledge and understanding for themselves" (73). Pictorial representations evoke special interest because they serve the need to unveil the unseen (including the past that we are not part of). Moving images activate different sites of memory from those activated by other visual cultures. However, the increasing circulation of images and the incessant influx of cataclysmic incidents covered by films can lead to two opposite ways of relating to the experiences of the past; especially such experiences of pain, which can lead to objectifying trauma. The first experience might relate to healing from being able to confront the past, and an opposite experience can lead to further trauma – what has been referred to as 'second-hand victimization'. This situation has created looming questions in the study of films of trauma, culture and testimony. What role does the mediation of film play in the conflict between events, what was seen and what is believed? Does film serve to connect or disconnect people with the real, to verify or 'de-realize' the traumatic events? These questions and many other invoke a tangled subject, related to media event theory (Dayan and Katz), which for several years now has received increased attention in film and television studies.

SIA cues the atrocity memory of the Rwandan genocide through the fictional narrativization of traumatic imageries in visuals and dialogues. The film portrays two Hutu brothers who are on the opposite sides of the complex relationships between the Rwandan majority tribe of Hutu and the Tutsi minority. Augustin Muganza (Idris Elba), one of the brothers, is a soldier in the Rwandan military; a father of three and husband to a Tutsi woman, Jeanne. Honoré Muganza (Oris Erhuero), his charismatic brother, is a celebrity media figure who helps spread extremist messages of Hutu propaganda over the popular Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM). The radio station broadcast was one of the most nefarious instruments used in aggravating the charged atmosphere of hatred and violence during the genocide. As the tension rises, Honore becomes more radicalized, intensely spreading heady and chauvinistic ethnic messages of Hutu ideologies over the radio. Meanwhile, his brother Augustin vehemently opposes the provocative atmosphere, fearing that some cancerous violence looms around the corner. The eventual consequence of the crisis consumed both brothers, rupturing their different psyches and obliterating their familial relationship. The film actually begins a decade after the end of what has been regarded as one of the most virulent genocide in history. It navigates, through artistic flashbacks, the one-hundred day genocide and the post-conflict milieu of 2004. Augustin, now a schoolteacher, receives a letter from his brother Honore, who is on trial in Arusha (Tanzania), at an International Criminal Tribunal for his apparent involvement in the genocide. In the letter, Honore requests his brother to come to Arusha to meet him if he wants to know the details of the death of his family during the genocide. This request disturbs Augustin who is torn at the prospect of seeing his brother after a decade of

estrangement, and the reality of knowing the truth about the murder of his wife and children. With great inner turmoil but sustained by the support he gets from his new partner, Augustin arranges the trip to see his brother. In their meeting, Augustin has to face the past squarely in order to come to terms with the present.

SIA does not seek to construct common memory. Rather, it reflects a conception and centrality of a narrative of trauma in the memory frame of real victims and witnesses to the Rwandan genocide. While the film itself is a fictional material, it provides a narrative of historical truth of the genocide. Objective reconstruction of a traumatic event does not have to be total in fiction films. Even real victims of trauma cannot totally reconstruct the truth of a traumatic event because memory is configured with actants of impermanent networks. Torchin has argued that "Film bears witness and offers testimony that is simultaneously dramatic and truthful; the visible invests the medium with additional claims to truth, but cinematic strategies render the events comprehensible." (74). In securing the truth status of testimonies in *SIA*, the film shows some actual news and event footages of the genocide period. Some actual locations of intense massacre during the genocide were used. Some witnesses, who themselves stood in the shadow of the common genocidal experience, were employed in the film as cast and crew members. While these may not be measures of absolute truth of events during the genocide, they bring some degree of self-reflexivity to the narrative structures of testimony in the film. Harrow is of the opinion that snippets of real history can help in advancing the context of a film narrative within a known cultural background. However, film narrative itself is a complete cultural text which may not always require raw data from history to compensate for the absence of reference to known people. Harrow argues that in fact, "film texts aim to de-familiarize our experiences so that we should experience life as depicted through the imagistic language of film which is not the everyday language" (36). *SIA* serves as a symbol for remembrance. It constitutes memory in itself. It belongs to the category of historical trauma films that creates "...platforms for perspectives and information that could not make their way into the public conversation via traditional means; and they energetically questioned the routine practices of overlooking the difficult questions of the past" (Holc, 74) While discussions of a film's historical knowledge invite consideration of its propaganda tendencies, the creative impulse of *SIA* does not suggest historical accuracy of events of the genocide, but it functions as one of the many accounts that push towards a possibility of self-revision and redemption. As it is, "Society exhibits a great longing for openly discovering this past not only out of interest in more objective accounts but as an intrinsically motivated means of self-assurance" (Nikor & Hegasy, 85). *SIA* provides an alternative text document for archiving the Rwandan genocide. There is a sense in which its narrative de-legitimizes such conceited ideas as the written document being the sole repository of historical truth and knowledge. "Truth claim may be necessary, it does not completely suggest sufficient conditions of historiography" (LaCapra, 1-2)

Images that confront the past: Analysis of *Sometimes in April*

The story of *SIA* is a story of Rwanda, steeped in the images of past ethnic discrimination which was systematically initiated by the Belgian colonialists. The film, written, directed and produced by Raoul Peck, analyzes in ambitious detail, the horrific events that devastated millions of lives during the unprecedented 1994 outpour of terror and violence in Rwanda. There will be little understanding of the genocide without recourse to the roles of the colonialists. This understanding must have prompted the film producer to begin the film by showing a map of Africa captured in a long shot. The map gradually zooms in to give a close shot of the map of Rwanda, which is quickly followed by a scrolling screen texts of the history of Rwanda; "For centuries, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa of Rwanda shared the same culture, language and religion. In 1916, Belgium took control of Rwanda from Germany and installed a rigid colonial system of racial classification and exploitation…" (*SIA*). By giving a glimpse into the history of colonialism, *SIA* tries to correct what Mamdani (28) has observed as the "silences in academic research" on the Rwandan genocide. These silences relate to the presentation of the Rwandan genocide as an anthropological oddity with no history or plausible reasons to account for its occurrence. These colonial historical details are reinforced succinctly by Clark in *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*:

> The most significant contribution by the Belgians to the widening social, cultural and economic divide between Hutu and Tutsi, however, was the introduction of ethnic identity cards in 1933. The Belgians issued an identity card to every Rwandan man and woman that indicated whether he or she was a Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. Numerous factors determined an individual's ethnic categorisation, including his or her ownership of cattle. Individuals with ten or more head of cattle were classified as Tutsi, along with their offspring; those with fewer than ten were classified as Hutu. After 1933 people received their ethnic classification according to their father's line. This system continued throughout the twentieth century until it was abolished after the genocide. It was often on the basis of identity cards that Hutu killers identified Tutsi whom they massacred in 1994. (Clark 2010, 17)

The elevation of the Tutsis over the Hutus created resentment among the Hutus, who were the majority tribe. The narrative device of the film with the filmic techniques underscore the potential of the film as a testimonial. A deep voice-over immediately commences after the screen text, layering further historical details on the camera's bird's eye view of an expanse of Rwandan's flora. This montage technique lets the viewers into a visualized space of Rwanda, and allows them to internalize the features of a country that experienced a devastating act of mass butchery in which nearly one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in a space of three months by Hutu extremists. Bah recounts that "The genocide in Rwanda between April and June 1994, which was central to the crisis of the region, was one of the most gruesome massacres of civilians since the Holocaust during the Second World War" (253). These events are represented in complex ways by the film, especially through a multilayered character-based dramatic narrative that carefully

weaves together a lot of 'true stories'. In the course of the pre-production of the film, the producer/director Raoul Peck travelled to Rwanda to meet with some of the witnesses; who have been mainly victims of the events. As part of his research, he listened to them and took strong notes. The harrowing first person-accounts convinced him of the need not just to bring their nuances to a global public by situating the events in a wider historical framework but to invite considerations of the real and symbolic import of those blighted days on humanity. By juxtaposing these first person accounts with fiction, Peck turns the film into a mosaic that lays out fundamental aspect of an intricate puzzle. The benefit of this was the extent of the verisimilitude imposed on the film. Put together, the film was able to make a powerful statement about the relationship between present and past, the importance of history, communal memory, and healing.

SIA can be located within the framework of a growing body of texts on historical trauma and memory studies. It evokes memory in order to explicate the ways in which it discursively works through a historical event of traumatic magnitude. It mobilizes imagery in a dramatic narrative populated by proximate characters while inviting informed viewers to revisit, and uninformed viewers to witness scenes from the past. It calls attention to the spectral or haunting property of some forms of memories that are to be retrieved from the past despite the pain they caused or the forms of denial they produced. It also inquires into how the reconstructed memories of the past that others have made consciously manifest through testimonials affect perception of that past. For instance, in one of the memorable flash forwards in the film, Augustin Muganza is captured by the camera reading a letter from his brother Honore, who is languishing in detention for crimes against humanity committed during the genocide. The letter is relayed in Honore's voice-over:

> My dear brother, the rains are here, it is April again. How many years since we have spoken. From my prison I am writing you this long due letter. I don't expect pity or love. I know that despite all the graves in your life, you have found something to live for. It was not supposed to happen this way; the war, the killings. When I finally realized that I was an actor in this tragedy, I chose not to live with that, I thought my death will bring me peace. I was wrong. Only the truth can ease my guilt. Dear Augustin, I must tell you what happened to Jeanne and the children. Come to Tanzania. Don't write me back. Just come. Your brother, Honore. (*SIA*)

The reading of this letter against the background of the camera's flashpoints on the picture of his late family, which is hung on the walls, creates an immediate track of traumatic memory. The struggle with trauma is a struggle with memory. Such struggle typifies flashes which go backward and forward in recurring timelines. Reasonably, the detailing of the plot of *SIA* contains several longer and other sometimes dispelling and fragmented flashbacks, where Augustin recounts or revisits episodes of his family life, his desperate struggle to survive during the events, and his search for what happened to his beloved ones. The film tries to visualize the hectic workings of (individual and collective) memory in relation to traumatic experiences. Before the final outbursts of the ravaging butchery, smoke has been billowing from every corner of Kigali; the capital city of Rwanda.

Human corpses are strewn everywhere on the streets. Augustin begs his brother, who is still popular among the rank and file of the perpetrators, to take his family to safety at the Hotel Mille Collines, where some international citizens are being given protection. Despite his wife's resistance, Augustin stayed behind, hoping it will be a temporary separation from his family. Before Honore has travelled far with his brother's family, their car is stopped by soldiers manning a roadblock. Honore introduces himself as a party cadre working for the RTLM extremist radio station and that he is on the way to a supermarket for shopping with the family. As for the family, Honore says that "they are ours" (*SIA*), meaning that the family also supports Hutu extremists. After a brief exchange of words with his superiors, one of the soldiers goes to the car and asks Jeanne to produce her identity card. The moment Jeanne announces that she forgot the identity card at home, the soldier violently breaks the window amidst loud screaming from Jeanne and her two sons. Honore's plea that, "I work for the party" (*SIA*) goes unheeded and the soldiers willfully harass the children and kill the family. Augustin's separation from his wife and sons, the lack of news or knowledge about his daughter who is in the boarding school, and the eventual killing of his friend, Xavier, right before his eyes, become for him the abstraction of his memory from which he interprets himself as an unconscious participant in the genocide. It becomes a representation of experiences and feelings too traumatic to acknowledge.

A traumatic past leaves its own residue behind. It occupies a hidden haunting presence and activates a symptomatic revenant in the identity of the victim. The end of the film does not guarantee a resolution to this trauma, which has the tendency of returning to turn familial genealogy into a nightmare of incredible stories. The reflected ending signals interminability – not as sentimental faked identification with history and its actors, but as a way of inscription of the representation of a past.

From 'Ashes' to 'Ashen': Memory and Testimony in *SIA*

Those who are concerned about the tenets of history would see testimonies as sources of information about the past and not in its complete reliability. Justifiably, they are at times prone to dismiss an interest in them. Testimony becomes important when they are related to the way memory provides something other than purely documentary knowledge. In testimony, memory is like the component and operative dimension of narrativity. The self compulsively relives flashes of images in embodied pre-consciousness. Often such intense psychic feelings or self-states is translated into a desire for narrative. The traditional Kantian idea that a personality gains coherence through narratives of self-historization seems to be confirmed by recent researches in the neurosciences that establishes an inextricable link between narrative and a sense of self. Suzanne Kaplan and Andreas Hamburger reason that; "Memory, in state of the art psychology, is not simple storage; rather, it resembles a construction process, combining abstract engrammes with subjectively convincing mental images, resulting in what is experienced as a vivid recollection. It can be shaped through and co-constructed in communication" (106). The position of this inference is that testimony is retrospective and the failure to ideate the active agency of memory in its narrative is

to repress its phenomenological appropriation of empathy. For empathy is privately owned. It cannot be transferred. It is not represented, but achieved. While testimony opens up empowering possibilities, it does not impose redemptive completeness in the victim. This is why empathy is required to downsize the tension in the memory of the testifier. "Empathy is being in feeling with another, rather than understanding another's feelings, in the sense that it is the inhabiting of another's emotional state not its simulation". (Chare, 38). Thus, in *SIA*, we see survivors' difficult relationship with testimony. In one of the scenes, Augustin tries to talk with a woman (later identified as Valentine), who had come to testify in Arusha; as a victim and survivor of the genocide:

> Valentine: You are a survivor..., aren't you?
> (Brief silence)
> Augustin: Yes.
> Valentine: Are you testifying in the tribunal?
> (Long pause)
> Augustin: No, am visiting somebody. Are you testifying?
> (Long silence)
> Valentine: I am a secret witness. (*SIA*)

The exchange between Augustin and Valentine is disrupted by intermittent silence. There are multiple figurations of the self layered in the exchanges and in things left unsaid. This figuration stands for the trauma's remainder of inexpressibility, its lapse in conscious register and the ruptured psyche's self-protective urge to forget. The pedagogical character of testimonial accounts lies in their structure as communicative acts. Shoshana Felman's and Dori Laub's argument that testimony is a "crucial mode of our relation to events of our times (5)" is more relevant nowadays when we find ourselves surrounded by inundating, instantaneous media coverage and reports about almost every kind of human catastrophe. Testimonies draw their substance from the events witnessed. They are a privileged mode of revealing the character of such experiences. Testimonies, then, are to be discussed in their relation to the event yet, they should be placed in relation to the witness as well. For Felman and Laub, a testimony must first of all be placed in "a relation to events" (5). In relation to traumatic events, testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance. Further, they claim that testimony, as grounded in scraps of a memory that has been overwhelmed, is actually an act. That act, however, cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition. As such, testimony may reflect "events in excess of our frames of reference" (5). A testimony therefore can be said to be a "discursive *practice*," as opposed to a "pure *theory*." Testimony directly pertains not only to the person testifying or to the event. It also involves the listener of the narrative as well. In other words, testimony involves not only the traumatic event but also encompasses the witness to the event, as well as the listener to the witness who relates the event.

Testimony of trauma is not intended to foster either repression or immobilization in the face

of history. Rather, testimony is often understood as a vital personal supplement to impersonal documentary evidence. Pedagogically, it encompasses a means for making history come alive. Overturning the anonymity that is often the fate of victims of historical trauma, testimony is treasured to the extent that it saves the shards of catastrophic experience from oblivion. Thus, as Carey-Webb notes, testimony may serve as an expression of survival and loss, simultaneously aspiring to "human continuity, the establishment of justice, and the making of the future" (7). To understand what the possible difficulties within the process of testimony might be, it is perhaps interesting to cite Lawrence Langer's position of testimony:

> Testimony is a form of remembering. The faculty of memory functions in the present to recall a personal history vexed by traumas that thwart smooth flowing chronicles. Simultaneously, however, straining against what we might call disruptive memory is an effort to reconstruct a semblance of continuity in a life that began as, and now resumes what we would consider, a normal existence (2).

Testimony comprises representations either by those who have lived through such events or by those who have been told or shown such lived realities, either directly or indirectly, and have been moved to convey to others what has been impressed upon them. Pedagogically, these testimonial accounts are used as modes of instruction that attempt to transmit information about the past and to keep specific events before one's eyes, thereby foregrounding the events' significance for current and future generations. For victims who experienced intense trauma in the Rwandan genocide, the pedagogical implication might be to portray them as isolated pieces of after-war materials. This opinion is reflective in the character of Augustin. Right from the outset of the film, he renders what is probably the most passionate monologue of the film:

> Yes, it's April again. Every year in April the rainy season starts. And every year, every day in April, the haunting emptiness descends over our hearts. Every year in April, I remember how quickly life ends. Every year in April, I remember how lucky I should feel to be alive. On April twelve, 1994 my wife Jeanne was killed. In that same month of April, my sons Marcus and Yves Andre were also killed. My friend Xavier was killed in April. My daughter Anne-Marie was killed sometime later, but I never asked when. (*SIA*)

When testimony is spoken from within the world of traumatic experiences, it feels like it is outside of ordinary life. Because the survivors have crossed the boundary posed by trauma, it is naturally assumed that they possess knowledge and understanding that those on the ordinary side do not have. It is also assumed that they know what is valuable and meaningful about life, including knowledge of war, peace, vengeance and forgiveness. In *SIA*, testimony was used to address other concerns related to the immense individual and collective consequences of the traumas of political violence: to facilitate reconciliation; to help survivors recover; and to reconsider identity. This stretched testimony in new and challenging directions toward the political, traumatic, and ethno-cultural. Valentine's reflection and testimony, about the head of the municipal who had accompanied the

interahamwes (local soldiers) to rape and carry out acts of brigandage in their community is apt:

> Head of tribunal: May I ask, why did you make what must have been a difficult decision to come to Arusha and testify in this tribunal?
> Valentine: I saw all this man did and I felt responsible to testify about this man's betrayal of the people who are entrusted to him. When a person leads assassins, he is also an assassin. (*SIA*)

Sometimes in April's narrative strategy solicits the viewers' memory and engages them in the restructuring of past events. In the discursive foundation, and dependent on the narrative frameworks existent in a particular culture, the issue of testimony always return to an arena where the individual and the collective meet. Even individual memory, implying an interaction between the past and the present, is culturally and collectively framed. Memory is not an object that is simply there to be extracted, but rather it is produced by active subjects that share a culture and an ethos. It is thus, that testimony as a form of memory narrative does not have to be totally true. It does not, also have to instantiate the conventional or ideal beginning, middle and end plot structure of narration, even as it aspires to unambiguous coherence. This responsibility of coherence or credibility marks testimony as a moment of apprehension and communication in which one testifies to another who, in turn, chooses or is impelled to represent what was seen or heard, thus continuing the process with someone else. In *Sometimes in April*, there are moments of obstacles and hindrances to the production of testimonies; such as the ability to remember or the inability to consciously be coherent with the narrative of the events. The impossibility of constructing a narrative and the symbolic lapses and voids involved in trauma is also typified when Valentine is testifying at the tribunal:

> Valentine: Later, I don't remember exactly but, the interahamwes held us in another room and they raped all the girls. A young man crept up on me, "take off your pant", he told me, there is no place for me now. The government had abandoned us. After that, he did humiliating things to me. He didn't regard that I was a mother. (Sighs). I heard the young girls screaming but I could not see them... (*SIA*).

In "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening", the trauma psychoanalyst Dori Laub recounts the story of a woman in her late sixties who narrated her experience in Auschwitz to interviewers. In her testimony, she narrated one intense moment when she saw four chimneys going up in flames. The woman's voice reverberated the emotion of the holocaust while she is being recorded for the purpose of archiving the testimony. Several months later, a conference of holocaust historians, artists and psychoanalysts met, and the woman's video was reviewed in one of the debates. It was discovered that the woman's testimony was not accurate. The number of chimneys that was blown up was misrepresented. Historically, just one chimney was blown up and not four as testified by the woman. Since her story was fallible, the meeting regard her testimony as lacking credence. But, according to Laub

> A psychoanalyst who had been one of the interviewers of this woman, profoundly disagreed. "The woman was testifying," he insisted, "not to the number of chimneys blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence. One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four. The number mattered less than the fact of the occurrence. The event itself was almost inconceivable. The woman testified to an event that broke the all compelling frame of Auschwitz, where Jewish armed revolts just did not happen, and had no place. She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was historical truth." (60)

A useful context in understanding trauma testimony is to consider the multifaceted dimension of social exchange attributed to memory. "As memory is experienced differently by different individuals, one cannot speak of how a "people" remembers without taking all components of remembering into consideration" (Ayoub, 57). A victim's sense of self and historical representation is rendered inarticulate in a spasm of riotous recall. The awareness of this leaves possibility for authentication which can be reinforced with testimony of other witnesses.

