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Augustine's Analysis of his Theft of Pears – the Medium Represents the Message

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Abstract:

This essay argues that Augustine structures his famous analysis, *in Confessions* 2, of his theft of pears by his understanding of the mode of insight rather than by his understanding of the mode of discovery. Therefore, while Augustine's study explicitly includes what he thinks are the stages by which his audience can discover his principal insight that human nature is *imago Dei*, i.e. spiritually united with a Self-Sufficient and Creator God for the sake of attaining perfect union with Him, it is entirely from this *imago Dei* perspective that Augustine presents his account of the pear theft. Recognizing the center of Augustine's approach, moreover, offers his reader two closely related benefits. These are opportunities, first, to overcome various limited criticisms and interpretations of Augustine's analysis of the pear theft and, second, to see how Augustine's rhetorical manner of *confessio* represents his perspective of insight.

Keywords: arrogating divinity, divine omnipotence, God, good/goods/goodness, *imago Dei*, moral evil, nothing, participation, pride, privation, sin, spiritual, will, and wickedness.

(i) Introduction

In a famous passage in book 2 of his *Confessions* (*conf.*), Augustine of Hippo (354 - 431 A.D.) recounts how at the age of sixteen he and his companions stole pears from a neighbor's vineyard and, while delighting in their actions, simply threw away the pears to pigs.[1] Augustine describes the event like this:

> There was a pear tree near our vineyard laden with fruit, though attractive neither in color nor taste. To shake the fruit off the tree and carry off the pears, I and a gang of naughty adolescents (*nequissimi adolescentuli*) set off late at night after (in our usual pestilential way) we had continued our game in the streets. We carried off a huge load of pears … merely to throw to the pigs. Even if we ate a few, nevertheless our pleasure lay in doing what was not allowed. … I had no motive for my wickedness except wickedness itself (*et malitiae meae causa nulla esset nisi militia*). It was foul (*foeda erat*) and I loved it (*et amavi eam*). I loved the self-destruction (*amavi perire*), I loved my fall (*amavi defectum meum*), not the object for which I had fallen (*non illud ad quod deficiebam*) but my fall itself (*sed defectum meum ipsum amavi*). My depraved soul leaped … to ruin. I was seeking not to gain anything by shameful means (*non dedecore aliquid*), but shame for its own sake (*sed dedecus appetens*).[2]

Many commentators maintain that Augustine is being scrupulous. While some imply that his theft of pears is no more than the typical action of a rebellious teenager[3], each holds that his thievery is not the epitome of wickedness.[4] The *sense* of the criticism is this: 'Yes, he stole some pears – but this pales beside the murderous actions of a Hitler. How, then, can a theft of pears represent the depths of depravity?' Along the same lines, some recent ethicists would criticize Augustine for measuring evil too much by motivation – i.e. by the psychological state of the evildoer[5] – rather than by the effects of the evildoer's actions upon others.[6] Despite their differences, these commentators agree that Augustine's analysis is overdone, the product of a tortured soul, and therefore largely irrelevant to contemporary human self-understanding.

It is evident, however, that Augustine sees the matter somewhat differently. To start with, he does not think that his theft of pears typifies early adolescence.[7] He certainly holds that each person is especially tempted to sin at that juncture in life. But he also understands that adolescents do not have to succumb to temptation[8] since means are available enabling them (and anyone else) to embrace authentic law and authority.[9] Second, Augustine nowhere claims in *conf.* 2 that stealing pears (for the sake of enjoying pears) is a *terrible* sin. In fact, his analysis of sin in 2.5.11 shows fundamental agreement with those who rate murder as a star instance of moral evil.[10] Moreover, *what Augustine means* by 'wickedness' is less the theft of pears than his attempted larceny of some aspect of the divine nature. In other words, his stealing of pears with his companions was an instrument of and signifies the much greater sin of pride (*superbia*).[11] As Augustine sees it, every sin (in terms of its metaphysical or objective dimensions[12]) represents a futile attempt to reject divine law and establish as law one's own judgments and preferences, i.e. to arrogate divine status.[13] Whether recognized or not, each sinner intends to 'play' God. While sinning does this implicitly, the sixteen-year-old Augustine acted explicitly – which is much worse. Indeed, what he recounts by speaking of the theft of pears is that he knew and loved the self-destructive character of his claim to divinity. *Hence, Augustine condemns as wickedness his self-conscious rejection of both God and his own personal integrity for the sake of basking in human glory.*