When the 'Ego' fails the 'ID': Fragmented Identity in *SIA*

A pervasive cultural atmosphere saturated by images and narratives of violence may desensitize people to what they see and hear, making it just another mundane part of their daily lives. As Michael Smith warns by invoking Jean Baudrillard's postmodern theory of simulacra and simulation that "the postmodern world is lacking distance or interiority, where everything occurs instantaneously and is explicitly visible, the "fatal" collapse and erasure of the distinction between appearance and reality occur" (50). This collapse and erasure of the distinction between appearance and reality go a long way in the reconstitution of a personal identity. To pronounce a static definition of personal identity is to invite an epistemological dilemma. The ways in which the various categories of creating, interacting and re-creating our personal self have become the components of our identity. Identity is complex and varied, and its reflections are bounced off, both in the outer and inner characteristics of the person. The argument here is that it is necessary to consider a range of corporeal and incorporeal materiality in the definition of the term, as mere consideration of one circumstance to the exclusion of another will inadvertently result into describing the self without identity or identity without the self. Many theories of personal identity have been fraught with theoretical imprecisions and conceptual fragilities because of lack of consideration for this assumption. Freud's 'Iceberg Model' is akin to this conceptual reflection. In his study of human consciousness, he suggests that human being is a divided self. He argues that what mainly drives humans is submerged in the unconscious. The 'id', in his definition, "is made up of all our unconscious drives". The 'superego' comprise elements that prevent us "from responding fully to everything our 'id' drives us to want to do. The superego is made up of all rules we are taught we must follow". The 'ego' arises from conflict between the 'id' and the 'superego'. "It is our consciousness" (Fortier, 68). Following Freud's perspectives, it becomes more difficult to ascertain the true state of personal identity of

a victim whose conscious level is in antagonism with the unconscious; someone whose reflection of the self has been ruptured by a traumatic event. Specifically, the introspective mediation of such a victim has lost the capacity for symbolic functioning. A large scale of psychological processes of sublimation is compromised. On a phenomenological level, the 'ego' is bruised as such victim is quite unable to coherently organize thoughts into conscious awareness. Moments of situations like this are experienced in *SIA* when victims' narratives transpose into spontaneous silence. This sort of silence is what Donald Meichenbaum considers as "internal dialogue". "This suggests that an important element in the behavior change process is not only speaking to oneself but also listening to oneself. It is close to a self-communication system, a dialogue with oneself that comes to influence behavior" (212). In the context of this kind of silence and the testimony of a traumatic event, Dori Laub opines that "Narrative must be rebuilt in order to reach beyond the fragmenting barriers of the traumatic event and renew linkage with the lost pretraumatic past. For this building process to occur, a certain degree of disengagement from externalities must take place, whereby survivors are with and within themselves, introspective and attuned to their inner lives" (57).

In *SIA*, we are presented with traumatized characters who have conflicting desires as they want to talk about their trauma, to work through it, but also to suppress it into their subconscious and conceal it. Their fragmented self is that "in-between experience of a past breaking away from the present. The past is then born from the historians (and individual's) traumatic experience of having entered a new world and from the awareness of irreparably having lost a previous world forever" (Ankersmit, 265). The film presents the psychological fragmentation of the characters as being shaped by multiple socio-historical forces. In a particular instance in the film, Martine (Augustin's new partner) returns to Sainte-Marie Catholic School nearly a decade after the genocide. She had been a teacher in the school before the outbreak of the genocide, and she had witnessed the killings of several girls while trying to protect them from the violence. Augustin's daughter, who attended the school was one of the victims. In the ruins of the building that used to be the school, she encounters an inexplicable shutdown of the self and associating consciousness. She starts to hear voices within her; voices of the girls:

> Voices: The girls are here. They are waiting for you. Why don't you come?
> Martine: No I can't.
> Voices: Why don't you come? What's wrong with you? Come!
> Martine: No! (*SIA*)

She rushes out of the building in a disoriented manner. She has encountered some symbols that vividly accentuated those images and imageries of the violence in her consciousness. Those images become triggers, and this occasioned a heightened form of fragmentation. Sub-textually, the voices she's hearing do not address her physical person, but the abject self of her person, severed from its own experience, its community, and the rest of humanity through trauma. It is like "The enigma of the otherness of a human voice that cries out from the wound" (Caruth, 3). Such is the enigma

of Martine's 'non-self'; one of the torn fragments of the remains of her disrupted identity which had once been normal. While on the surface the scene seems to create fragmented personae of Martine's identity as it appears to escape meaning and recognition for the characters she's involved with, on a more complex level, it powerfully dramatizes a suggestive psychological experience of victims of the Rwandan genocide and the subconscious alienation which they probably suffer from. This kind of overwhelming experience is difficult to place in a proper narrative by victims. Because of the repetitive nature of trauma, survivors find it difficult to place the traumatic period within a "smooth-flowing chronicle". This need to give the event a place in their personal history is similar to making it part of what Burnstein called "narrative memory" (13). Langer believes that there is a certain danger in this need. His view is that "in fashioning consecutive chronicle, survivors who record their accounts unavoidably introduce some kind of teleology, investing the incidents with a meaning" (40). The traumatic path implies a break in the ability to live through an experience that makes sense and has some meaning. There is a suspension of temporality, expressed in the repetitions, reappearances, and recurrent specters that follow. According to Werner Bohleber

> This is owing to the fact that trauma is not only the consequence of a shaking to the core of the psyche's structure, but also that the ego/self is abruptly overwhelmed and reacts with helplessness, fear of death and annihilation anxiety: the psychic processing mechanisms become paralyzed, and only emergency reactions are possible. This experience of massive psychic overwhelming then results in permanent change to the psyche's organization. Naturally, not every traumatic situation impacts upon everyone in the same way; predisposing factors also play a role. The normal functioning of psychic organization is, however, suspended. (20)

Re-conceiving testimony begins by assuming that the survivor is not simply an isolated vessel who passively carries the residue of traumatic memories or the documentation of criminal events. When the otherness or alienation caused by trauma is too much to bear, it erupts as a violent acting out or an impassive deadening of the self or dissociation. To counteract the transience of life, events have to be transformed into narrative structure. But the repeated re-enactment of traumatic conditions, or experiences by the traumatized testifies to the persistent and pernicious force of trauma, the devastating effects of which are not tamed by narrative. The narrative itself becomes fragmentary, becoming disjointed in the complete analysis. In a meaningful narrative, when an episode is concluded, it is not the end because it is attached to a string of other reverberating narratives. The episode influences the rest of the plot, commenting on central themes and reflecting the values incorporated in the rest of the story. As it were, the parts always reflect in the whole, and vice versa. Triggers thus render victims into a state of narrative incompleteness. As Caruth notes; "The traumatized carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (60). The technical strategy of sustaining bits of the self when going through unresolved personal conflicts and identity fragmentation is to work through it and devise personal coping mechanisms. Based largely on their clinical observations,

Meichenbaum and Fitzpatrick used a constructivist narrative approach to gauge trauma survivor's coping abilities, emphasizing that "individuals respond to their interpretation of these events and to their perceived implications of these events" (720). Understandably, an event itself may not be as traumatic to an individual as much as the meaning attached to it. The meaning of this is that once the concept of the individual variation is acknowledged in the reading of trauma, that it is not the event itself that makes the event shattering or not, but rather an individual's internal perception of that event and the meaning the individual puts to it, the focus is then placed on the continuum of posttraumatic responses which shapes the coping and resilience ability. Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis lucidly define how the process of working through or mourning enables the individual to confront repressed elements from the past and to halt the mechanisms of repetition. While admitting that working through is itself a form of repetition, they argue that "interpretive activity counters and cauterizes the harmful elements of such repetition" (488-489). Despite going to Arusha to see his brother, Augustin fails to meet with him for the first few days of his arrival. His interminable mental flashbacks have prompted him to inflict a guilt-judgment on both himself and his brother. On so many occasions in the film, he breaks down and weeps; an action which reasonably depicts that his identity is fragmented, and his self has been dismembered through the imagery of the past violence. His brother, Honore, who is a perpetrator in the violence suffers from the same guilt infliction. They both suffer agonizing moments of recollection and have not devised reasonable coping mechanisms. When Augustin finally meets with him, their encounter was icy:

> Honore: So, why did you come?
> Augustin: Because you asked me to.
> Honore: Augustin why are you here? Are you going to be like everybody else? They come here to parade their good conscience around as if it's a crown... (*SIA*)

Testimony of traumatic events usually triggers a series of reactions in a victim's body. This reaction, usually refers to as a 'fight-or-flight' response, causes individuals to exhibit extreme, unexplainable strength. This response is a defense mechanism against pain from trauma and is mainly an instantaneous method for survival. It has been scientifically reiterated in studies that deal with coping with trauma, that the body prepares a person by sending a flood of chemicals that hasten the reaction of the body and focus attention to the crisis. Individuals react immediately in ways that are sometimes extremely surprising or confusing. These reactions can be categorized into four groups: "physical, mental, emotional and behavioural, and they include responses such as the momentary extreme strength, and quick-thinking", (Rosenbloom and Williams, 20). The responses are varied, depending on individuals and the intensity of a traumatic event. Dominick LaCapra explains that; "Indeed, severely traumatized people may have different dimensions of the self engaged in acting out, working over, and working through which may not, to a greater or lesser extent, effectively communicate with one another" (90-91). The Arusha tribunal was initiated not only to serve justice, but also help victims to work through and over their trauma. From the point of

view of *SIA*, it provides such ambience that allows for expressions of grief, and a deliberate scripted recall of the specific moments from the genocide but fails to provide victims a moralized and influential framework for responding to trauma and its representations. As victims have not fully worked through their grief, the tribunal presented itself as more of a place of purgation than healing. In a telephone conversation with Martine in one of the scenes in the film, Augustin reacts to the processes of the tribunal:

> Augustin: You don't understand. This thing. It doesn't make sense.
> Everybody that planned genocide is here.... They get full meals.
> They get AZT medicine while rape victims are dying of AIDS.
> It's like a fucking health club! (*SIA*)

Conclusion

SIA is confrontational and politically explicit in accusing the protagonists (active and passive) of the genocide. In the understanding of Kaplan and Wang's trauma cinema strategies, *SIA* can be observed as cure, as shock treatment, very minimally as voyeurism, and of course as witnessing. However, to the populations in the region that the film portrays, it becomes not simply a witness or recorder but an interpreter, which transmits the acknowledged painful process of traumatization. This acknowledgement is important for viewers and witnesses themselves, as there is a need to confront the horrors of these historical settings in order to move on. However, movement beyond the traumatic experiences has implications toward the divergent survivors, perpetrators, and beneficiaries of these environments, because they all find themselves at different points of a healing timeline. It is here that the film functions both as a social critique and as a form of therapy. It serves as both due to the fact that it enacts the loss and trauma in the present. It highlights the possibility that survivors can actively tell stories that embody personal, truthful, and ethical narrative representations of the experiences of the violence. As active participants in living historical, social, and cultural domains of experiences, those survivors carry within them many different voices; these voices speak of themselves, of their journey, of those around them (friends and enemies, living and dead), of the eras in which they lived, and of their unique conscious struggling. In this respect, a testimonial account is a performance intent on carrying forth memories by conveying a person's engagement between consciousness and history (Felman & Laub). Struggling with the difficulties of communicating experience through symbolic practices, such performances incur a responsibility to convey a tangible sense of prior events in ways that enable their remembrance and the assessment of their significance. *In SIA*, the Rwanda genocide is represented in the sense that the impacts of the historical experience are still alive – not only did some individuals survive, but the genocide as a human experience survived a haunting specter too. The historical reference remains stable and reaffirms the master-narrative of the event. In a pragmatic sense, such reference enables trauma victims to situate themselves in relation to the past and to name the past in the present. "The issue of obligation, moral and political, has been raised in every film about the Rwandan genocide. It

may be that the films on Rwanda have functioned to enmesh this moral obligation with the political mandate by producing a popular knowledge of genocide - one not so present in the news media of that period, which preferred to cast the events as a case of eternal tribal warfare". (Torchin, 123-124)

In visual terms, *SIA* works to build and to reveal memory, insisting that the telling and the visualizing of traumatic stories are complicated ongoing processes. The memory revealed therefore can be described as social memory, which is sustained in the medium of ever-changing social contexts. The film presents to the viewer a narrative of traumatic experience, holding together fragments of history and political memory in clear recurring flashbacks and monologic frames. This filmic technicality might be interpreted in its imagery that the trauma being told still have recurring fragments left behind, therefore healing has not been completely achieved. During the making of the film; "In one incident, the special-effects crew scattered fake cadavers in a swamp outside the capital of Kigali that had been a killing ground and hiding place for Tutsis. The scene was too real for a village woman who wandered to the set and saw more than a dozen silicone corpses. She screamed and sobbed, overcoming the shock only with a psychologist's help" (*NBC News TODAY*). This particular incident was a reflection of the film's narrative intent of confronting the horrors of the genocide, working through it and projecting such understanding as to the fact that healing has not been completely achieved. The manner of rendering the last line in the film by Martine, and the visual style of capturing that moment by the camera complement this view. Martine walks to the Gucaca local court (a traditional open court in Rwanda initiated after the genocide to try perpetrators). Here, some of the perpetrators of the genocide are being tried. Martine moves completely to the camera in a close shot, and speaks directly to the screen - as if speaking to the whole world, with the court audience behind her representing victims;

> Martine: I was there. I am a survivor. (*SIA*)

Filmography:

Sometimes in April, 2005. Raoul Peck. HBO Films.

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How an Eating Disorder May Have Informed Marianne Moore's "Nine Nectarines"

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Abstract:

How do eating disorders inform and reveal themselves in works of Marianne Moore? Using archival research at The Rosenbach Museum in Philadelphia along with medical texts and theories of the 1930s, I consider Moore's "Nine Nectarines" as a means of teasing out how eating disorders play a prevalent role in her overarching oeuvre. Disorders and diseases such as depression, anxiety, and addiction have received plenty of attention as a lens to approaching a poet's work. However, eating disorders are largely left out of these types of analyses, mirroring the unfortunate fact that eating disorders today persist as the deadliest, most under-diagnosed, and under-insured of *any* mental disorder. Such an oversight is glaring, particularly considering how relevant food and hunger are as symbolism in modern poetry. Failing to incorporate the role(s) eating disorders may play in a likely anorectic's work (Moore's) leaves a gaping disparity in a poet's or poem's comprehensive literary analysis. This manuscript aims to play a role in filling this disparity by focusing on eating disorders as lens with Moore's work.

Keywords: eating disorders, Marianne Moore, anorexia, bulimia, poetry.

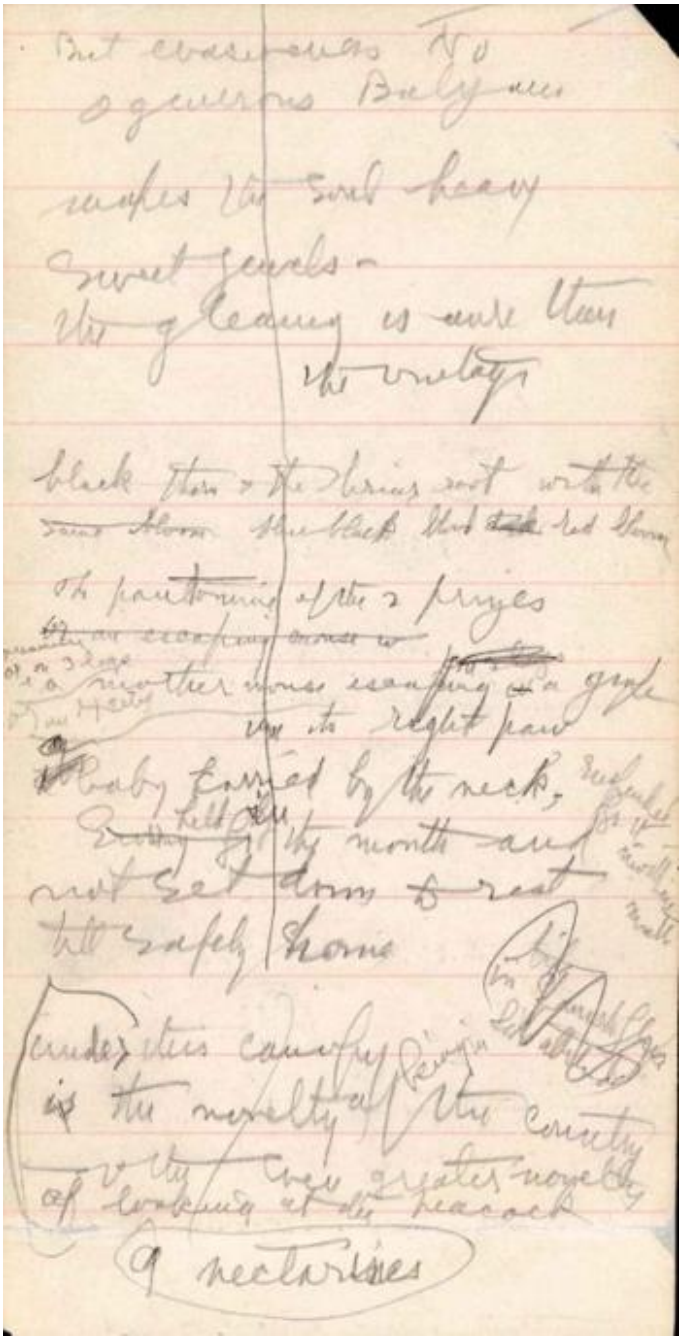
Introduction

Much has been written of Marianne Moore's poems of the 1930s with many critics ignoring the potential personal experience of the poet in favour of external influences. Moore preceded the era of so-called confessional poets, but I argue that there are hints and clues tucked within Moore's work that suggest a much more personal narrative than the majority of critics have thus far addressed. Her poetry does not exist in a silo of the natural world, as critics such as Laurence Stapleton have suggested. I argue that Moore's poetry, and "Nine Nectarines" specifically, offer insight into a more personal realm of the poet's world via an expert use and manipulation of language, themes, and symbolism.

"Nine Nectarines": In the Beginning

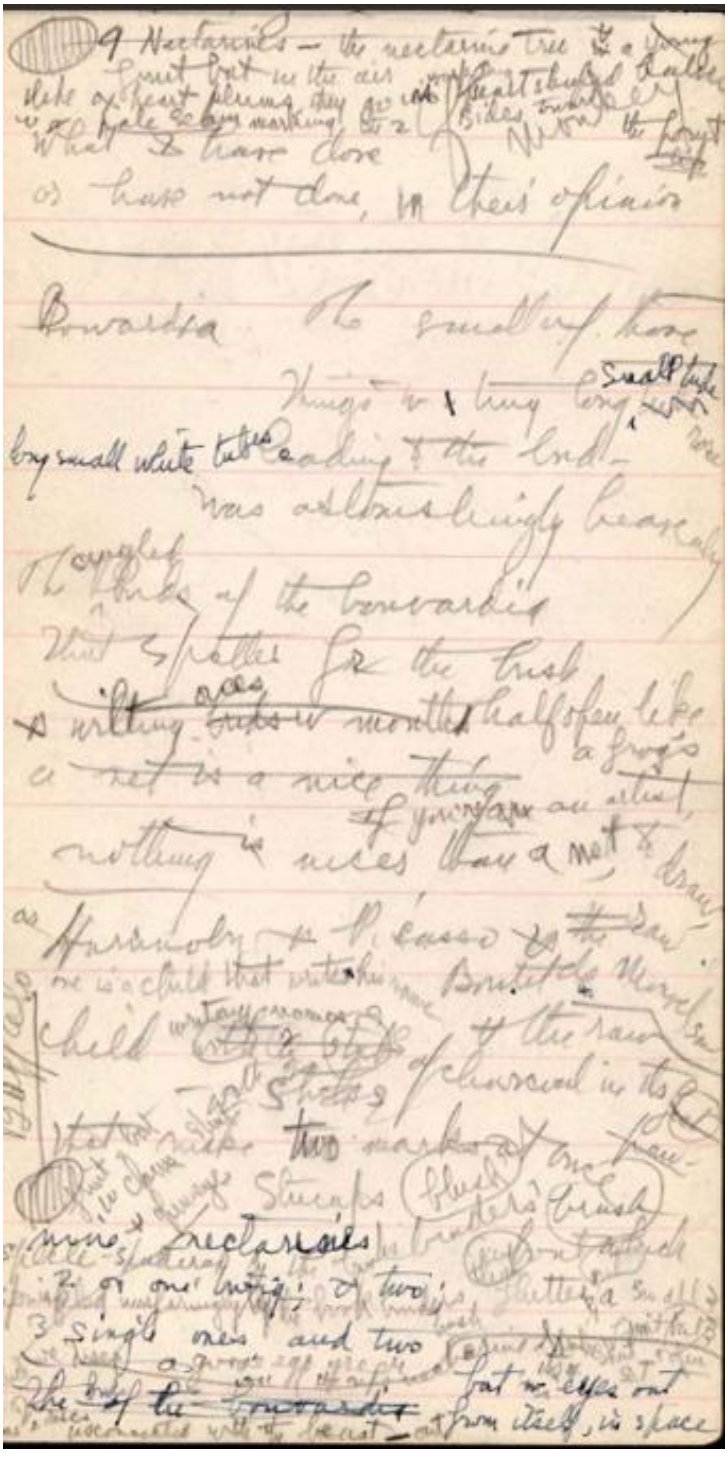
"Nine Nectarines and Other Porcelain" was originally published in *Poetry* magazine (1934). It was then collected in *Selected Poems* (1935) as "Nine Nectarines" and finally included as "Nine

Nectarines" once again in *Collected Poems* (1951).[1] There are changes between the 1934, 1935, and 1951 publications – sometimes ample changes. There are also, of course, vast differences between the draft of the poem held at the Rosenbach Museum where Moore titled the work in progress "Nine Nectarines" and the various published versions. Museum researchers estimate that Moore started this notebook in 1933, which gives a probable date to the draft. Some have called the poem an "advance" on her 1935 poem "Camellia Sabina" (Stapleton 77). However, in actuality it seems that Moore was working on ideas for both poems simultaneously. She included a simple but telling reference to "Nine Nectarines" on the second page of her 1933-1940 notebook, a page otherwise completely dedicated to drafting "Camellia Sabina." Located at the bottom of the first page are two circled words: "9 nectarines" (Moore VII:04:07, 002-verso).



Part of Moore's draft of "Nine Nectarines," held at the Rosenbach Museum (Moore VII:04:07 002-verso).

It was not until the seventh page of this notebook that Moore began working on "Nine Nectarines" in earnest:



Part of Moore's draft of "Nine Nectarines," held at the Rosenbach Museum (Moore VII:04:07 007-recto).

Crossed-out words include "with," a word suggestive of companionship and support, as well as "young," which indicate Moore's continued grappling in her various drafts to accept time and age (see, for example, her omissions of "before" and "older" in "Pigeons"). Moore's conflicts over whether

to include or omit words relating to companionship, age, and life are also reflective of her own personal (partially self-subscribed) confinement. Co-dependency was (and is) common for anorectics. By the 1930s doctors believed that separating the patient from the parents, and particularly the mother, was an important part of treatment. "Parentectomy," the method of isolating patients from their parents, was an approach coined by Murray Peshkin in 1919 and originally designed to treat asthma patients, but it quickly grew in popularity as an anorexia treatment (Robinson 199). One 1938 case describes a 19-year-old woman who was told repeatedly that she would be separated from her family but "never believed that her mother would abandon her" (Nicolle 154). It was only when she saw her family leave the care facility that she acquiesced to treatment, as she understood a split from her family had truly occurred. However, for many women of the 1930s, like Moore, such an intervention was not possible.

Dualism in "Nine Nectarines"

The splitting, dualism, and halving themes of "Nine Nectarines" are just as prevalent as Moore's selective deletions, even in her early draft. The 1934, 1935, and 1951 published versions all maintain the splitting imagery in the first stanza:

> Arranged by twos as peaches are,
> at intervals that all may live—
> eight and a single one, on twigs that
> grew the year before—they look like
> a derivative;
> although not uncommonly
> the opposite is seen—
> (*Poetry* 64)

One of the most obvious changes from Moore's draft of "Nine Nectarines" to the published versions is her decision to open the line by naming peaches instead of nectarines, only hinting at the closely related fruits through simile. It is not uncommon for the layperson to confuse peaches and nectarines since there is a single gene variant between them, and nectarines are often described as a bald peach that tastes like a plum. Nectarines are harvested by grafting their branches onto peach trees.[2] This unique dependency of nectarines was surely not missed by Moore, which may have been one of her reasons to wait until the eighth line (in her published versions) to mention nectarines by name. If a nectarine cannot be harvested without a peach tree first solidly in place, naming the nectarine well after the peach is akin to a reliant child paying respect to its elders. Moore rightly references the nectarine as "derivative," a noun to indicate something based on another source, but it would be remiss to ignore "derivative" as an adjective that insults an artist or their work. "Derivative" can serve as both a noun and an adjective in this poem's instance if we view the nectarines as metaphors for Moore-the-poet.

Her draft of the poem includes the lines "a ~~net is a nice thing~~ / if you're ~~are~~ an artist, / nothing is nicer than a net" (Moore VII: 04:07 007-recto). This may have been an allusion to James Joyce's *A Portrait of a Young Man,* and suggests that Moore read and enjoyed Joyce's work well after she notoriously rejected his submission to *The Dial* in 1927 when she served as editor.[3] A net can be a sense of security, a literal safety-net, or as a restriction and imprisonment (and is often a tool used to capture bats, animals that appear throughout the draft). Nets also work as a great metaphor for how anorectics see their lives, initially comforted by the control but eventually finding themselves in a prison of sorts. Merritt Low attempted to explain anorexia in 1936 as "undoubtedly [coming] from the struggle of trying to standardize a product which is fundamentally individual" (834). Low was referencing the "product" of a subscribed one-size-fits-all diet, but a product can just as easily describe an objectified human being – or an artist. Moore laboured with whether to include the description of a net in relation to an artist in the draft, much as Joyce described an American artist as wrestling to "try to fly by those nets" (310). She deletes the active descriptor, replacing it with a passive description. Her change from active to passive is a recurring theme in the poem *and* in much of her life. For example, in changes made between her 1935 and 1951 versions, she swaps "we" for "one" in a different stanza. It is an instance of the poet prominently trying to place herself – or someone like her, an artist – into her work with the security and distance of a third-person approach. Moore's personal passivity was displayed both through her physical appearance and in her acceptance of being kept under her mother's thumb until Mary Moore's passing. In a letter home from Bryn Mawr College dated 2 April 1908, Moore described the results from a physical appointment. Her weight and the alarm it caused the person administering the exam are indicative of Moore's potential ED and her unwillingness to take up space – a type of passivity common in anorectics:

> But my height is 4 ft 5 (5' 4"?) and my weight only 98. Miss Applebee says it is a disgrace that your weight ought to go into your height twice (or the other way about) and was most kindly and persistently prescribing stuff to eat, tonics, slow eating, sleep everything in fact. She finally pinned me down to raw eggs and said I *had* to eat one a day. (*Selected Letters* 44-45)

Moore's resistance to eating and, contrarily, her description of food binges in some correspondence with her brother, are themes in her letters throughout her life. However, in her poetry the focus on food and the results of consumption – weight and substance – are veiled in her preference for the natural world. Stapleton claims that the final (published) version of the poem suggests that a nectarine "intimates immortality" like its peach derivative now that the poem has become more "compressed" (79). He glances over the importance of immortality in the poem, although his naming of immortality as a key aspect of the poem seems to be by sheer coincidence. It is inarguably true that the final version of the poem is more compressed. Moore deleted entire stanzas in the 1935 and 1951 versions, and all these abandoned stanzas heavily featured descriptors of porcelain. It is crucial to pay close attention to what the deleted porcelain was and how it connected to food – and the nine nectarines in particular. The porcelain objects Moore deleted were all *dinner*

plates, designed for the dual purpose of serving food while also serving as works of art. When Moore removed the plates from the poem, she also removed the ability to consume food in a civil manner. This is much like how her mother was known for crafting meagre meals prepared on a hot plate before she gave them to her daughter to eat on the edge of a bathtub (*Twenty-First Century* 15).

Moore's emphasis on the number nine should also not be overlooked. Consider the number through the lens of Chinese culture, as it should be since Moore wrote about Chinese porcelain specifically and exclusively in the poem. Chinese numerology, which has been prevalent in China since it was created by Emperor Fu His over 4,000 years ago, dictates that the number nine is lucky and is often interpreted to mean "enough" and perfection (Ghannam 53). Both fullness (or resistance to it) and the quest for perfection are recurring themes in an anorectic's life. The number nine in Mandarin, 九, sounds very much like 久, which translates to eternity. This detail Stapleton either misses or dismisses when he claims the nectarine is "intimating immortality." He does not expand upon that immortality at all. Moore's western ear may have also heard the similarities between these Mandarin words, pronounced jiǔ, and "Yu," the latter being the red-cheeked peach she mentions by name in the poem. The Yu peach of Moore's poem is known for stopping death and, more importantly, "eternizes life" (Schlegel xxiv). "Nine Nectarines" describes a Yu "peach which cannot aid the dead, / but eaten in time prevents death" (*New Collected* 117). Gustaaf Schlegel's 1866 book about the "Heaven-Earth League" described how eating this peach "frees man forever from hunger" and promises immortality, and Schlegel specifies how in lieu of a real Yu peach a painting of the fruit or alternatively a *porcelain* peach can be a substitute (xxxiv).[4] Moore borrowed the phrase "prevents death" directly from Schlegel's book. The Yu is ultimately a Chinese version of Eve's apple without requiring a fall from grace, and an understandably irresistible tale for the anorectic – or a lover of obscure history like Moore.

Another sub-section here?

Stapleton only considers the three most accessible, published versions of the poem in his analysis. He does not address the initial draft where Moore briefly allows herself to be present in a rare instance, exposed as a naked peach. Still, Stapleton's work does probe deeper than some other popular criticism which suggests Moore's poems of the 1930s were largely centred simply on "engagement with animals and plants" and an "ethical and aesthetic stance toward the natural world" (Weinstein 373). Those elements are clearly present and are very much part of the outermost layer of Moore's multi-coated poems in their many versions. However, look for the poet within the poems and she reveals herself quietly in metaphors and comparisons. You can find Moore in the initial draft of "Nine Nectarines" as a very present, assumingly human interloper in the draft's fourth and fifth lines: "What I have done Monkey ~~tip~~ / or have not done, in their opinion" (Moore VII:04:07 007-recto).

Her voice is initially unapologetic at the beginning of the draft, with the nectarine boldly announcing itself in the first line. However, Moore swiftly separates the nectarines from the rest of the poem with a long dash:

> 9 Nectarines—the nectarine tree ~~w~~& a ~~young /~~ fruit bat in the air working
> like ox heart plums they go in heart shaped halves
> w ~~a~~ pale seam marking the 2 cf 2 sides toward the point
>
> (Moore VII:04:07 007-recto)

Once Moore distances the remainder of the poem from the named fruit, she is quick to compare nectarines to hearts in two ways. These comparisons include the description of the "heart shaped halves" and the analogy of fruit to "oxheart plums," but these intimate and seemingly loving metaphors prove too vulnerable to sustain. The connection between anorexia and heart atrophy and failure was already established by the mid-twentieth century (Hellerstein 122). Today, cardiac failure is attributed to 33% of deaths in anorectic patients (Sardar 88). When Moore confronts what she has "done" immediately after exposing and exploring the fruit at its most defenseless inner workings – its heart – it is a statement, not a question. There is no such sentimentality or regret in the published versions of "Nine Nectarines." Instead, these later versions abandon the first-person entirely, offering one royal "we."

Pronoun Selection

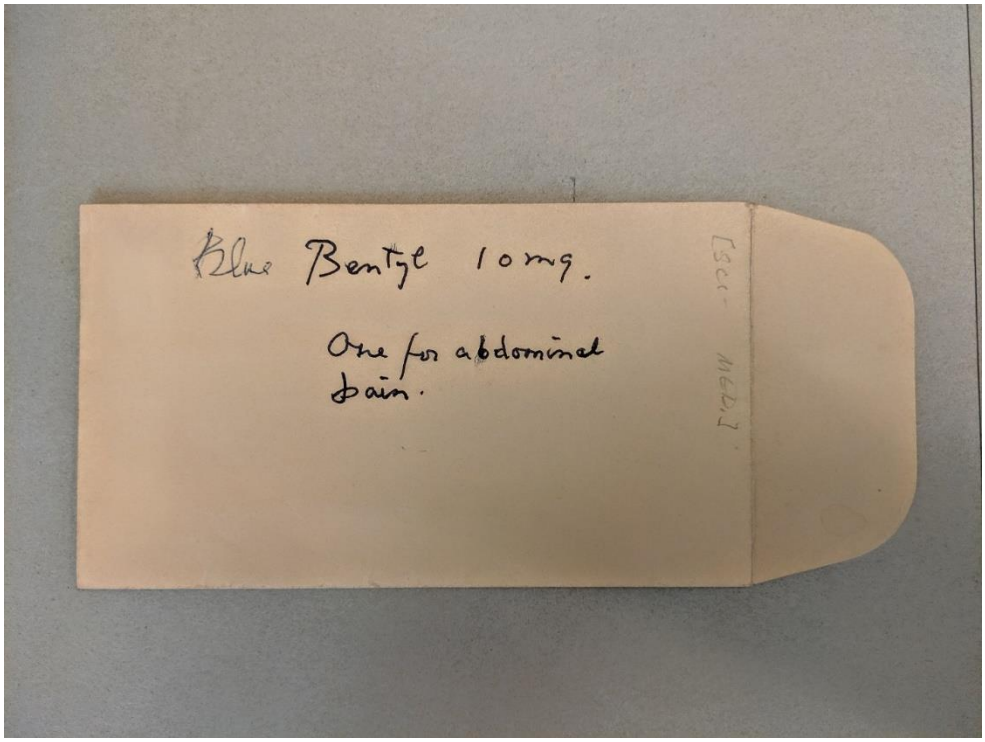
Pronoun usage is a known means of signifying a person's focus of attention. King Henry II was one of the first to use the royal "we," indicating that he was speaking for both God and himself, and today's research shows that first-person pronoun usage suggest insecurity and acute self-awareness while first-person or second-person *plural* suggests an outward focus of consideration of the feelings and thoughts of others (Kacewicz 2013, 125). "We" cannot know if Moore was using the same royal assumptions as King Henry II, speaking for God and herself, but her change from "I" to "we" before publication does suggest the adoption of sort of armour to protect herself from public scrutiny and an attempt to distance herself from the poem. The fruits, similar to the poet, are also sheathed by the time they are published, and, in the case of the fruit, they are safeguarded by their peach comparison. This may be why Moore no longer felt the need for separation with the dash. However, that favoured punctuation still makes an early appearance in published versions. It is used to separate "live" and "before" in all published versions, both terms that are indicative of life. Moore added an em-dash after "blue" and "style" in the 1934 *Poetry* version with the lines "Fuzzless through slender crescent leaves / or green or blue – or both / in the Chinese style – the four" (*Poetry* 64). However, those two dashes were removed by the time the poem was collected one year later in *Selected Poems.*

Much of Moore's early draft of "Nine Nectarines" is so different from the published versions that it is impossible to directly compare the two. What can be analysed are the themes and subjects repeatedly present in the draft and missing entirely in publications. The two most prominent figures missing from the draft stage to publications are the bouvardia plant and fruit bats. An unnamed species of bat is mentioned once in the 1934 and 1935 published versions, but Moore is no longer so acutely focussed on the animal. Bouvardia plants and fruit bats both engage themes of hunger and food in the 1933 draft. Moore describes the bouvardia with the lines:

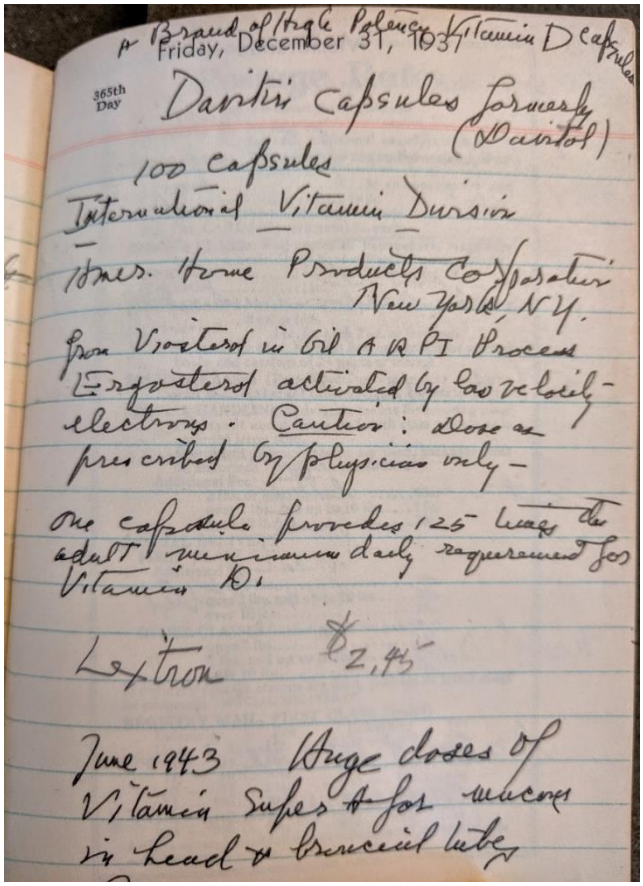
wilting ~~buds~~ w mouth~~s~~ half open like
a frog's
a ~~net is a nice thing~~
if you're ~~are~~ an artist,
nothing is nicer than a net

(Moore VII:04:07 007-recto)

The bouvardia is inedible and Moore describes it as both dying (wilting) and with a "mouth" half open as if it is begging for nourishment. These two descriptors of the plant mirror the appearance of the anorectic who wastes from the disorder but continues to refuse food. Consuming the bouvardia plant directly will poison a human, but the common side effects of pharmaceutical drugs infused with hydroalcoholic extract (which is taken from the bouvardia) mirror the symptoms and results of an ED. Donepezil causes fatigue, vomiting, weight loss and insomnia; Rivastigmine causes weight loss, anorexia and dizziness; and Galantamine causes anorexia and heart attacks (Herrera-Ruiz 537). Anorexia in these medical definitions refers to any loss of appetite, and not specifically to anorexia nervosa. Initially in the draft, Moore rightfully describes the plant as having multiple mouths (as the bouvardia has multiple blossoms), but she scratches out the plural "s" to fixate on a singular blossom. This decision circles the poem back to an inner reflective stance, perhaps associating the singular hungry blossom with the draft's individual human. There is no record of Moore taking medications with hydroalcoholic extract, but there are ample examples of drugs she was prescribed or expressed interest in that share a common thread. Bentyl, Lextron, and Thiamine are all known to treat anorexia, amongst other conditions.[5]



A pill packet for Bentyl in Moore's handwriting, held at the Rosenbach Museum.


Friday, December 31, 1937

365th Day

Dartin Capsules formerly (Dartol)

100 capsules

International Vitamin Division

Mrs. Home Products Corporation

New York, N.Y.