Most important, while a good number of recent commentators (*e.g.* MacDonald, Starnes, Cavadini, Vaught, and Crosby) share Augustine's view in the matter, their analysis is incomplete since it underestimates, in some way, Augustine's profound metaphysical doctrine ordering every sentence and paragraph in his entire *Confessions*, viz. that *the human being* (*as imago Dei*) *is established together (i.e. in spiritual unity) with God for the sake of right union with Him.* This outlook obviously informs Augustine's confessional mode of discourse throughout *conf.*; he speaks at once to God, neighbor, and himself; and it is explicitly asserted in *conf.* (*e.g.* in 10.26-37-27.38[14] & 13.11.12) and employed throughout book two. In the latter regard, Augustine shows that the essence of sin cannot be the claim to divinity (2.6.13-14) unless man is already (at least to some degree) aware of, united with, and ordered to God. According to Augustine, this reality is known intuitively by the mind (*e.g.* the thief's awareness that theft is morally wrong [2.4.9]) and is arrived at philosophically by a rigorous application of the doctrine of participation[15] according to which

lower order realities (*e.g.* substances, core attributes of all substances [*e.g.* beauty], and cognitive acts) are understood to participate in some supreme, uncreated personal being known by, and therefore spiritually united with, the human mind. Man, in other words, is essentially theological.

Although I will elaborate on this matter in my conclusion, Augustine's moral theory or psychology entails that: (i) man (who exists by participation in God) has always some relationship with and is ordering divine goods (*viz.* God's law and truth) and created goods (which exist by participation in God); (ii) man should order created goods to divine goods; (iii) sin consists in ordering divine goods to created goods; and (iv) while lesser sins are committed for the sake of enjoying wrongly some created good, the greatest sins are committed to embrace wrongly some divine good. In other words, while lesser sins go against God indirectly the greatest sins go against Him directly. Hence, Augustine maintains in *conf.* 2 that what he did as a teenager, viz. stealing pears for the goal of claiming divine status, is far worse than stealing pears for the sake of food or revenge upon one's neighbor. While each sin contradicts personal integrity, the former contradicts personal integrity absolutely since, generically speaking, it is the paradigmatic sin in which every sin participates. For our purpose, this brings two crucial implications. First, Augustine's claim that his theft of pears signifies his attempt to arrogate God's power as the source and goal of the moral law is grounded in the metaphysical principle that man is established in relationship and for the sake of right union with God. And second, a comprehensive account of Augustine's analysis of his grievous sin depends on understanding the aforementioned principle.

With this in mind, we can infer that the commentators on Augustine's theft of pears fall into three groups. Some accuse him of scrupulosity; others argue that he fails to explain adequately the problems of sin he considers (*e.g.* Mann [1979]); and a third group maintains that he sets out a cogent overall analysis both of his sin and of the structure of human sin generally (*e.g.* Starnes, MacDonald, Wills, Cavadini, Vaught, and Crosby). While those holding that Augustine is scrupulous do not distinguish (i) the sin of theft from the sin of pride and (ii) its philosophical ground, those maintaining that Augustine does not ultimately provide an intelligible account of wrong-doing (Mann [1979]) distinguish his sin of pride but fail to recognize its philosophical ground. And finally, those asserting that Augustine provides a cogent account of wrong-doing (Starnes, Wills, MacDonald, Cavadini, Vaught and Crosby)[16] distinguish the sin of pride but neglect to elucidate crucial aspects of both that sin (pertaining to Augustine's motivations and pleasure in his act) and Augustine's doctrine of wrong-doing because they underestimate, in diverse ways, Augustine's profound philosophical ground.