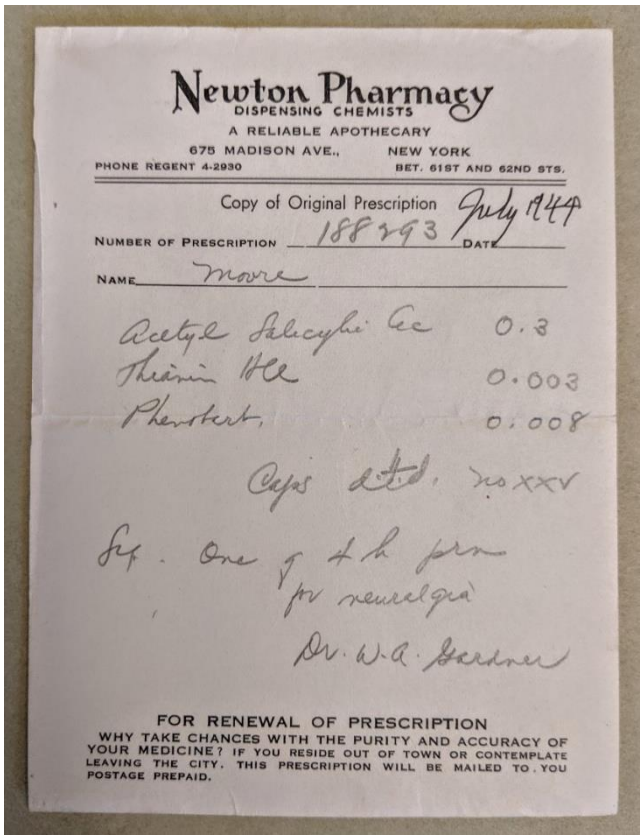
Irradiated ergosterol activated by low velocity electrons. Caution: Dose as prescribed by physician only.

One capsule provides 125 times the adult minimum daily requirement for Vitamin D.

Lextron $2.45

June 1943 Huge doses of Vitamin Super A for mucous in head & bronchial tubes

A note for the cost of Lextron ($2.45) in Moore's handwriting, held at the Rosenbach Museum.


Newton Pharmacy

DISPENSING CHEMISTS

A RELIABLE APOTHECARY

675 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK

PHONE REGENT 4-2930 BET. 61ST AND 62ND STS.

Copy of Original Prescription July 1944

NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTION 188293 DATE

NAME Moore

Acetyl Salicylic Gr 0.3

Thiamin Hcl 0.003

Phenobarb. 0.008

Caps dtd. No XXV

Sig. One q 4 h prn for neuralgia

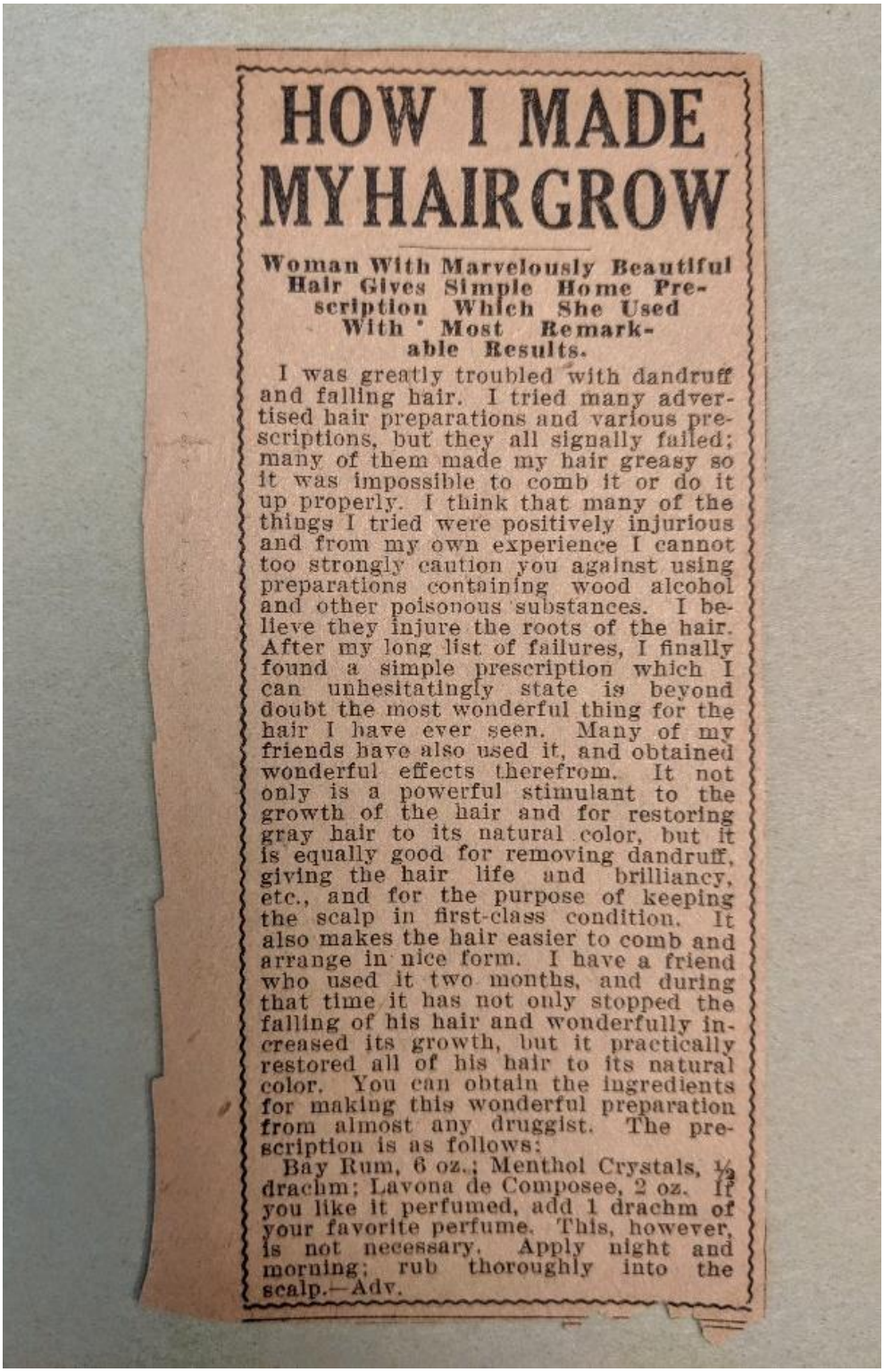
Dr. W.A. Gardner

FOR RENEWAL OF PRESCRIPTION

WHY TAKE CHANCES WITH THE PURITY AND ACCURACY OF YOUR MEDICINE? IF YOU RESIDE OUT OF TOWN OR CONTEMPLATE LEAVING THE CITY, THIS PRESCRIPTION WILL BE MAILED TO YOU POSTAGE PREPAID.

Moore's prescription for Thiamine (and other medications), held at the Rosenbach Museum.

It is clear even from this sampling of notes and prescriptions that Moore diligently sought out supplements, drugs, and medicines to help with a variety of ailments. She also regularly kept clippings and articles featuring various methods to treat afflictions from hair loss to being overweight and difficulty swallowing – all common concerns for the anorectic. Moore wrote home from Bryn Mawr on 29 March 1908 that her "hair began to fall out a while ago" (*Selected Letters* 42).



HOW I MADE MY HAIR GROW

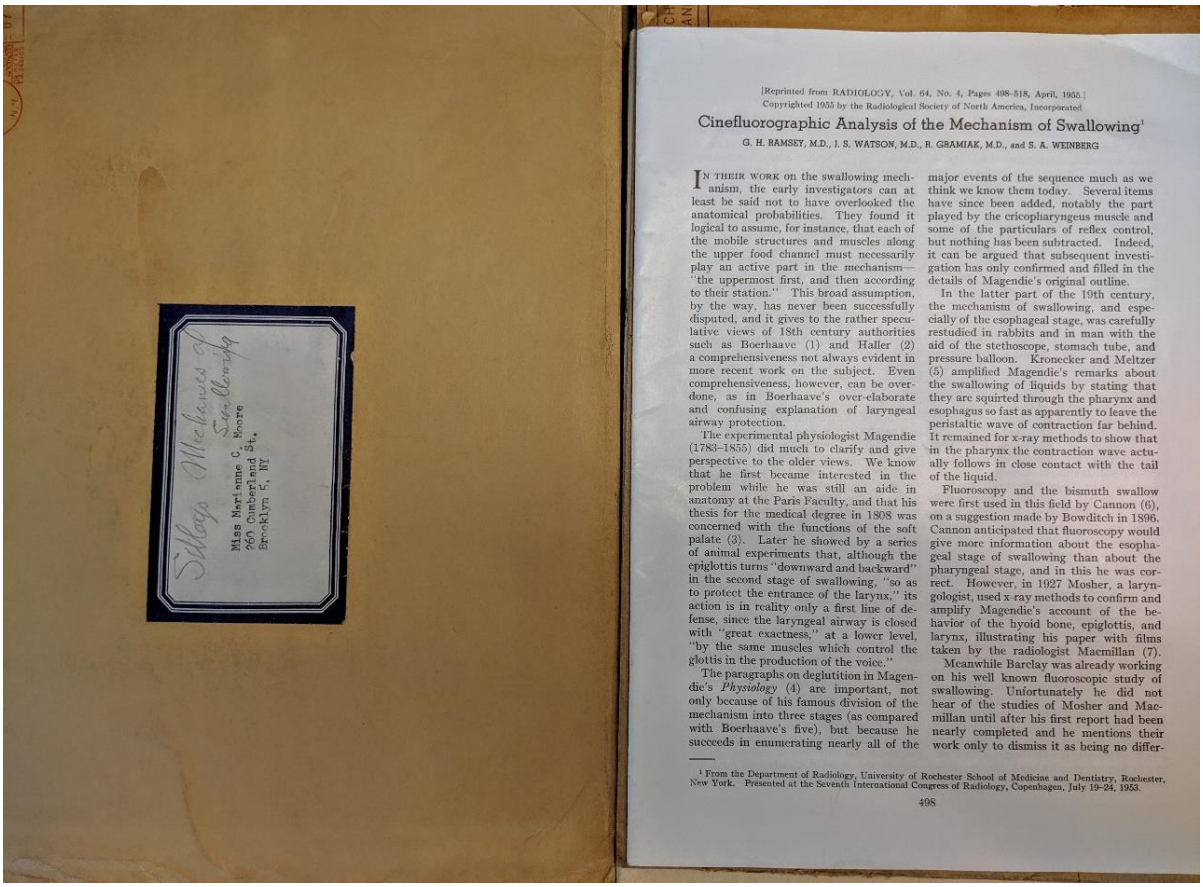
Woman With Marvelously Beautiful Hair Gives Simple Home Prescription Which She Used With Most Remarkable Results.

I was greatly troubled with dandruff and falling hair. I tried many advertised hair preparations and various prescriptions, but they all signally failed; many of them made my hair greasy so it was impossible to comb it or do it up properly. I think that many of the things I tried were positively injurious and from my own experience I cannot too strongly caution you against using preparations containing wood alcohol and other poisonous substances. I believe they injure the roots of the hair. After my long list of failures, I finally found a simple prescription which I can unhesitatingly state is beyond doubt the most wonderful thing for the hair I have ever seen. Many of my friends have also used it, and obtained wonderful effects therefrom. It not only is a powerful stimulant to the growth of the hair and for restoring gray hair to its natural color, but it is equally good for removing dandruff, giving the hair life and brilliancy, etc., and for the purpose of keeping the scalp in first-class condition. It also makes the hair easier to comb and arrange in nice form. I have a friend who used it two months, and during that time it has not only stopped the falling of his hair and wonderfully increased its growth, but it practically restored all of his hair to its natural color. You can obtain the ingredients for making this wonderful preparation from almost any druggist. The prescription is as follows:

Bay Rum, 6 oz.; Menthol Crystals, ½ drachm; Lavona de Composee, 2 oz. If you like it perfumed, add 1 drachm of your favorite perfume. This, however, is not necessary. Apply night and morning; rub thoroughly into the scalp.—Adv.

A clipping Moore kept on methods for hair growth, held at the Rosenbach Museum.

A clipping Moore saved on juicing for weight control, held at the Rosenbach Museum.



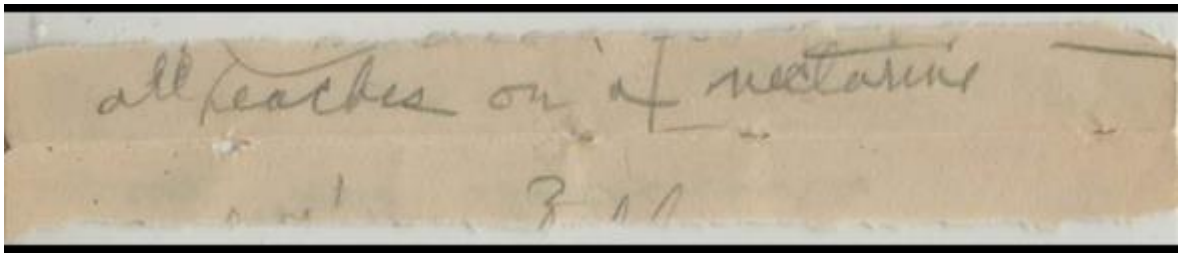
A medical article Moore saved on difficulty swallowing, held at the Rosenbach Museum.

It would be no surprise if Moore was highly knowledgeable about the side effects and lesser known off-label treatments of various medications. Her personal archives suggest that her penchant for medicines that treat anorexia and its side effects was not coincidence, but rather an attempt by the poet to treat an ED. As far as we know, Moore never sought treatment for anorexia nervosa specifically (a neglect which would not be unusual in mid-century America), but perhaps she indulged in self-treatment through various supplements and writing therapy. Her use of hunger and food themes as well as animals and objects that serve as metaphors for the poet and her ED-charged issues is highly prevalent when considering her poetry through an anorectic lens. "Bibliotherapy" was recommended to patients by Benjamin Rush and John Galt II as early as the mid-1800s (Silverberg 131). Eli Griefer, poet and pharmacist, started giving patients poems along with their prescriptions in 1928, eventually founding "poetry therapy" in two hospitals (Gustavson 55). Writing therapy was not formally introduced by Ira Progoff until 1965, but the foundational concepts had clearly been in place for decades (Hiemstra 19). It can be reasonably assumed that poets like Moore were aware of and experienced the personal benefits of writing therapy, and perhaps used writing as a type of self-medication.

Moore chooses the image of the fruit bat to bookend the poem in draft form, starting with the "~~young~~ / fruit bat working" in the first two lines (Moore VII:04:07 007-recto). The poet may have seen elements of herself and her dysfunctional relationship with food in her draft's fruit bat and its eating process. There are nearly 200 species of fruit bats, and the majority consume mostly liquid fruit juice and flower nectar instead of the usual bat fare of insects.[6] However, it is a misnomer that fruit bats actually *eat* the fruit. Instead, they chew and then spit out the skin, pulp, and seeds, only consuming the fruit juice. Moore, more so than most people, would have probably known detailed specifics about a given animal's behaviours considering her affinity for studying the natural world. "Chewing and spitting" is a relatively newly studied facet of EDs and is closely related to binge-eating disorder (BED) and anorexia, though the strategy itself is surely far from novel (Guarda 2004). Bat imagery is echoed repeatedly in the final lines along with the bouvardia:

> bat shut ~~paw~~
> that make two marks at once
> fruit- w claws & open eyes Stumps blush
> nine nectarines
> specle-spattered [sic] by the book binders' brush
> about which
> 2 on one twig; & two; that out
> sprinkled unsparingly by the book binders brush flutters ^ a small
> 3 single ones and two fruit bat
> which are discs a goose egg green
> on the ripe nectarine [illegible] shut & open eyes
> its ~~2~~ set
> bat ~~w~~^ eyes out
> ~~the buds of the bouvardia~~ from itself, in space
> as 2 discs unconnected with the beast–out
>
> (Moore VII:04:07 007-recto)

This is where Moore ends her draft of "Nine Nectarines," save for an odd scribble on page 28 of her notebook which reads "all peaches on a nectarine" (Moore VII:04:07 0028-recto). The note, followed by a brief illegible line below it, is the only writing on that page and was made after drafting several *other* poems which were published in *Selected Poems* and her later collection *What are Years.*



Part of Moore's draft of "Nine Nectarines," held at the Rosenbach Museum (Moore VII:04:07 0028-recto).

The draft of "Nine Nectarines" ends with an almost manic list of fruit bat descriptors. Moore wrote to her brother on 1 June 1934 that "I am writing like a demon with canton-flannel horns on my Nectarines poem" (Leavell 283). During Moore's revising of the "Nine Nectarines" draft, she scratches out the "paws" of her fruit bat before morphing the animal itself into fruit – specifically, a "fruit- ~~w~~ claws & open eyes" before again reiterating "nine nectarines." This marks the evolution of the draft into what became the *beginning* of the final poem versions with nectarines "arranged by twos as peaches are." However, in the draft, Moore places the mention of the fruit on its own, solitary line. The bats are described in dual pairs, the same as nectarines, all but one time when Moore denotes a trio of them – thus nine bats and nine nectarines. The bats' open eyes do not mysteriously go missing as she compares them with nectarines, but seem to be violently removed with the description of the "bat ~~w~~^ eyes out" and in the last line as "2 discs unconnected with the beast–out" (Moore VII:04:07 007-recto). This is the only time Moore calls the bats beasts, which is far removed than the young and hard-working fruit bat she describes in the beginning of the draft. The poet ends the draft with the word "out" followed by a long dash, drawing focus to the bat's enucleation and (as the dash is emphatic and much longer than an em-dash) suggestive of ostracism and loneliness.

Line Placement and Isolation

The ostracism theme persists from the draft form through various iterations to the final published version in 1951. The first stanza's only non-punctuation change from the 1934 *Poetry* version is the shift of the word "both" from the tenth line to the eleventh. Moore moves the word "peach" from "peach-nut" from the tenth to the eleventh line in the second stanza and deleted the hyphen from "bees-wax" in the same stanza. The original 1934 publication has a line in the third stanza that reads "We can not find flaw", which Moore changed to "One perceives no flaws" in all later publications (citation needed here?). She also deleted the em-dash after the word "curcilio" and de-italicised it from the 1934 version onward. The hyphen in "much-mended" is deleted from the third stanza in the 1934 version and the word "or" is moved from the tenth line to the eleventh.

These minor changes might be seen as tidying up, but each is a choice based on omissions or movement. Moore was hyper-vigilant of words and punctuations that connected and divided and worked toward perfecting what she saw as an ideal use of hyphens and dashes throughout the poem's publications. She paid special attention to the words "both" and "or," and brought food references together when she moved "peach-nut" to the same line and allowed "beeswax" to desegregate. Her fixation on connection and disconnection is perhaps most highlighted in the only major change in the first three stanzas: her shift from "we" to "one" when referencing the search for flaws in the nectarines. The 1934 *Poetry* version has a royal "we" which allowed the poet to lay claim (albeit via a group consensus) to the hunt for flaws within the nectarines. Later versions deviated to a more disconnected and formal "one" which *may* be Moore but could be any person. This anonymity allowed for honesty. She dissociated herself from the obsession with the nectarines and the examination for blemishes and began the process to eliminate complete lines and stanzas from the original 1934 *Poetry* publication. The change from "we" to an unidentified "one" is the start of Moore's dismantling of both her own poem and her preoccupation with the odd-numbered fruit.

The 1934 publication's fourth stanza had its last six lines completely deleted by the 1951 version. Consider the differences in the fourth stanza below, beginning with the original publication of the fourth stanza in *Poetry* in its entirety followed by the fourth stanza as it appeared in *Collected Poems* (again, in its entirety):

> unantlered moose, or Iceland horse,
> or ass, asleep against the old
> thick, lowleaning nectarines that is the
> color of the shrub-tree's brownish
> flower. From manifold
> small boughs, productive as the
> magic willow that grew
> above the mother's grave and threw
> on Cinderella what she wished,
> a bat is winging. It
> is a moonlight scene, bringing
>
> (*Poetry* 65)

> unantlered moose, or Iceland horse,
> or ass, asleep against the old
> thick, lowleaning nectarines that is the
> color of the shrub-tree's brownish
> flower.
>
> (*Collected Poems* 36)

Decisions on Deletions

The sweeping deletions Moore instituted after "flower" in the fifth line of the fourth stanza continued as she deleted stanzas 5-7 for the 1951 publication. These deleted stanzas largely address the "other porcelain" made in China (dinnerplates) detailed with imagery such as "a crane, a stork, a dove" and "Hunts and domestic scenes" (*Poetry* 66). A veritable menagerie of animals and what Moore called "half-beasts" are removed along with stanzas 5-7 as the poet sawed her poem nearly in half. Robin Gall Schulze claimed that the multiple versions of Moore's many poems are an invitation to rethink the nature of the modernist poems, and that Moore's always-evolving poems were a denial of the "ahistorical authority of her own literary events" (Dickie and Travisano 1996, 120). There was a 17-year gap between the publications of the poem in 1934 and 1951, and of course the context of Moore's life and sense of self (and self-as-poet) would have changed. However, Moore also entered her sixties during this time span, and the whittling away of her words while removing the overt fragility of the many porcelain objects listed in those removed stanzas is telling. Perhaps it was not simply a "compression" of the poem, as Stapleton argued, but an attempted compression to reduce the poet herself through the removal of excess (78). Compression lends itself to sturdiness, and perhaps doing away with the easily broken porcelain was Moore's way of reinforcing herself through her poetry as she entered the winter season of her life. She wrote in detail of compactness and the compacted in *Predilections* (1955) when discussing the work of Louise Bogan – a fellow poet who many suspect was anorectic.[7] Moore wrote that she was "struck by her [Bogan's] restraint" before discussing a variety of Bogan's work that focused on food imagery and hunger, such as "The Crossed Apple" (*Predilections* 131-133).

Conclusion

The final stanza of "Nine Nectarines" remains largely the same throughout the 17 years of revisions. Minor changes again focussed on punctuation, dashes, and word placement. The 1934 *Poetry* version has a hyphen between "long-tailed" and a comma after "cinnamon-brown" that is removed in all later versions. The word "who" is moved from the tenth line to the eleventh in 1935 and 1951 publications. The only major change in the final stanza is found in the first line. The 1934 *Poetry* version reads, "Theirs is a race that 'understands / the spirit of the wilderness'" in reference to Chinese people (67). The 1935 and 1951 version read, "A Chinese 'understands / the spirit of the wilderness'" (*New Collected* 209). On one level, this change is partially a simple clarification since Moore removed stanzas that directly addressed Chinese porcelain in these versions. Naming the Chinese in the final stanza is helpful in this sense, whereas using "theirs" in the 1934 version was fitting after three stanzas of detailing Chinese dinner plate art. However, it is also important to consider Moore's decision to *name* and shift the placement of "who" at the end of the poem. She points to a singular Chinese artist, "a Chinese," not *the* Chinese people or artists. The shifting of the word "who" also changed the 1934 version's final line from "imagined this masterpiece" to "who imagined this masterpiece" (*Poetry* 64; *Collected Poems* 30). She may not have inserted herself overtly into the poem's final published version, but she adopted a stronger stance than the nameless "one" who saw no flaws.

Moore ended the 1951 published version of "Nine Nectarines" with certainty, assertion, and a sprinkling of mystery. The 1935 and 1951 versions both featured an asterism before the final stanza, Moore's breadcrumbs that hinted to readers who might not have read the original publication in 1934 that something was indeed removed from these two versions – and that reading between the lines (and stanzas) was highly recommended. What is not there, the lack of excess, might be more telling both in EDs and poetry than what we see before us.

Endnotes:

1. All iterations of the poem will be referred to in this thesis as "Nine Nectarines" for clarity.
2. Peach seeds may become trees that only occasionally bear nectarines, but nectarine seeds can become trees that might equally produce nectarines or peaches—making grafting a necessity to ensure the desired crop.
3. The famed Joyce passage reads: "When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets" (310).
4. The full description of the Yu peach in Schlegel's *Thian Ti Hwui: The Hung League or Heaven-Earth-League, a Secret a Secret Society With the Chinese in China and India* reads:

   Peaches have been, and still are, in China the symbol of long life or immortality. Therefore the peach-fruit enters into all the ornaments in paint and sculpture which are made in rooms, on furniture etc., and, especially, in the presence of congratulation and felicitation offered to one's superiors or equals. They are preserves as Newyear-gifts; and, by want of genuine ones, porcelain, jade, or coloured-stoned peaches are offered. According to the *Shin-nung-king,* the peach *Yu* prevents death and eternizes life. If one has not been able to eat of it early enough, yet it preserves the body incorruptible till the end of the world. According to the *Shu-y-ki*, whoever eats of the fruit of the *Yu*-peach on the mountain *Kwoh liu,* gets eternal life. According to the *Shin-hian-kan,* the peach of immortality produces only one fruit in 1000 years but it frees man forever from hunger ... this fruit is of a beauty and odour not of this world" (xxxiv).
5. More information on Bentyl (also known as dicyclomine) and anorexia side effects can be found in R.A.F Jack's work; more information on Lextron and anorexia can be found in Shaine Marks's work; and more information on Thiamine and anorexia can be found in the works of Liu Mei.
6. Some species of fruit bats do eat food besides fruit, such as the Egyptian *Rousettus aegyptiacus* that eats leaves and pollen in addition to fruit. However, the majority of fruit bats enjoy a fruit-rich diet when possible, if not a strictly fruit-based diet.
7. See citation of Frances Kerr's "'Nearer the Bone': Louise Bogan, Anorexia, and the Political Unconsciousness of Modernism."

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Gertrude Käsebier, Photographer: The New Woman in Black and White

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Abstract:

This essay makes a case for remembering and celebrating the advances in the art of photography and in social attitudes alike that were made by Gertrude Käsebier (1852-1934). Although she was forgotten by the time of her death, and her body of work is still underappreciated today, she was an innovative and important artist whose representations of women in particular were groundbreaking – never more so than in a self-portrait published in 1900 in Alfred Stieglitz's magazine, *Camera Notes*. There she created an image that looked ahead in both its technique and its unsparing self-representation to the art of modernist figures such as the painter Frida Kahlo, as well as the photographer Lee Miller. Käsebier's powers of intense observation, along with her readiness to empathize across the lines of race and class, may owe something to her lifelong struggles with hearing loss. As a turn-of-the-century woman photographer and, moreover, as one with a disability, Käsebier lived and worked in ways greatly ahead of her time.

Keywords: photography, New Women, portraiture, disability, lesbian, modernism.

When Gertrude Käsebier died in 1934 at the age of eighty-two, the New York art world, which she had inhabited from the 1890s onward, scarcely took note. In the eyes of those on the avant-garde scene, her death represented merely the passing of a woman who was, in all senses of the word, old. The photographic processes she favored, involving materials such as platinum paper, and the images she fashioned, which featured women in ankle-length dresses and men in high collars, had alike been consigned to the past. In the year of her death, the modernist community was abuzz instead with the stir created by an opera, *Four Saints in Three Acts*. With a libretto by the Jewish lesbian expatriate writer, Gertrude Stein; music by Virgil Thomson; choreography by the British ballet dancer Frederick Ashton, and sets and costumes by Florine Stettheimer, a New-York-based surrealist painter, *Four Saints in Three Acts* was designed from the start by its white collaborators to attract controversy and attention, not least because it used a singing and dancing cast in which all of the performers were Black.

Before its successful premiere in February 1934 (first in Hartford, Connecticut, then on Broadway), John Houseman, director of the production, engaged Lee Miller (1907-1977) as its official photographer. Thus, it was for Miller – the *Vogue* model who went to Paris in the late 1920s and became an experimental photographer, before returning to the U.S. in the early 1930s – that the cast members in *Four Saints in Three Acts* sat for their portraits. Though the notoriety surrounding Miller, who had posed for nude photos by Man Ray and also for nude self-portraits, seemed to predict that the photographs of the opera's Black cast might be sensationalized or exploitative, the reality was very different. The result instead was a suite of somber black-and-white images of dignified individuals, as Miller photographed the forty-four performers one by one, many of them in head shots that emphasized – as Carolyn Burke, Miller's biographer, puts it – "force of character": "Lee's portraits are empathetic. The participants are seen not as professionals preparing public selves but as friends engaged in an unusual venture" (Burke 2005, 138-39).

Where and how did this most daring of modern women learn to create such portraits? While it is impossible to prove that the direct source was Gertrude Käsebier, it is entirely possible to claim an influence – or, at least, the existence of a tradition of portraiture by women that went through Käsebier to reach down to Lee Miller. At the turn of the century, Käsebier exemplified and perfected the practice of treating groups of figures related by a common enterprise, such as the American male painters known as "The Eight," by exploring the character of each member in separate images. But the more precise antecedent for what Burke calls these "empathetic" portraits by a white woman that resisted the racial othering of Black actors was Käsebier's series of photographs of the Native Americans who had traveled East in the 1890s under the auspices of the entrepreneur William Cody. In *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Warriors*, Michelle Delaney writes about these men and their families, who were turned into "Show Indians," meaning both that they were paid performers in "Buffalo Bill's" show and that they were put on display, intended to embody an exotic spectacle for the entertainment of white audiences. Delaney explains how Käsebier invited them to her house, got to know them, brought them to her studio on Fifth Avenue in New York, and "treated the Sioux performers as friends" rather than as novelties (Delaney 2007, 16), while photographing them individually in ways that emphasized their unique personalities.

If there was a link from Gertrude Käsebier to Lee Miller – from the old and largely forgotten turn-of-the-century American pictorialist to this young modernist – it also extended through another area, in terms of avant-garde visual effects. Working alongside the photographer Man Ray, Lee Miller had rediscovered in 1929 the nineteenth-century technique of solarization – that is, the exposure of film to light during the development process – which turned the black areas of an image white and the white areas black, creating a sense of strangeness and stylization. Had Miller ever seen Käsebier's remarkable self-portrait, first published as *Portrait of the Photographer* in the April 1900 issue of *Camera Notes*? In it, Käsebier manipulated the black-and-white image to strip away details from all but her head and hands, leaving what was likely a dark background white

and reducing her clothing to an empty outline (Fig. 1). It was an image that had less in common with the realist modes of the early twentieth century than with the latter-day surrealist experiments of Miller and her contemporaries. Truly, when it came to matters ranging from racial politics to aesthetics, Gertrude Käsebier proved herself to be the newest of New Women.

But that was the problem. The very term "New Woman," which described someone at the end of the nineteenth century who was self-consciously progressive and unconventional in her social philosophy, gender politics, artistic ambitions, and way of life had fallen out of fashion. So, too, by the time of Gertrude Käsebier's death in 1934, the women who had been slapped with that label, as well as those who had proudly used it themselves, were dismissed as anachronisms – as quaint and even embarrassing figures, for having been too earnest, militant, woman-centered, and feminist. Käsebier was part of a circle of turn-of-the-century American women photographers who believed in careers in the arts for women, and who worked together to advance the interests of those pursuing them. For Käsebier, there was no ambiguity surrounding this issue; it was, so to speak, a matter of black and white.

Writers of turn-of-the-century advice manuals had urged middle-class women to earn their livings by taking up cameras and opening studios of their own, much as Käsebier did. Mrs. M. L. Rayne, for instance, began one section of her 1893 book, *What Can a Woman Do: Or, Her Position in the Business and Literary World*, by helpfully informing readers that

> There are nearly twelve hundred lady photographers in the United States. The requisites for this business are patience to continue steadily in one line, improving one formula, a preliminary education in the science of photography, a knowledge of the chemicals used, and a few hundred dollars . . . The business pays at the rate of one hundred to three hundred per cent on the cost of the material used. (Rayne 1893, 126-27)

Women such as Käsebier, however, who hoped not merely to make money, but to be taken seriously as artists, faced greater challenges. In his study of Käsebier's contemporary and acquaintance, Zaida Ben-Yusuf – a British emigrée of North African heritage who opened a portrait photographer's studio on Fifth Avenue, about ten blocks from Käsebier's – Frank H. Goodyear III sums up the difficulty of dealing with male colleagues: "While willing to accept women in the field, many believed that they lagged behind men in terms of quality of work, that they were unsuited to positions of leadership, and that their careers inevitably stagnated before being abandoned"; thus, what men frequently offered women such as Ben-Yusuf and Käsebier was a shifting and unstable base of support, or what Goodyear calls a mix of "simultaneous encouragement and scorn" (Goodyear 2008, 34-35).

In search of more reliable assistance, women looked to one another. Gertrude Käsebier was part of a network of female photographers – New Women socializing with and inspiring other New Women – that was based in New York City, but extended south through Philadelphia and down to Washington, DC. As Barbara Michaels reports in *Getrude Käsebier: The Photographer and Her Photographs*, many contemporaries – from Eva Watson Schütze, to Alice Austin, to Sarah

Sears – revered Käsebier's work and considered her a role model. She was already in her mid-forties at the turn of the century when, with her three children grown and able to look after themselves, and with the burden of a husband who shared none of her artistic passions, she set herself up as a professional in her own studio. Meanwhile, accustomed to working alongside other women at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, where she had studied painting in the early 1890s, and happy to be in their company, Käsebier generously mentored younger female aspirants. Rose Clark, for instance, "said she owed Käsebier 'any success she had with a camera'" (Michaels 1992, 64).

If Käsebier was the leader of an informal group, that group was itself a subset of a larger network loosely organized around another one of her friends, Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864-1952). Though eight years younger, Johnston had discovered camera work as a calling a few years earlier than had Käsebier. In *The Positive Image: Women Photographers in Turn of the Century America*, C. Jane Gover describes the important, though unofficial, association of likeminded professionals who gathered around Johnston:

> Many of the women involved were friends who shared artistic interests, class backgrounds, and other objective sociological characteristics. These women, through photography, tested the bonds of domesticity, found a sense of sisterhood, and sought to establish their own creative identities. In their way, they were at odds with the prevailing middle-class social expectations for women and this as much as their interest in photography defines them as a unique cultural group. (Gover 1988, 55)

Several members of this circle were at odds with expectations in another way, too, for they were primarily lovers of women, whether as intimate friends or as romantic partners. None used the word "lesbian" – or even the term more common in this period, "Sapphist" – to name themselves, but a number moved across what Adrienne Rich later would call a "lesbian continuum" (Rich 1983, 156). Some even established what were known at the time as "Boston marriages," living and working in committed relationships with other women, with whom they might or might not have been sexually involved. This was particularly true of Frances Benjamin Johnston.

Like Gertrude Käsebier, Johnston was a celebrated photographer whose success was enhanced by assignments from magazines. She was, as her Bettina Berch puts it, always quick to "peddle" a "photo feature" to an editor (Berch 2000, 77). Among these was a series for the *Ladies' Home Journal* that she edited from 1901 to 1902 of "seven photo essays . . . that showcased the talents of eight of the 'foremost' women photographers" of the day, among whom she included Käsebier (Malone 2018, 180). But Johnston also welcomed exciting commissions from individuals, such as one from Booker T. Washington in 1902, who engaged her to photograph the African American students at the Tuskegee Institute, with the resulting images used by Washington in his own journalism (Berch 2000, 65). Unconventional subjects appealed to her, for she was herself unconventional.

In 1909, Johnston entered into an eight-year-long intimate partnership with another woman photographer, Mattie Edwards Hewitt, who was newly divorced from a husband, and who had

been writing love letters to her (Berch 2000, 82-84). Four years earlier, though, in the summer of 1905, Florence Johnston had traveled around Italy, France, and England with Gertude Käsebier at the latter's invitation. Johnston's biographer, Bettina Berch, is at pains to clarify this episode, suggesting that Käsebier's motivation was mere professional ambition, rather than emotional or erotic attraction. Käsebier wanted to meet with (and to photograph) socially prominent people abroad, and "Johnston was known for her boldness when it came to getting access" (Berch 2000, 77). Another possibility, of course, was that Käsebier needed a female traveling companion by her side for the sake of maintaining social propriety, in Europe and also in New York, where Käsebier's German-born husband Eduard still had the power to exercise some sway over her actions, as well as her reputation. Käsebier may have been a New Woman, but she was one who had been born in 1852. Observing the Victorian prohibition against unchaperoned travel for ladies of the middle classes would have been second nature to her. Even so, it seems no great stretch to imagine that, in choosing to go abroad with Johnston, Käsebier recognized that she would be happiest in the company of what we might now call a woman-identified woman. During this same period, Käsebier was spending most of her working days alongside other women, such as Harriet Hibbard and Alice Boughton, who were her studio assistants at various times. She liked women, just as she liked looking at them, especially through a lens.

Indeed, she rarely tired of doing so, even when she was, quite literally, tired. Thanks to a cache of revealing, unpublished notes (now housed in the University of Delaware Library's Special Collections Department) that were written by her granddaughter, Mina Turner – many of them transcriptions of stories that Käsebier told about herself – the record survives of what happened at the end of one such exhausting day of work. With the assistance of Harriet Hibbard, Käsebier had just finished photographing a family of Chinese shopkeepers, with whom she had struck up a friendly acquaintance during her many excursions to New York's Chinatown, where she went often to eat and to watch theatrical performances. She had invited the family to visit her in her studio, and they had done so as a group, resulting in a lengthy photo session. As William Innes Homer documented in his catalogue of a 1979 exhibition of Käsebier's images, she favored long sittings with a carefully posed subject as the core of her method of portraiture. She treated sitters "much as a painter would, often working two or three hours" with each one, "until she found the most appropriate pose and the best possible light" (Homer 1979, 17). On this particular occasion, the group portraiture project left both Käsebier and her assistant drained. As Turner records, once Käsebier and Hibbard were alone again, the latter changed into a kimono-style dressing gown and sprawled in a chair to rest. But if Käsebier, too, was weary, she nonetheless had an unflagging passion for framing and capturing striking effects – particularly when they involved the representation of women – and an eye that, so to speak, never slept. According to Turner's account, Käsebier abruptly barked an order at her assistant, calling out the name "Hibbard" and telling her not to move, and then began photographing her in this pose. As soon as she had finished, she headed straight to the darkroom to develop the resulting image (Turner, Gertrude Käsebier Papers).

Several things about this story – for which Käsebier herself would have been the source, communicating it to Mina Turner after the fact – are worth noting. One is the rather blunt and autocratic persona that comes through. Käsebier was a commanding presence. She was briskly modern, rather than genteel or in any way "Victorian" in her manner, and she put the urgency of capturing a photographic moment above any polite social forms. Another is the way in which Käsebier chose to address her assistant, using her surname only. The model for this version of employer-employee relationship, at the turn of the century, was not a domestic one, of a mistress calling out to a servant (who would have been "Harriet" to the lady of the house); nor was it that of a lady milliner or other tradeswoman, whose subordinate would have been known as "Miss Hibbard." It was instead a masculine model, of men giving orders to other men, addressing their fellows as they had learned to do at school, by surname alone. When it came to her camera work, Käsebier undertook it with the same seriousness and intensity as her male peers. She dealt with women whom she trusted and liked as a man would have done with his associates, expecting them to be physically tough and selflessly dedicated to the perfection of the end result, just as she was.

In her single-minded pursuit of an image, she resembled nothing so much as her intrepid contemporaries in journalism, the so-called "girl reporters," who both emulated and competed with men, and who did so while wearing the less restrictive, more comfortable clothing styles – known as "rational dress" – that Käsebier also favored. Although she appreciated and preserved in her photographs the graceful beauty of the fashionable women around her who were corseted, ornamentally hatted or veiled, and swathed in layers of flowing white muslin, she preferred something more practical for daily life – a variation on the "walking suit" (a long dark jacket and skirt, worn with a cotton blouse) that constituted the costume of middle-class women outfitted for business in an urban world. The purpose of such clothing was functionality and mobility, while affording women an air of respectability that helped them to move through public spaces.

Käsebier's own attitudes toward class-based and gender-based codes of respectability were – especially given her mid-Victorian birth and her marriage to an unimaginative, bourgeois German man – surprisingly close to those of the most daring suffragists and other feminist reformers twenty years her junior. Her disdain for many social prohibitions came through in small and large matters alike, particularly when notions of what was or wasn't a suitable object for the camera's lens were at stake. Her granddaughter, Mina Turner, drawing upon family lore, has provided an amusing example of the differences in opinion that divided Käsebier from her more rigidly conventional husband, Eduard. One day, Käsebier chose to photograph her young grandchild, Mina Turner's brother, while he was sitting on his toilet-training chair. To this, Eduard reacted loudly and violently, insisting that it was an outrage to take an image of his grandson in such a pose. His objections, however, carried little weight with Käsebier (Turner, Gertrude Käsebier Papers).

More controversially, Käsebier exercised her right to determine what constituted a fit subject when, around 1901, the middle-aged Society architect Stanford White brought to her studio his teenaged lover, Evelyn Nesbit, who had been making her living as an artist's model and a chorus

girl. This was hardly the sort of visitor that a lady was expected to receive. To Käsebier, however, a commission was a commission and not an occasion to get on her moral high horse. The image of Nesbit that she produced was as beautiful as it was non-judgmental. In it, Nesbit, with eyes half-closed and leaning forward toward the camera *en deshabillée* – seemingly uncorseted and wearing an off-the-shoulder white dress that emphasized her unbound breasts – is no mere pin-up. Käsebier's composition draws the spectator's eye to the foreground, which is dominated by the hand on which Nesbit must lean in order to achieve this seductive posture. There is nothing idealized or eroticized about that hand. The wrist is rather thick; the fingers seem short and are splayed, in order to bear all the weight; and the muscular tension of the forearm is evident, as Nesbit holds the pose. For the viewer, the effect is of being treated simultaneously to an attractive fantasy and of being taken behind the scenes, to see the effort on which the illusion depends. This sort of modern – almost postmodern – self-consciousness and contradiction was something that Käsebier explored repeatedly, especially in her photographs of women, many of whose arms and hands strain uncomfortably as the subjects prop themselves up to place their bodies at an attractive angle. Not long after Käsebier created this photograph of *Miss N.*, as she titled it, the Irish poet William Butler Yeats would publish, in the December 1902 issue of the *Monthly Review*, "Adam's Curse" – a poem in which a female speaker explains that "'To be born woman is to know – / Although they do not talk of it at school – / That we must labour to be beautiful'" (Yeats 2000, 2097). Käsebier had already revealed as much to her male and female audiences alike, purely through visual means.

It was, in part, this extraordinary capacity to capture the appealing public image that sitters wished to project and, at the same time, to suggest the effort, whether physical or mental, that it took to maintain an illusion of surface perfection and coherence of personality, that underpinned Käsebier's success in portraiture. Certainly, her unjudgmental empathy with her subjects – the quality that Carolyn Burke would also locate decades later in Lee Miller's photographs of the African American cast of *Four Saints in Three Acts* – accounts for how and why Käsebier was able to create one of her most important series of images: her photographs of Gertude Simmons Bonnin (1876-1938), the daughter of a Sioux mother and of a white father, who wrote under the Native American name of Zitkála-Šá.

When she accepted Käsebier's invitation to visit her New York studio and to pose, the twenty-two-year-old Zitkála-Šá had every reason to be wary of an older white woman with a camera, however "New" Käsebier might have been in her social attitudes. From the time when, as a little girl, she was taken away by missionaries from her mother and from the Yankton reservation in South Dakota, to be stripped of her supposedly "savage" ways at a school in Indiana, Zitkála-Šá was aware of being the object of the white gaze. In a series of autobiographical accounts that she began publishing around 1900, she wrote openly about the pain and resentment she felt at being the victim of that unsympathetic and controlling gaze – about how, when she was a child, white children and adults alike subjected her to their intrusive, disapproving stares (or, as she put it, "riveted

their glassy blue eyes" on her), which "embarrassed me, and kept me constantly on the verge of tears" (Zitkála-Šá 2003, 87). Using journalism as her form of protest, and magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly* as her vehicle, she made clear that this hostile scrutiny had continued, with racist misrepresentation added to it, even after she became a college student, a musician, and a debating champion. On one occasion, while participating in an intercollegiate oratory contest, she found

> There, before that vast ocean of eyes, some college rowdies threw out a large white flag, with a drawing of a most forlorn Indian girl on it. Under this they had printed in bold black letters words that ridiculed the college which was represented by a 'squaw.' Such worse than barbarian rudeness embittered me. (Zitkála-Šá 2003, 102-03).

How, then, did Gertrude Käsebier earn her trust – so much so, that Zitkála-Šá posed for the camera not only in the sort of diaphanous aesthetic costume that a white female musician was expected to wear, but in Sioux dress? Surely Käsebier's openness and guilelessness helped – that is, her readiness to make friends with almost everyone she met and to be interested in them as individuals, across the lines of race and of class, whether it was a family of shopkeepers in Chinatown or a displaced young Native American violinist, torn between career opportunities in the East and personal loyalties in the West. But there is another possibility, too: that Zitkála-Šá responded to the not-completely-hidden sense of vulnerability present in a woman who had spent her entire life dealing with a disability.

It is easy to forget the existence of that invisible disability, which was the permanent effect of Käsebier having contracted scarlet fever as a child. Mina Turner highlights it, however, in her unpublished account of her grandmother, where she describes the deafness in one ear that began for Käsebier at the age of three, but that progressed to affect her hearing in general as she aged. According to Turner, Käsebier's way of deflecting sympathy for her advancing deafness was to make a joke of it and to say she was grateful for a condition that allowed her to be unaware of and to ignore so many unimportant things that were being said around her (Turner, Käsebier Papers). Yet it was an obstacle in life nonetheless. Having spent years under the unfriendly scrutiny of white racists, Zitkála-Šá had become hypersensitive to the motives of those who wished to stare at her. She would most certainly have recognized the difference, however, between being treated as a spectacle by those who were out to ridicule or patronize her – something that was intolerable – and being looked at closely and appreciatively by someone for whom sight was, by necessity, her primary means of connection with the outside world.

Here perhaps was one explanation for the trust that a number of Käsebier's photographic subjects, men and women alike, placed in her during the lengthy sessions through which they patiently sat – especially in cases where those subjects differed from her in race and/or in class. To careful observers, Käsebier's partial deafness would have been evident through her way of turning or cocking her head and would have helped, so to speak, to level the playing field

between themselves and a privileged white woman, who could afford her own studio (albeit one bankrolled at first with her husband's money). Her condition would have excused the intensity of the gaze that she fixed upon them, especially within a social order where women in general were to be looked at, but were never supposed to look back.

As is often true, however, of those for whom daily life is more of a struggle, Käsebier turned her least charitable, least flattering regard upon herself and, in visual terms, cut herself no slack. An extreme example of this phenomenon, of course, was the case of Frida Kahlo, disabled by spinal injuries sustained in an accident, who in the late 1920s began her career in painting, just as Käsebier's career in photography was ending, with a long sequence of searing self-portraits. Käsebier, in contrast, seems rarely to have been the subject of her own work and rarely to have placed images of herself before the public, which makes even more interesting the heavily manipulated self-portrait that she executed around 1899 and published in the April 1900 issue of *Camera Notes*, the journal of the Camera Club of New York, edited by Alfred Stieglitz (Käsebier 1900, 246). Although Käsebier often used pictorialist techniques to aestheticize her female sitters, including strategic placement of the billowing, gauzy white fabrics of turn-of-the-century garments, she denied herself that softening effect, offering nothing but the barest black pencil outline of a clothed body. As Barbara Michaels describes this image,

> Käsebier's self-portrait . . . montaged clear photographs of her own face and hands to a sketchily drawn Chinese-style gown, emphatically demonstrating her philosophy that, in a portrait, the face and hands should be given priority . . . [The] combination of media would have recalled Käsebier's switch from painted portraiture to photography, while suggesting her continued willingness to keep a brush at hand to alter or enhance photographs. (Michaels 1992, 66)

I would like to end with some additional thoughts on how to read this very modern, almost abstract self-portrait (Fig. 1). First, we should note that the angle of her head is tilted slightly backwards, as though to emphasize deliberately her least beautiful or conventionally feminine feature – her prominent jaw. She had, in fact, artificially distorted the original size and shape of her lower face in real life. As Mina Turner notes, in 1872, when Käsebier was twenty-years-old, she decided to have all her teeth removed, because she wished never again to have to put herself in the hands of a dentist (Turner, Käsebier Papers). Nineteenth-century dentures, of course, were hardly the undetectable, perfectly fitted objects they are today. The cross-cultural garments that Käsebier wears in her self-portrait – what is obviously a Western high-collared blouse, combined with a loose and unrevealing coat of Asian design – both desexualize and de-familiarize this image of a woman. What Käsebier offers here makes an anti-fashion statement, denying spectators the pleasure of looking at a woman's clothes. The image also resists turn-of-the-century Orientalism, through its erasure of all details of the seemingly Chinese-style garment, which thus cannot be treated by Western viewers as an exotic spectacle. The coat exists merely as a suggestion, almost as an architectural structure, to support the unglamorized head. Its use also

makes impossible any guess as to whether Käsebier is or is not wearing a corset, which in 1900 was the mandatory signifier of respectability.

What is perhaps most radical, however, about this self-portrait is its visual questioning of *being* as a verifiable state and of the boundaries between existence and non-existence. As Mina Turner reports, Käsebier confided in her granddaughter that she had been subject all her life to uncanny perceptions and experiences, some of which fell into the realm of the paranormal (Turner, Käsebier Papers). Käsebier's self-portrait, in which she appears to be of an impermanent and indeterminate shape, evokes late-Victorian spirit photography, as it was called – manipulated images, some of them by and of women, that were produced to document psychic phenomena and to serve as evidence of ghosts moving among us in the modern landscape. Here, Käsebier is her own ghost. It is impossible, moreover, to know whether we are seeing her dematerialize or materialize, fading from sight or coming into view. Either way, Kasebier is suspended between two states.

But this is also a photograph that self-consciously reminds the audience of photography itself as a form of creation and erasure, of life and death – one that encourages its audience to think about the implications of witnessing a human image as it gradually appears and rises from the fluid bath, during the development process, or as it is expunged by the creator's hand. It seems fitting, therefore, to place this self-portrait alongside some of Käsebier's more famous depictions of the theme of maternity. In photographic images such as *The Adoration* (1897), mothers proudly hold up to the camera's lens the dynamically moving forms of the children they have borne, doing so with the pride and assurance of artists, "as beautiful objects and as evidence of their own creativity" (Stetz 2013, 46). But in this self-portrait, as in Frida Kahlo's notoriously daring 1932 modernist work, *My Birth*, in which the painter depicts her own adult head emerging from the womb, Käsebier is giving birth to herself. At the same time, with her bodily parts both coming into focus and disappearing before our eyes, in this literal and figurative vision of dissolution and development, Käsebier confronts her own mortality and corporeal impermanence – as well as the impermanence of her art form, despite its seeming fixity.

Perhaps Käsebier really was psychic, for in highlighting transience and ephemerality, her self-portrait proved prescient. Despite her great success at the turn of the century, Käsebier lived long enough to see herself and her innovative work cast aside. Once considered a New Woman, she was unjustly relegated to the category of the old guard and wrongly viewed as the antithesis of modernism, instead of as a precursor of it. Such a change in status was, of course, by no means unique for women artists of the early twentieth century. As Eve M. Kahn has described in "Portrait of an Artist," Lillian Baynes Griffin, a gifted contemporary, met a similar fate and sank into obscurity even deeper than Käsebier's, becoming "one of New York City's forgotten photographers" (Kahn 2018, 33). In the case of Gertrude Käsebier, however, such erasure is particularly unfair and unwarranted. More than merely a precursor of modernist figures such as Frida Kahlo and Lee Miller, she was an exemplar of success for all women artists who wished to forge a professional

career and a distinguished reputation while demonstrating fearless devotion to the principle of experimentalism, boldness of personal vision, and determination to cross the borders of race and class. She deserves not only to be remembered, but celebrated.

Figure 1.
Portrait of the Photographer, manipulated self-portrait by Gertrude Käsebier, circa 1899.

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Longing for Return: An Existential Search and Identity Formation in Almodovar's *Volver*

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Abstract:

This essay explores Almodovar's construction of female characters in his film Volver (*2006*), in which the strength of the protagonists' maternal instinct foments their willpower and vital energy leading them to come to terms with past experiences of emotional and sexual abuse. At the center of interpretation of this cinematographic work is the Nietzschean term of the eternal return, developed in his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, according to which, all the events of the past and present have already occurred at some time, will repeat themselves in the future ad infinitum and can be visually represented by a kind of incessant wheel or circle with no beginning or end formed by the past and future. In this vein, my reading of *Volver* examines how "the unconditional and infinitely repeated circular course of" events (Nehamas 1985, 146) forges the existential search and self-realization of Almodovar's characters. The analysis concludes that such reoccurrence of the traumatic events allows the female protagonists to unfold the secrets of their past, and by virtue of discovery, redemption, and reconciliation, to recover the lost family bond ultimately reviving the fractured symbiosis between these women and reasserting their will to improve their individual and collective future.

Keywords: Pedro Almodovar, *Volver*, Nietzsche' *Eternal Return*, Motherhood, Identity Formation, Abuse and Trauma, Redemption.

"Everything goes, everything comes back;
eternally rolls the wheel of being."
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*

When Pedro Almodóvar presented his film *Volve*r at the 2006 Cannes film festival, he emphasized that the title implied several returns: a return to the female universe, to his native region of La Mancha, but most strikingly, a return to the theme of "motherhood, as the origin of life and fiction" (Almodovar 2006, n.p.). Almodovar centers the story on three generations of women in one family – Raimunda, her sister Soledad, their mother Irene and Raimunda's daughter

Paula – who had to overcome a series of traumatic events to re-establish the family bond and re-affirm their selfhood. The events of the film take place between the La Mancha region and Madrid where the two sisters Raimunda and Soledad are reconciling with the horrible death of their parents in a fire. Almodovar's construction of his female characters, particularly of Raimunda, hinges on their maternal instincts which foment their willpower and vital energy as they come to terms with haunting experiences of incest. This essay seeks to analyze the film *Volver* in connection to the Nietzschean concept of the eternal return, developed in his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. According to Nietzsche, all the events of the past and present have previously occurred, will repeat themselves in the future ad infinitum and can be visually represented by a kind of incessant wheel or circle formed by the past and future without beginning or end. "[N]othing that ever happens to us, even if it is the result of the most implausible accident and the wildest coincidence, is contingent - once it has occurred," explains Alexander Nehamas in his study *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Nehamas 1985, 149).While repetitions of past events are innumerable, the variants of circumstances that surround them are limited. As the past repeats itself, Nietzsche views struggles as imperative for "life organization and as expression of will to power" (Granier 2005, 103; my translation) which, in turn, empower humans to strive against fatalistic attitudes and to foster creation instead of destruction. Such creation deems inseparable from "an inner transformation" during which individuals overcome pain in order to evolve multilaterally (Granier 2005, 105-108).

It is my contention that in *Volver*, the "repeated circular course of" (Nehamas 1985, 146) traumatic events that result in violence and death of the aggressor put into motion an existential search for Almodovar's characters and ultimately gives new energy to their will to power. Raimunda, Irene and Paula epitomize the type of desirable individuals – identified by Nietzsche as sinners – who challenge social decadence and "barbaric violence which characterize vulgar and mediocre individual[s]", (Granier 2005, 100) embodied in the film by their male counterparts. By virtue of "operations on [their] souls" engendered by violence and with evolution of their "'sense of strength'" (qtd in Granier 2005, 31, 100), the female protagonists experience Nietzschean *becoming*. Lawrence J. Hatab in *Nietzsche's Life Sentence* asserts that this notion of "becoming" is fundamental to the understanding of eternal return and cannot be explained in terms of anything other than the immediate condition of the individual (Hatab 2005, 63, 62, 57) to overcome existing complexities and break away from impediments to progression. Such liberation, in turn, yield them "emotional possibilities [...] to create new values" (Jean Granier 2005, 33) for a more meaningful family relation and individual growth. The father figures' transgressions, on the other hand, exemplify how such decadence, embodied by their "unruly" [incestual] instincts, "demoralizes the will" (Jean Granier 2005, 30-31), resulting in their violent deaths. The reoccurrence of such transgressions, however, allows Raimunda and her mother to unfold the secrets of their past, and by virtue of discovery, redemption, and reconciliation, to recover the lost family bond ultimately reviving the fractured symbiosis between these women and reasserting their will to improve their individual and collective future.

In this essay, I explore how Nietzsche's eternal return theory broadens our understanding of the repeated incestual aggression in *Volver* as a catalyst for existential search, discovery, and ultimately for the self-affirmation of its female characters. Even though "[w]ayward husbands and incestuous fathers are (or have been) quickly dispatched off screen" (Kinder 2007, 6), their ghostly presence in the narrative serves as a leitmotiv to link the family's past to its present. Reading Nietzsche's eternal return, Joan Stambaugh highlights that "[i] n a determined series of recurring events the 'when' of an event is already established. The 'what' is not totally predictable, because the element of repetition enforces and strengthens the effect of the event" (Stambaugh 1980, 26). Based on this premise, I argue that the attempt by Raimunda's husband Paco to rape her daughter Paula in the beginning of the narrative produces a stronger impact on Raimunda's psyche since it forces her out of the emotional rut caused by having been raped by her own father as a teenager and her successive rejection of her mother. As the transgressions by the father figures are repeated, Paula's drama incurs the eternal return of the mother's suffering and of her grandmother's killing of her abusive husband, finally allowing the protagonists to overcome the past and to canalize the destructive energy into a new constructive vein. In *Volver*, Paula's trauma represents the eternal return of her mother's and grandmother's past per se even though the circumstantial differences of the tragic events vary. Here we witness, in Alexander Nehamas' words, how "if any property [of an experience] were different, its subject would be simply a different subject (Nehamas 1985, 155). In other words, while Raimunda's father managed to abuse, rape, and impregnate her, Paula saves herself from being raped by Paco stabbing him with a knife. By killing her offender, the granddaughter reintroduces the grandmother's act of taking the abuser's life into the family history circle and therefore, further foregrounds the ongoing suffering of Raimunda and Irene. Therefore, all the variations in the re-occurrence of the events in Almodovar's narrative, such as father versus stepfather, abuse versus attack/attempted rape, ignorance versus complicity of the mother, constitute acceptable formative components within the framework of eternal return of the same that are justified by the fact that the subjects of the two experiences are not identical either. They are two different victims of abuse by a father figure, which results in emotional trauma and the transgressor's death, but, in turn, espouses reconciliation between the three generation of women.

"*Volver* seems to focus on a difference within repetition that can only be mediated by (cinematic) representation" (Gutiérrez-Albilla 2017, 34). Raimunda's painful experience remains an enigma almost to the end which fosters a more meaningful interaction between the narrative and the audience as the director continues to build on the clues in the protagonist's characterization. The temporality here not only maintains the interest of the viewer, but also facilitates a deeper understanding of Raimunda's psychological trauma and the consequent abandonment of her family. Over the years, her father finds his death in a fire at the hand of his wife when she finally learns of the crime committed by her husband against their own daughter. As the audience becomes exposed to the disturbing images associated with Paco's attempt to rape Paula, the abuse

committed against Raimunda in her adolescence acquires more visuality and impact. It becomes a terrifying reality of a repeated abuse and intensifies the pain of that family tragedy. At the same time, the return of the past trauma brings about a realization for Raimunda that "each one of [... her] past actions is a necessary condition to be what [... she is] today" (Nehamas 1985, 160). Nietzsche believed that, "[b]y creating, on the basis of the past, an acceptable future, we justify and redeem everything that makes this future possible" (160). The protagonist's acceptance of Paula's and her own pain, cover-up of Paco's death and the consequent fosterage of the family's emotional and financial stability exemplify the organic principle that makes possible the very notion of eternal return: redemption.

Ever since Raimunda moved to Madrid, she has immersed herself in daily responsibilities, keeping up with the fast pace of a large city and perpetuating the circle of life following in her attempt to flee the anguish of the past. The past recurs eternally in this daily life as every day she finds herself in "the world as a circular motion [...] doing now what has been done in the past" (Nehamas 1985, 142) more automatically than willingly, consciously or not suppressing the pain of the wound that has not healed in fifteen years. The textural clues in a shape of circular objects and eolic wind turbines dominate in the film's imagery ascribing to the sense of past repeating itself in the present. The film abounds with the semiotic sign of eternal return as a course of events lacking a marked beginning or an end to reinforce the construction of meaning of "[l]ife, suffering and the circle [...which] belong inextricably to each other" (Stambaugh 1980, 36). In the scenes of Raimunda and Paula's travelling from Madrid to the hometown, the images of the wind turbines raised along the way through the wheat fields prevail in the background, demonstrating, as Gutiérrez-Albilla well states, that "[t]he landscape also forms a passage through which the characters constantly move between rural and urban spaces" and emphasizing their "in-between' existence" (Gutiérrez-Albilla 2017, 39). The recurring appearance of these spaces of transition also symbolize continuous transformation of the protagonists' identity which is inseparable from working through past traumas to regain self-confidence, mutual appreciation and ultimately family unity. At the same time, by means of the infinite circular movements put into action by the wind, this gigantic technology fulfils its main function: production of clean energy. The renewable energy constitutes an essential force for the continuation of the social order and self-realization. Similarly, through the willful return to their hometown in La Mancha by the end of the narrative, the circle of the protagonists' life is re-established and enriched.

In the endless succession of daily tasks, Raimunda lives in a sort of habit wheel, ending one day to start another, fulfilling the same obligations and being absorbed by "a certain process, [... in which] there is no static content" (Stambaugh 1980, 32) as represented by the numerous sequences pertinent to the routine and the performance of duties. As Gutiérrez-Albilla insightfully remarks, "Raimunda may or may not come to terms with or move away from the compulsive repetition that forces her to 'involuntarily and repeatedly relive her trauma' as a belated experience" (Gutiérrez-Albilla 2017, 39-40). In *Volver*, the director organizes the visual space of the screen

surrounding the protagonist with objects whose circular shape indisputably highlights the weight of a routine in which Raimunda finds herself: plates, baskets, and washing machines. Her reflection in a glass door of a washer, automatically completing circle after circle, reflects the protagonist's perpetual traumatic state. The dark circles under Raimunda's eyes and her sorrowful facial expression highlight the fatigue caused by the character's entrapment in this vicious circle, the inability to address the trauma of her past, to come to terms with it, and to attain a peaceful homecoming. Furthermore, Raimunda's voluptuousness, consistently emphasized by the camera from various angles, somatizes the circularity of her life.

One night, returning home at the end of a long day of physical work at the Madrid airport, Raimunda finds her daughter Paula pale and soaked from the rain, waiting for her at the bus stop. Paula's face expresses fright and emotional distress which Raimunda initially does not realize as she is overwhelmed from fatigue and daily life worries. After a series of routine questions from the mother and inconsistent answers from the daughter, Raimunda seems to realize the unusual nature of Paula's state. Something in this strangeness arouses the suspicion and fear that her husband Paco has caused it. Evidently the nightmare of her own adolescence helps Raimunda make the proper connection between the present and the past. She enters the apartment, where she witnesses her husband's body lying on the kitchen floor in a pool of blood, smelling of beer and with the pants fly still open since the last thing he tried to do before receiving his fatal blows was to rape Paula. The frame highlights the presence of a kitchen knife, which has previously appeared to foreshadow the traumatic interruption of the life circle. In the sequence of the evening preceding Paco's death, one of the medium-close up shots focuses on Raimunda over a kitchen sink where the presence of large knife establishes a contrast with the round shape of plates. The frame centers on a stack of dishes on top of which the knife is placed and such deformed circumference augurs a violent change in the development of the narrative discourse. The most immediate circle of the protagonists' routine is transgressed when the very next day, the same knife becomes a murder weapon when Paula stabs Paco with it in self-defense.

The events of the night before the murder introduce the audience to the theme of incest through a series of interaction between Paco and Paula in which the director makes vast use of the point of view shots. Upon returning to Madrid from visiting the family cemetery with her daughter, Raimunda finds her husband getting drunk at home after being fired from his last job. As she arrives, Paula greets her father and sits across from him, putting one leg on the arm of the chair unaware of Paco's reaction. The medium shot shows Paula with her back to the camera while Paco fixes a lascivious gaze between the legs of his fourteen-year-old stepdaughter. The focus of the camera is on the father, on his every movement. These point of view shots expose the viewers to Paco's libidinous energy towards the girl. The implication of the theme's importance is accentuated when Raimunda notices her husband's expression and, irritated, demands that Paula correct her pose. The sequence ends with Paco peering at Paula through the doorway while she is changing her clothes before going to bed. This episode undoubtedly represents an instance

of "recurrence [of] something that has run its course and occurs again" (Stambaugh 1980, 30), that is, of a daughter representing the sexual object of her father, consequently leading to his violent death.

The next evening, as his body lies face down on the floor with his legs wide apart, a medium-long high-angle shot shows Raimunda standing between them looking down at her dead husband. Her dominant pose and erect body staged as a phallic symbol reemphasize the power dynamic between the two as a couple and their roles in it as individuals. Paco was a failure, unable to keep a job, an indolent and perverse human being. Raimunda, on the other hand, is a strong and willful woman, who possesses what Nietzsche defines as "plastic power," that is, "the ability to develop oneself individually, to transform and incorporate within oneself the past and the alien, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken molds" (Nietzsche 1997, 62). Raimunda epitomizes the "so little affected by the worst and most appalling disasters that they can feel tolerably well and be in possession of a clear conscience even in the midst of those or somehow soon after" (Nietzsche 1997, 62). Finding herself in this calamity, Raimunda almost immediately recovers her judgment and shows clear conscience, when she rolls up her sleeves to clean the bloody puddle that has formed on the floor and then decides to take advantage of the restaurant key left by his neighbor Emilio to keep Paco's body.

The camera follows Raimunda's movements focusing on rolls of paper towel, whose whiteness stands out in the extreme close-up against the crimson blood as the paper absorbs it. This use of contrasting colors alludes to Raimunda's tragedy, caused by the violent loss of her virginity, the cruel assault on her innocence and happiness by the one who carried the same blood in her veins, her father. White is stained and absorbed by blood and yet it comes out triumphant because paper, which, although a fragile material, is the means by which order and cleanliness are restored. Thus, in her adolescence Raimunda replaces what she has lost and heals her wound with the life that is generated within her body despite the atrocity committed against it.

Motherhood becomes the means of her emotional purification and re-affirmation of her inner force to heal in this new phase of her existential journey. The strength of her "deeper roots" (Nietzsche 1997, 62) is manifested in the power of the protagonist to use the past in the service of life, use her previous experience in order to get ahead, continue to live or overcome another return from the perpetual difficulties of the life that comes her way. Raimunda "embraces destruction [that is] ... essential to the creative openness that animates life" which symbolizes the Nietzschean concept of "becoming" (Nietzsche 1997, 62). After having been victimized, the adolescent Raimunda assumed her immediate condition of rape and pregnancy and embarked on the journey towards her future far from her family, from pain, from the constant memory of abuse and humiliation she suffered at home. Years later, in Madrid, she is forced to embrace the destruction caused by Paco's animalistic instincts and channel Paula's and her life into a new vessel. With Paco's death Raimunda is forced to use all her strength and ingenuity to find an additional source of income. When her neighbor leaves her a key for his restaurant, she is presented with an opportunity to re-invent herself. Raimunda takes charge of preparing food for a group of thirty people

who are filming a movie in the area. Within the sequence of the event preparation, the protagonist is surrounded by a great diversity of fruits and vegetables. As Steven Marsh observes, "[t]he sense of an organic cycle is furthered, subtly, in Raimunda's peasant earthiness and the brightly colored fresh food she prepares in her restaurant. Such elemental connections also enable, it seems, a restoration of origins, the curing process of reconciliation and forgiveness, a genuine return" (Marsh 2009, 351). An opulent palette predominates in the frames, in which the red of various shades reigns symbolizing the beginning of a new life cycle, galvanized by violence and death.

This new beginning, however, is predicated on yet another return to the past as it coincides with the reappearance of Raimunda's mother, Irene, whom everyone believes to have died in a fire, next to her husband. On the night of Paco's death, Raimunda receives the news about the death of her aunt Paula, her mother's sister, who lived in their hometown. Without giving any explanation, Raimunda insists that Soledad go alone to their aunt's funeral. After the funeral, their mother Irene who was allegedly dead for five years but has been living with Paula, takes the main step to reunite with her daughters after fulfilling the duty to care for her sister. Hidden in the trunk of her daughter's car, the mother arrives in Madrid to make her appearance in front of Soledad. Irene remains to live with her youngest daughter, while Raimunda is completely ignorant of the fact that her mother has returned and is waiting for an appropriate moment to re-enter her life and apologize for "not having [realized] what [...] happened" to her eldest daughter, for "being blind" and not seeing "that the similar monstrosity could occur before [her] eyes" (*Volver*). We discover that, upon learning of the lawlessness her husband had perpetrated against Raimunda some fifteen years ago, Irene took justice into her own hands and set on fire a barn where he was napping with his mistress. The grandmother's killing of the abusive father figure finds its return in the granddaughter's taking the life of the one whom she believed to be her father. Although Paula's case is self-defense while her grandmother's is revenge, neither actions were premeditated but both resulted in the violent death of the offender in lieu of his incestual sexual instinct. Therefore, as Kinder well puts it, "in *Volver*, Eros is replaced by death" (2007, 6) and while she considers such "turn from Eros to Thanatos, as quite a loss" due to Almodovar's "sacrifice of sexuality" in favor of "a new mature serenity" (2007, 9), I view it as beneficial on the diegetic level as it allows to reinforce the dialogic relations between the thematic content of incest and trauma within the dramatic arc and to further focus on the characterization of the three generations of protagonists. By bridging Freud's libidinal energy and Nietzschean concept instinct, both of which constitute "the basis of the unconscious attitude towards the world" (Granier 2005, 52), Almodovar foregrounds how the unconscious suffering becomes a source for a conscious effort to address and overcome past traumas which we witness in Irene's return to her daughters' life and Raimunda's acceptance of her mother, as well as the death of her father and husband. As Nietzsche explains, the strength of instincts which form vital energy, depends on individual capacity and reasoning (Granier 2005, 98). While the paternal figures' unconscious behavior speaks to their "chronic illness of instinct" (Granier 2005, 98) and results in an end for their livelihood,

three generations of women turn their deaths into a new beginning, an opportunity to grow and move forward through a joint effort.

Circling endlessly through the routines of everyday life, Raimunda expresses no desire to change or erase her past despite enormous pain experienced due to sexual abuse and consequent estrangement from the family. The attitude that guides her behavior is not that of a victim of circumstances, but of a survivor in control of your life. "Accepting the present is, of course, accepting everything that has led to it" (Nehamas 1985, 160) and this acceptance of each aspect of the past experience as a constitutive element in the totality of a life lead to redemption. Likewise, Raimunda's redemption towards the end of the story is accomplished through her understanding that all past events have been necessary. In Nietzsche's words, she has had to "patiently go through all the necessary steps till the decisive moment where the sense of imminent danger [...] help to discover a lifesaving decision" (Granier 2005, 33). The suffering of her mother, her daughter and her own has formed a large part of this process of redemption and has allowed them to reach a higher level of intimacy, of finally being themselves. The redemption also empowers Irene to aspire for a better future as she yearns to eliminate the silence that began between her and Raimunda about fifteen years ago. Thus, *Volver* offers a story of hope when it demonstrates how the eternal return of all things does not condemn individuals to paralysis and stagnation but rather presents them with an opportunity to redeem their past by.

By accepting the present fact that Paula, her daughter conceived through her own rape, has committed a crime in self-defense, that her mother is responsible for the death of her father and has returned after five years to be with her daughters, that her father's death was not an accident, Raimunda accepts and surpasses her past trauma finally achieving peace and reconciliation with her family. Despite the female protagonists' fear, pain, and suffering, this film offers a hopeful ending as Raimunda returns to her hometown, from which she escaped fifteen years ago due to her father's abuse and her mother's lack of support. Now it is returning to her roots, to the mother's womb, which helps her achieve peace with her past and provides her with the strength to follow the incessant existential wheel. Raimunda is no longer alone in this fight; now her mother has returned to give her unconditional love and emotional support – everything Irene was unable to offer her daughter as she was unaware of her family's tragedy. Despite the return of Raimunda's nightmare due to her daughter/sister tragic incident, Paula's future is assured by the presence and wholehearted support of her mother, grandmother and aunt. As Paula manages to save herself at the cost of committing a crime, the circumstances of the eternal return deviate from her mother's experience while, at the same time, allow to intertwine Paula's and her grandmother Irene's traumas caused by the fathers' instinct for Eros resulting in their death. In *Volver*, we also witness how incorporating the past, a new present and future are being molded. At the end, a new cycle of relations between Raimunda and her mother starts to take shape, inseparable from their redemption and will to power for a more meaningful future.

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Quantitative Analysis of Sound in a Short Horror Film

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Abstract:

In this article I analyse the structure of sound in a short horror film *Behold the Noose* (Jamie Brooks, 2014), applying quantitative methods in order to determine the structure of the film's soundtrack and to understand how sounds at different frequencies create an emotional experience for the viewer. Examination of the normalised aggregated power envelope shows the soundtrack is organised at different scales, from local transient events to medium scale sections easily distinguishable from those that precede and follow, and a step change between large scale segments. In this film, sections of increasing tension are associated with non-linear increases in sound energy. Using the short-time Fourier transform I show that sounds at different frequencies are associated with different emotional effects in the viewer and that the range of frequencies used increases as the emotional effect of the soundtrack intensifies.

Keywords: Computational film analysis, digital humanities, horror cinema, sound design, normalised aggregated power envelope, short-time Fourier transform, Behold the Noose

1. Introduction

Sound pays a key role in creating a frightening experience for the viewer in horror cinema (Grøn 2013). William Whittington writes that "in general, horror films use music and sound effects to stablish emotive intensity and impact far more aggressively and conceptually than any other genre" (Whittington 2007, 130); and Ivanka Pavlovic´ and Slobodan Markovic´ (2011) report that visual information in the cinema has a stronger emotional impact than auditory information, with the exception of the emotion of fear. The use of stylised sound effects makes the everyday strange, transforming the traditional role of sound effects from creating a sense of realism and coherence to one of estrangement where the audience is kept off-balance (Bullins 2013). As sound designer Gregg Rudolff states, "Even on something like a door close, I might add more low end. I may want to have a little weirdness to it. I might add a little flange or pitch bend ... it's not a traditional sound the audience is comfortable with" (Farinella 2007, 51). Localised sound events are linked to specific moments terror: acoustic blares elicit startle responses from the viewer to make them jump (Sbravatti 2019), while the slow attack of the soundtrack as it builds to a crescendo creates a feeling of apprehension (Moncrieff, Dorai, and Venkatesh 2002). Music plays a key role in shaping emotional responses, as Neil Lerner

points out: "Frightening images and ideas can be made even more intense when accompanied with frightening musical sounds, and music in horror film frequently makes its audience feel threatened and uncomfortable through its sudden stinger chords and other shock effects" (Lerner 2010, ix). The result is that the sound design of a horror film is able to manifest a "direct emotion and a primary psychology" (Donnelly 2009, 121).

Despite the central role it plays in the viewer's experience of watching a film, the analysis of sound in the cinema is not yet a significant part of the digital humanities. Applications of digital humanities approaches to questions of film style and film form have focused on editing (Heftberger 2018), cinematography (Kovács 2014), scriptwriting (Murtagh, et. al. 2009), and the narrative structure of films (Cutting 2016), but not sound. This is surprising given the soundtrack to a film can be accessed directly through the use of non-linear editing software and is readily available for processing and analysis, along with the easy availability of analytical tools and methods developed in the fields of computational music analysis, sound studies, and the natural sciences (e.g. acoustic ecology, bioacoustics, etc.) that can be applied to understanding film audio.

Audio segmentation comprises a set of techniques for analysing the features of audio signals, including motion picture soundtracks. Parsing the structure of film audio allows us to identify scenes and change points, features in the audio envelope (attack, sustain, release), the distribution of sound energy, and the presence of affective events in a soundtrack. This approach has been used to detect narrative structure via audio pace (Moncrieff and Venkatesh 2007), exploring temporal coincidences between the visual and audio in montage editing (Zeppelzauer, et. al. 2011), and to identify changes in the soundscapes of motion pictures (Orio 2013). In this paper I apply audio segmentation to analyse the structure of sound in *Behold the Noose* (Jamie Brooks, 2014), a short horror film about a sheriff's deputy who arrives at a mysterious farmstead while searching for a missing girl. Applying quantitative methods, I use the short-time Fourier transform and the normalised aggregated power envelope to understand how the frequencies of the different noises used and the temporal evolution of sound energy in motion pictures create an emotional experience for the audience. Quantitative methods have previously been applied to horror film soundtracks in the context of multimedia content analysis and indexing: Moncrieff, et. al. (2002) applied quantitative methods to affective sound energy events in horror films, identifying specific patterns of sound energy dynamics correlated with particular affective events (e.g. startle, sustained alarm, building tension) in horror films and were able to automatically distinguish between horror and non-horror films based on the presence absence of these dynamic events in a film's soundtrack. This article is the first to adopt a quantitative approach to understanding how sound functions in a horror film and demonstrates how the digital humanities can be expanded to include the analysis of film soundtracks.

2. Methods

I use two methods to analyse the soundtrack of *Behold the Noose*: the short-time Fourier transform and the time contour of the normalised aggregated power envelope. These methods are

implemented using Python (v.3.5.1) and the librosa package (v0.4.0; McFee, et al. 2015). The methods used in this paper are described in detail in Redfern (n.d.), which also includes examples of the code used.

I downloaded *Behold the Noose* from YouTube as an mp4 file (24 fps) and using a non-linear editing suite exported the film's audio as a mono 16-bit wave file sampled at 22.05 kHz. This audio file was then normalised to a peak volume of 0.0 dB using Audacity (v. 2.0.6) and re-exported as a mono 16-bit PCM wave file (Fig. 1. (a)).

I calculated the short-time Fourier transform (STFT) to the wave to produce a 2D time-frequency representation of the signal called a spectrogram (see Goodwin 2008). A signal as a function of time (such as the sound wave in Fig. 1. (a)) can be thought of as the linear combination of a series of sine waves. The Fourier transform is a method for decomposing a signal and expressing it in terms of its component sinusoidal waves, and is applied globally assuming the signal does not change over time (i.e. that the signal is *stationary*). This process cannot be applied directly to film soundtracks because they are non-stationary signals, their properties (amplitude, spectral composition, etc.) varying with time. The STFT is a commonly used tool for analysing such a signal, dividing the signal into windows and calculating the Fourier transform for each window. The result is a Fourier transform of the signal localised in time dependent upon the shape (rectangle, Hann, etc.), size (the number of samples within a window), and overlap of the window used. The window size also controls the trade-off between time and frequency resolution: the more precise the time resolution the less precise the frequency resolution, and *vice versa*. The spectrogram describes how the magnitudes of the individual frequencies comprising a signal vary over time, with the power spectral density indicated by colour.

Fig. 1. (b) shows the log amplitude spectrogram of the soundtrack of *Behold the Noose* using Hann windows with a length of 2048 samples and hop length of 512. The log amplitude spectrogram is used to display the STFT of the soundtrack because most of the information in the film's soundtrack is in the range 1 Hz to 3 kHz making it easier to visualise details at lower frequencies. The number of short-time spectra in Fig. 1. (b) is equal to the product of the running time of the film and the sampling rate divided by the hop length while the temporal precision is equal to the hop length divided by the sampling frequency. This results in (568 × 22050) / 512 = 24464 short-time spectra at intervals of 512 / 22050 = 0.0232s. Each short-time spectrum in Fig 1. (b) is a Fourier transform with a length equal to half the window length (2048 / 2 = 1024).

Summing the power spectral density values in each of the short-time spectra in the STFT of the signal in Fig. 1. (a) produces an aggregate power envelope, which is then normalised to a unit area and treated as a probability mass function. The resulting plot shows how the energy of a signal evolves over time. I calculated the power envelope using the original STFT rather than the log amplitude spectrogram in Fig. 1. (b) because, while summing the spectra in the log amplitude spectrogram produces the same time contour plot of the normalised aggregated power values, the resulting plot is rendered with a linear y-axis that is potentially misleading. I used LOWESS

regression to fit a trendline to the envelope, and Fig. 1. (c) presents the time-contour plot of the normalised aggregated power envelope of *Behold the Noose* and its trendline.

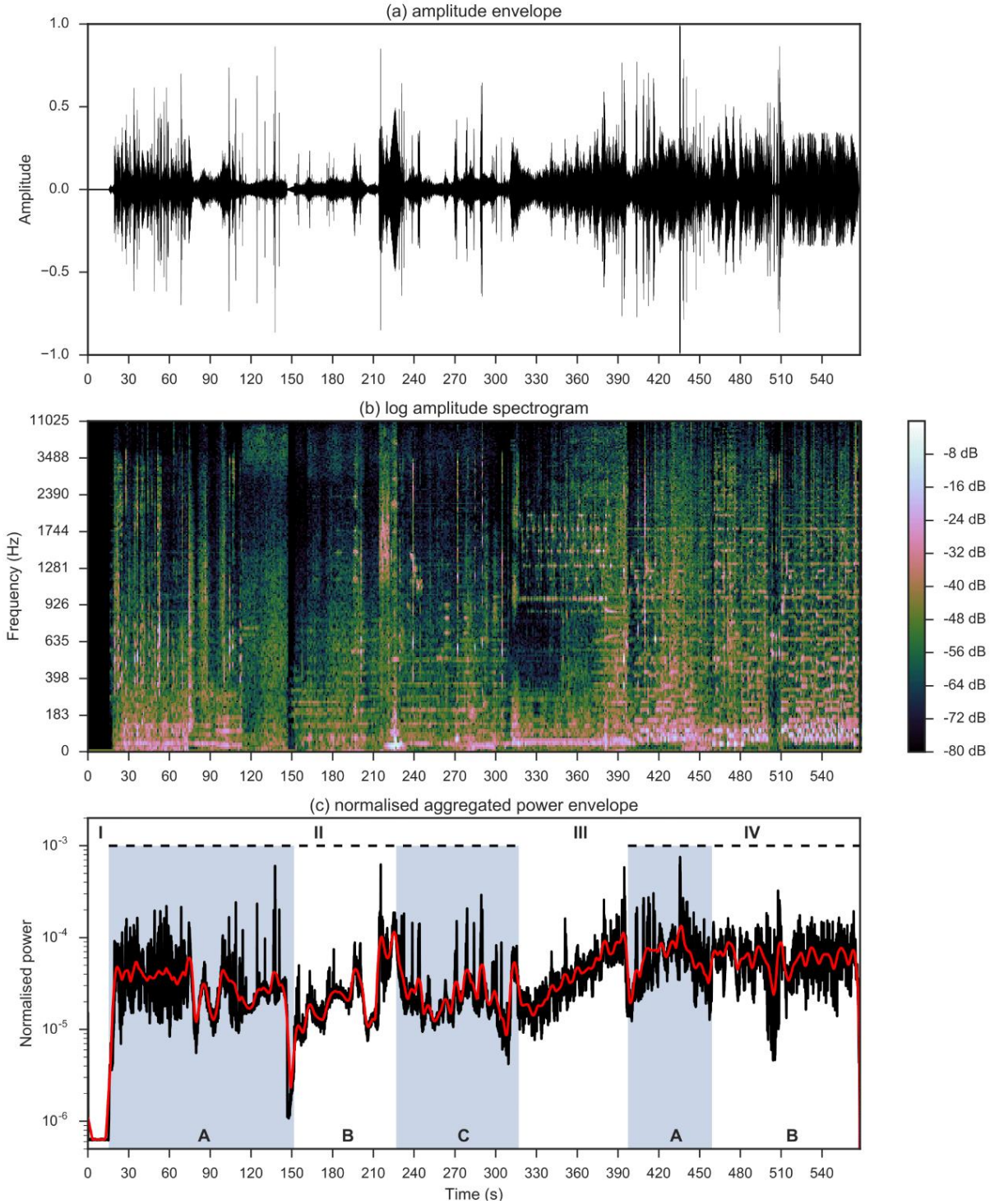

Fig. 1. The soundtrack of *Behold the Noose* (Jamie Brooks, 2014): (a) the amplitude envelope of the signal as a 16-bit mono PCM wave sampled at 22050 Hz normalised to a peak volume of 0.0 dB; (b) log amplitude spectrogram of the short-time Fourier transform of the wave form, with a Hann window of length 2048 samples and a hop length of 512; (c) the normalised aggregated power envelope with fitted LOWESS trendline.

3. Sound in *Behold the Noose*

From the short-time Fourier transform in Fig. 1. (b) and the normalised aggregated power envelope in Fig. 1. (c) we can identify a range of features in the film's soundtrack. In this section I apply these methods to the soundtrack of *Behold the Noose* to describe how the temporal evolution of sound energy in the film and the use of different sounds at different frequencies create emotional effects in the viewer.

3.1 Structure and evolution

Analysis of the normalised aggregated power envelope allows us to describe the large-scale temporal structure of *Behold the Noose* and to segment the audio and narrative structure of the film. It also allows us to understand the nature of the temporal evolution of sound energy for specific narrative features in the film.

Table 1: The structure of *Behold the Noose* based on segmentation of the normalised aggregated power envelope of the film's soundtrack

Segment	Section	Time (s)		Action
		Start	End	
I		0.0	15.4	Title card
II	A	15.4	151.7	The deputy is despatched to search for a missing girl and arrives at a farmhouse.
	B	151.7	226.9	Deputy exploring the grounds; a body in a shed is revealed to the audience.
	C	226.9	317.0	The deputy continues with his search until he arrives at the main house.
III		317.0	397.3	Deputy enters and searches the house, discovering the killer's "shrine."
IV	A	397.3	459.2	The deputy discovers the "hanging tree" and is stabbed by the killer.
	B	459.2	568.0	The deputy's body is added to the "hanging tree" and the missing girl is declared safe. Credit sequence.

There are four main segments in the film and segments II and IV can be further divided into three and two sections, respectively (see Table 1). This segmentation of the film is based on the structure of the film's audio identifiable from the LOWESS trendline in Fig. 1. (c) and the statistical summaries of the different sections derived from the normalised aggregated power envelope. The overall pattern of the evolution of the film's sound energy is a step function change from the slow build-up of tension in the second part of the film to the violence of the final segment linked by a transitional phase (segment III). There is a clear change in the level of sound energy: the median value

of the normalised aggregated power envelope in Fig. 1. (c) is 2.19×10^{-5} for segment II and 5.41×10^{-5} for segment IV. The median level for segment II is consistent with the early part of segment III, while the median level of segment IV is consistent with the sustain section of the sound envelope of segment III. It is the gradual shift between these levels that marks out segment III as a transitional phase of the film's soundtrack. The spread of sound energy in segment IV (IQR = 4.19×10^{-5}) is also higher than the spread in segment II (IQR = 1.69×10^{-5}). Finally, the cumulative proportion of energy in segment II is just over a third of the film's total (39.1%) even though at 301.6 seconds this segment accounts for over half the film's running time (53.1%), whereas the cumulative proportion in segment IV (which at 170.7s is 30.1% of the total running time) is just under half the total energy (45.3%).

Segment I comprises a title attesting to the veracity of events in the movie and advising viewer discretion, but there are no sounds during this part of the film.

The second segment of the film comprises three distinct sections. Section II.A establishes the film's premise as the Sheriff's deputy is called over the radio to assist in the search for a missing girl and drives to the farmhouse. On arriving, he exits the vehicle and retrieves his shotgun before heading off to search the premises. The sounds in this part of the film include the voice of the deputy and the dispatcher on the radio, the noises of the vehicle (the engine while driving and the parking brake on arrival), while the atmosphere of the sequence is created through a combination of music and crickets chirping in the background. Throughout this section the sound energy level remains even, though there are changes in the spread when no-one is talking (e.g. from 75.0s to 100.0s).

Section II. B begins in silence as we see the deputy walking on a CCTV monitor, though there is no indication of who is watching. There is little dialogue in this part of the film (the deputy uses his radio twice), and the effects used comprise the deputy's footsteps and the chirping of crickets. Within this section there is a series of individual peaks, each associated with an increase in emotional intensity as the deputy enters the yard (163.0s), turns a corner into the unknown (183.5s), discovers the bloody sheet (196.5s), and, finally, at 216.0s the deputy opens a door to release a flock of cawing birds before the final "true shock" of this sequence is revealed – a body hanging in the shed (the peak at 225.3s). These last two features produce a "double peak" in sound energy.

The hanging body is shown to the audience, but the deputy is unaware of its presence as we move into section III. C and he continues his search of the grounds. In this section the film returns to the relatively even sound energy level of section II. A with the voice of the deputy as he calls out and the crickets in the background. There is no music in this section to speak of, with the atmosphere created by a mixture of wind effects, throbbing noises, and ghost-like noises.

Segment III begins as the deputy enters the farmhouse. The sound energy in the early part of this sequence continues at the level of section II. C, but the sounds themselves have changed. As in section II. B there is little dialogue until the deputy radios for help (384.6s) and there are few effects aside from the buzzing of flies in the kitchen, which is eventually replaced by a similar non-diegetic noise that eventually distorts. The principal musical element of the soundtrack is the rise and fall of a childish melody clearly visible by the pattern in Fig. 1. (b), and the energy of this tune also increases

throughout the sequence until it starts to distort as the deputy makes his way through the farmhouse. The sound energy of this sequence increases from 327.9s as the deputy moves deeper into the house to 378.3s, when he discovers the killer's shrine to his victims – a scene that is first revealed to the audience with a shot of a skull in a jar. This increase in sound energy is related to the spatial experience of the film's "terrible place:" as the deputy moves further into the house the energy of the soundtrack increases until peaking at the moment where he is furthest from safety and confronted with his terrible discovery. The peak level is sustained until 397.3s as the deputy surveys the photographs in the shrine and begins to panic, desperately radioing for help. The sound energy then rapidly decays to the level at which this segment began after a banging noise and laughter is heard off-screen and the deputy turns to exit the building. At 395.1s the song "Witch Lynching" by Forever and Everest (2012) begins and dominates the remainder of the film's soundtrack.

The final segment of the film contains all the violence of the film and comprises two distinct audio sections. In section IV.A the deputy makes his way outside the farmhouse to discover numerous bodies hanging from a tree. The energy of the first part of this sequence (397.3s-421.5s) increases as the song "Witch Lynching" takes over the soundtrack and the deputy calls out into the darkness, reaching a peak as the deputy gasps in shock at the sight of the hanging tree. The sound energy of this feature does not immediately decay and is sustained from 421.5s until the deputy is stabbed is by the killer and his shotgun fires. From 437.0s the energy of the soundtrack decays until 459.2s as the blade is driven deeper into the deputy's body and he finally falls to the floor. The volume of the song is reduced to bring the body horror of the deputy's goring to prominence and the soundtrack emphasises the sounds of the blade twisting in the deputy's body and his final, gasping breaths. Section IV.B begins with the rapid attack of the trumpets from the song and returns to the level of section IV.A, which is then sustained until the end of the film. The action in this part of the film sees the deputy's body dragged through the words and hanged before cutting to the deputy's vehicle as the dispatcher comes over the radio to announce the missing girl is safe and sound. The sound energy drops to a low at 505.0s as the dispatcher's voice fades and the volume of the music reduces before the sudden attack of the whistling refrain of "Witch Lynching" returns as flames burst from the farmhouse's chimneys to illuminate the night sky. After this the credits roll over the remainder of the song.

The overall structure of the soundtrack is immediately clear from Fig. 1. (c) and it is evident that the sound design of the film is organised at a relatively large scale: each section of the film is associated with a particular temporal evolution of sound energy. For example, the time contour plot in Fig. 1. (c) reveals a key feature of the sound mixing in sections II. B, III, and IV. A not previously identified in studies of sound in horror cinema: in each case the attack of the sound event increases slowly in the first part of the sequence before accelerating rapidly to a climax and follows a *non-linear crescendo* pattern. The decay of the sound event in section IV.A (437.0-459.2s) is also non-linear as the deputy succumbs to his fate. Smaller-scale sound events exist within these section-level events. For example, section II. B features some local events (the individual transient peaks)

within a non-linear increase in sound energy that runs for the whole length of the sequence. In this section, each peak has a higher level of sound energy than the last and so we should not see these shocks as existing isolation but as part of a single dynamic structure producing a cumulative effect in the viewer. Because the sound energy does not fall back to the level prior to the peak these small-scale events contribute to the overall non-linear increase of the whole section.

A feature of horror film soundtracks noted by several scholars is the use of "assaultive blasts that coincide with shock or revelation" (Lerner 2010, ix) or *stingers* to produce emotional effects in the audience. Stingers take the form of noises such as screams, orchestral music, or sound effects characterised by their suddenness, their stabbing shortness, and a sudden increase in volume to produce a startle effect (Hutchings 2004, 134-137; Baird 2000; Sbravatti 2019) that triggers a basic reflex of shock or surprise resulting from the collision of loud and soft sounds (Whittington 2014):

> The fact that these scenes are often equally effective underscores the significance of *contrast* between a relatively *loud* sound bursting into a relatively *quiet* scene. In gestalt theoretical terms: a figure that stands off perceptibly from a ground (Hanich 2010, 134; original emphasis).

Hanich (2010, 134) claims that the crescendo culminating in a short-sound stab is a less effective method of producing the desired audience response than a sudden, unexpected increase in volume, though he offers no empirical support for this claim and does not specify the form of the crescendo. Analysis of the dynamics of sound energy in *Behold the Noose* shows this does not adequately account for the evolution of sound energy over time. The evolution in sound energy in section II. B occurs at both the local scale of the transient events and at the medium scale of the section. Consequently, the difference between "figure" and "ground" is not clear-cut: the peaks (or "figures") associated with each event are part of the larger structure of the soundtrack evolving at a higher scale and contribute to the overall dynamic of the section as well as creating transitory moments of heightened tension. Those small-scale moments cannot be separated from the larger scale of the crescendo and so the claim that one method is more effective than another cannot be justified. When analysing horror film soundtracks it is therefore necessary to examine not only those moments of extreme horror but also their place within the larger structure of the soundtrack.

3.2 Frequency analysis

Close analysis of the short-time Fourier transform in Fig. 1. (b) reveals that sounds at different frequencies are used to create different emotional effects in the viewer and that the range of frequencies used increases as the emotional effect of the soundtrack intensifies.

From Fig. 1. (b) we see that most of the energy in the soundtrack of *Behold the Noose* is concentrated in the low frequency part of the audio spectrum. Specifically, the energy of the soundtrack is concentrated in the sub-bass (20 Hz-60 Hz), and bass (60 Hz-250 Hz) ranges. (For descriptions of frequency ranges see Owsinksi 2006: 25-26). The function of these tones is to create and maintain a persistent sense of unease and dread throughout the sequence and, although

frequencies in this part of the spectrum increase in loudness during moments of intense emotion, they are not necessarily characteristic of those moments. Emotionally intense moments of horror in those scenes in which the deputy explores the "terrible place" are associated with frequencies in the mid-range (250 Hz-4 kHz) and occasionally at frequencies in the treble range (greater than 4 kHz).

For example, in section II. B sub-bass and bass range frequencies are a constant presence throughout the sequence, and though the amplitude varies these frequencies are not associated with specific actions in the film. It is the synchronisation of mid-range frequency tones with key moments of the film's action that create specific moments of heightened terror in this section. These mid-range tones arise prior to the deputy turning a corner as he explores the grounds and they occur with a shot of what appears to be a bloody sheet and with the escape of the birds that provides the "false" shock peaking at 216.0s. The peak in the normalised aggregated power of section II. B occurs when the body is revealed (225.3s) and shows increased energy in three frequency ranges: the introduction of a heartbeat effect with energy concentrated in the infrasonic and sub-bass ranges, the persistent bass hum that begins early in the film, and the expansion of the higher frequency tones to a range of 500 Hz-10 kHz. Fig. 1. (b) shows this in the increased amplitude at 216.0s and 225.3s across a much broader range of frequencies than those moments in the film immediately preceding and following.

The soundtrack in section III comprises a very low frequency hum in the range 50 Hz-80 Hz that continues throughout the sequence, intermittent low-frequency tones in the range 100 Hz-200 Hz, and a childish melody in the range 1 kHz-2 kHz. Over the course of this segment the childish melody increases in energy, becoming louder at 340.0s and again at 358.0s, eventually distorting as the deputy makes his way through the house and gets closer to the shrine. In Fig. 1. (b) we can also see harmonic tones in the range 2 kHz-7 kHz increasing in frequency until the end of this sequence and which contribute a high-pitched buzzing sound to the scene. A key moment in the sound of this sequence occurs at 378.3s when the audience is shown a close-up of a skull from the deputy's point-of-view. Here the soundtrack heightens emotion by introducing a ghost-like hollow tone that uses a much wider range of frequencies in the low end than in earlier parts of the segment (1 Hz-900 Hz) as well as increasing the amplitude of frequencies in the mid- and treble ranges. The sequence ends with a banging noise off-screen and the sound of laughter at 394.5s, also using the full range of frequencies in the sample. It is this noise that draws the deputy outside to his fate.

As noted above the energy of the soundtrack increases as the emotional effect intensifies. In part this is due to increases in the loudness of sounds present but it also due to an increase in the range of frequencies used at moments of emotional intensity. Furthermore, the greater the range of frequencies used the more intense the emotional shock. The use of sounds with frequencies greater than 4 kHz in the most emotionally intense moments of sections II. B and section III is interesting as these frequencies are classed as "presence" (4 kHz-6 kHz) and "brilliance" (6 kHz-20 kHz). "Presence" refers to the listener's experience spatial relationship with a sound source: boosting sounds in this frequency makes the source feel close by while reducing sounds at ~5 kHz makes

sounds seems distant. The "brilliance" range is composed of harmonics and although we do not perceive these as individual sounds they add to the timbre of a sound event and shape our emotional involvement in a scene. For the buzzing noises in section III this creates the aural sensation of being in the room with rather than simply watching the deputy move through the house. As this scene progresses the sounds move from the diegetic (flies in the filthy conditions of the farmhouse) to the non-diegetic (simulated and distorting buzzing noises) and increase in both energy and frequency to create an intense emotional effect.

4. Conclusion

This paper demonstrates the use of quantitative methods for analysing the structure of sound in horror cinema using the short-time Fourier transform and the normalised aggregated power envelope. These methods have several features to recommend them for analysing the structure of sound in motion pictures. First, they are easy to compute using freely available software, though the computing power and the time required for analysing feature film soundtracks will be high. Second, they have descriptive power, communicating detailed information about a film's soundtrack in a straightforward manner that is easy to interpret. Third, they have analytical power supporting a bottom-up approach to analysing film style that allow the researcher to identify interesting features in a soundtrack and then to look beneath them in order to understand what is going on here.

Applying these methods to a short horror film I identified a range of features to provide a detailed understanding of how sound functions in *Behold the Noose*. The normalised aggregated power envelope allows us to segment the film and define its structure at different scales. At the micro scale individual moments of horror in the film stand out, while at the medium scale each section of the film can be easily distinguished from those that precede and follow it based on the time contour plot. A key feature revealed by this method is the non-linear sound mixing in the sequences in which the deputy searches the film's "terrible place" that builds tension to a climax to create an emotional response in the spectator. This is an original result not previously identified in studies of horror film soundtracks. This feature is not identifiable from simply listening to the film's soundtrack or from examining either the waveform or the short-time Fourier Transform of the soundtrack; but is immediately apparent in the normalised aggregated power envelope, demonstrating the value of this method. Finally, at the macro scale the evolution of the sound energy is a step function change between the set-up of the narrative and early, transient scares and the sustained emotional intensity and bloody violence of the deputy's murder.

In *Behold the Noose* emotional intensity is related not only to changes in sound energy but also to the range of frequencies used. Heightened moments of anxiety and horror in the film use a wider range of frequencies, particularly increasing the sound levels in the mid-range and above, in order to increase the audience's involvement in a scene through enhancing the presence and brilliance of the soundtrack. Using methods such as the STFT we gain a complete picture of what sounds are present in the film and thereby form an integrated understand of a film's soundtrack.

In doing so we will be better able to explain how horror films effect audiences physiologically and psychologically.

Filmography:

Behold the Noose (Jamie Brooks, USA, 2014, 9:28 min), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhlDW9_Ehik, accessed 6 July 2020.

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