This essay will argue, therefore, that each party falls short of explicating some crucial aspect of Augustine's teaching for two closely related reasons pertaining, on the one hand, to content and, on the other, to method. Concerning content, each party neglects – albeit in varying manners – to recognize Augustine's fundamental framework of analysis that man participates in God by the mode of spiritual relationship. This common oversight, however, can be traced to a shared deficiency in their method. On this score, each party focuses too much on Augustine's account of the order of

discovery and too little, therefore, on his teaching concerning the order of being. Augustine's analysis includes both approaches but his *confessio* mode of exposition emphasizes the order of being since that is, he thinks, what the order of discovery ultimately teaches. In this respect, Augustine's medium represents his message.

(ii) *Conf*. 2.4-10: Augustine considers his theft of pears

Augustine introduces consideration of his theft of pears by proclaiming that stealing is contrary to the moral law that is (i) promulgated by God and (ii) writ on the heart of every person.[17] He writes:

> Theft (*Furtum*) receives certain punishment by your law (*Exod.* 20: 15) Lord, and by the law written in the hearts of men (*Rom.* 2:14) which not even iniquity itself destroys (*quam ne ipsa quidem delet iniquitas*). For what thief can with equanimity endure being robbed by another thief (*quis enim fur aequo animo furem patitur*)? He cannot tolerate it even if he is rich and the other is destitute.[18]

Augustine begins with this example because he thinks it shows that every thief (including the sixteen-year-old Augustine) has some notion/awareness of divine law. According to Augustine, each human being is subject to an objective moral standard (i) deriving from God, (ii) structuring his relationship with God and neighbor, and (iii) implying that he is made for the sake of *right union* with God and neighbor. Hence, Augustine claims that it is by adhering to such law that we fashion *right order* in the way we procure the goods, for which we have natural inclinations, like food, shelter, clothing, friendship, and knowledge.[19]

As Augustine sees it, the contradiction of the thief who refuses to suffer theft is this: on the one hand, he appropriates what he knows belongs to another; on the other hand, he refuses to allow others to appropriate what he knows belongs to him. The thief both asserts and denies the same law in one and the same respect – and this is only possible because he recognizes (i) an objective law against theft and (ii) it is in his power to obey or disobey the law. So, as the thief is ordered through law to God, and consequently to human flourishing, it follows that when he breaks the law he contradicts and diminishes himself.[20]

As we remember, Augustine claims that he stole the pears because he wanted to do evil for its own sake – thus far defined as the intention to break the moral law precisely because of what it is (*et malitiae meae causa nulla esset nisi militia*).[21] To show the gravity of his sin, Augustine spends the remainder of book 2 analyzing philosophically the theft of pears. This is accomplished by bringing before his reader an analysis of sin – in terms of its objects, motives, and metaphysical dimensions. Augustine begins by asserting that sin does not consist in enjoying the temporal goods that attract us. On the contrary, these goods, whether physical or social, attract us insofar as they fulfill our innate inclinations to good, especially to beauty, and are rightly enjoyed if properly ordered by the soul. Augustine writes:

> There is beauty (*species est pulchris*) in lovely physical objects, as in gold and silver and all other such things. When the body touches such things, much significance attaches to the rapport of the object with the touch. Each of the other senses has its own appropriate mode of response to physical things. Temporal honor and the power of giving orders and of being in command have their own kind of dignity. ... The life which we live in this world has its attractiveness because of a certain measure in its beauty and its harmony with all these inferior objects that are beautiful. Human friendship is also a nest of love and gentleness because of the unity it brings about between many souls.[22]

According to Augustine, then, sin is *disorder*; it occurs when the soul[23] subordinates its proper object, the highest and supreme (because non-participated or uncreated) Good, viz. God, to lower goods, i.e. to goods that are such by participation in God.[24] As the soul is a participated good made (i) in relationship with God and (ii) to achieve happiness or fulfillment by embracing Him above all created goods *and* therefore by ordering to God (as He sees fit) its pursuit and enjoyment of created goods, sin happens when the soul wants to enjoy a created good in such a manner that (objectively speaking) it *attempts* to elevate that good's intrinsic value while reducing the intrinsic value of God. Augustine writes:

> Yet sin is committed (*peccatum admittitur*) for the sake of all these things and others of this kind when, in consequence of an immoderate urge towards those things which are at the bottom end of the scale of good, we abandon the higher and supreme goods (*meliora et summa deseruntur*), that is you, Lord God, and your truth and your law (*tu, domine deus noster, et veritas tua, et lex tua*). These inferior goods have their delights, but not comparable to my God who has made them all (*qui fecit omnia*). It is in him that the just person takes delight (*in ipso delectatur iustus*); he is the joy of those who are true of heart (*ipse est deliciae rectorum corde*) (*Ps.* 63:11).[25]

To support his definition of sin, Augustine cites as evidence our common analysis of crimes. We maintain that there is a motive behind every crime and usually identify it with the desire to enjoy an inferior/participated good like property of some kind, sexual relations, money, or human justice.[26] Within this framework of analysis, Augustine searches for his motive in the theft of pears: "Wretch that I was, what did I love in you (*Quid ... in te amavi*), my act of theft (*furtum meum*), that crime which I did at night in the sixteenth year of my life?"[27] He wonders if his theft was precipitated by an undue desire for the participated good that is the pears. He discloses, however, that he stole neither to enjoy the pears' appearance or taste nor, for that matter, to satisfy a hunger for food. It had nothing to do with the beauty or utility of the pears; rather, his motive was directly related to the act of theft. In his case, the stolen object could just as well have been a car, computer, or towels from a hotel. Augustine writes:

> The fruit which we stole was beautiful but was not that which my miserable soul coveted. I had a quantity of better pears. But those I picked solely with the motive of stealing. I threw away what I had picked. My feasting was only on the wickedness which I took pleasure in enjoying (*epulatus inde*

> *solam iniquitatem qua laetabar fruens*). If any of those pears entered my mouth, my criminality was the piquant sauce (*condimentum ibi facinus erat*).[28]

What pleasure, then, was he trying to procure? In other words, what does it mean to 'feast on wickedness'? Augustine begins to unravel this mystery by asking if his theft was carried out for the sake of some real or apparent participated good aside from the pears. Taking a panoramic view of participated goods, he compares his theft to (i) acts of virtue; (ii) qualities in the mind and body; (iii) the orderly movements of the stars and the cycle of death and birth which preserves living creatures; and (iv) specious vices (i.e. to some apparent good). He discovers, however, that his pleasure cannot be identified with any of the above. His action was not for the sake of (i) cultivating the virtue of justice; (ii) developing his intelligence or muscles; (iii) benefiting the pigs (*e.g.* to satisfy their appetite for food) or the vineyards (*e.g.* planting more trees or fertilizing the ground); or (iv) robbing the rich to feed the poor.[29]

The *primary object* of Augustine's theft, then, was neither the pears nor some other participated good that employs the theft of pears as its means. Rather, he acted for the sake of what is worse than a specious vice, viz. vice itself. Where, then, is his pleasure found? Based on his analysis thus far, we can only surmise that Augustine's satisfaction consists in using the lower goods for the express purpose of *subordinating* the highest good. This is because to steal for its own sake means that one's pleasure is found in breaking the law and defying the One who makes and enforces it. If Augustine does not want to enjoy any real or apparent participated good, he must want to enjoy what belongs to the God who forbids theft.

For this reason, Augustine now offers his *second, more profound and decisive, account of sin* that is centered on a study of pride (*superbia*). He identifies *superbia* as the essential motive behind every sin, and his principal teaching is that every sinner – whether the latter recognizes it or not – aims to appropriate what belongs to God. This is because if each good the sinner desires exists by participation in or is God, it follows that every sin represents the sinner's desire to arrogate *some aspect of the divine nature.* In short, sin consists in setting oneself in the place of God.[30]

Moreover, the sinner who arrogates what belongs to God (i.e. perversely imitates God) can take nothing from Him for He *is* Goodness. Rather he can only take something (viz. goodness) from himself, i.e. diminish his own capacity for right order. *In reality*, then, the sinner gets the opposite of what he wants; instead of procuring goodness he loses it. The ambitious person who wants the honor and glory due to others – and, above all else, to God – loses the honor and glory that is his due. The cruel leader, seeking only to be feared, loses the fear owed him as leader; and the curious person, striving to know what he doesn't need to know, fails to gain the knowledge he ought to have. Likewise, the idle, by rejecting work, lose the rest that is their due (as the result of hard work); and the vengeful person who takes justice into his own hands loses the justice owed to him by others. On this basis, Augustine maintains that every sinner *fornicates away from God*:

> So the soul fornicates (*Ps*. 72:27) when it is turned away from you (*fornicator anima, cum avertitur abs te*) and seeks outside you (*et quaerit extra te*) the pure and clear intentions which are not to be found except by returning to you (*ea quae pura et liquida non invenit, nisi cum redit ad te*). In their perverted way, all humanity imitates you. Yet they put themselves at a distance from you and exalt themselves against you. But even by thus imitating you they acknowledge that you are the creator of all nature and so concede that there is no place where one can entirely escape from you.[31]

According to Augustine, every sin is futile and self-contradictory because the sinner exists by participation in and, therefore, by ordination to God. There can be no rebellion – no attempt to set up a contrary order – unless there is an objective order to rebel against in the first place. How does the sinner imitate God? By trying to order, according to his standard, what is already and can only be ordered by God the Creator. The sinner, in other words, claims divine status as the ultimate source of being, value, and reward and punishment. Why does Augustine maintain that this hostile attitude towards God is nonetheless an acknowledgement of God? Because when the sinner denies God in one respect he necessarily embraces Him in another respect. As everything (including the sinner) exists by participation in God, and as the sinner is established (by God) in relationship with God for the sake of achieving right union with Him, his rejection of God means that he embraces as God some good that participates in God. At bottom, this is himself and/or some good that is God but is wanted apart from Him.

Augustine advances here an important insight that is missed by those holding that he ultimately distinguishes no adequate motive (in the sense of 'his pursuit of some [apparent] good') in his theft of pears.[32] Unlike Augustine, these thinkers focus their analysis on only one aspect of the subjective dimension of Augustine's motivation. In particular, they neglect to consider sufficiently the adolescent Augustine's simultaneous desire for divine omnipotence and human glory; in general, they fail to recognize Augustine's primary teaching that as *man is spiritually united with God* each of his thoughts and actions have an accompanying theological aspect.

Even if someone claims 'to do evil for its own sake' (including the person who wants to commit suicide and believes that death brings personal annihilation) the corresponding objective dimensions of his action would be essentially the same as the sixteen-year-old Augustine's since the standard of analysis is no less than an objective (i.e. metaphysical) understanding of the human person *in relationship with and fulfilled in God*. In other words, that motivation means the agent wants to arrogate divine omnipotence – claiming that he/she, rather than God, creates human being and thereby determines right and wrong, and reward and punishment. As Augustine's objective account of human personhood entails relationship with God, it follows that – whether the human agent is aware of it or not – his motives and actions have an inherent theological dimension. Again, if the suicide (i) no longer wants to be (period) or (ii) wants to be cast into hell by God (*e.g.* Ivan Karamazov in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*) then, all things considered, *he really wants* to be God. Put differently, the good he embraces as God is in one respect himself and in another respect God. This person knowingly wills what does not perfect him but his own existing as a

participated good in relationship with God means, objectively speaking, that his will for self-destruction (insofar as it contravenes divine law) is also a will for some good either by participation in God or because it is God! At the same time, then, as the sinner rejects God in one respect he embraces Him in another respect. For this reason, Augustine calls someone with this mind-set 'a runaway slave'.

Therefore, since man is spiritually established with God he always embraces the non-participated Good in some respect. If man is rightly ordered, he orders himself to God; if he is wrongly ordered, he orders God to himself (i.e. wants to be God). Hence, they are mistaken who maintain Augustine teaches that his theft of pears is not motivated by the pursuit of some (ontological) good. The young Augustine wants what is ontologically good – the problem is that he does not want this in a manner that is morally good. Consequently, they are also mistaken who hold that persons can act for no apparent good at all. Someone might *say he is acting for no apparent good* but *in the ultimate scheme of things* he is really making a claim to divinity, and he himself is the apparent good he is acting for. Those who ignore these distinctions analyze insufficiently Augustine's reflections on his theft of pears, overlooking especially the profound dignity he ascribes to the human person.

In any event, it is Augustine's point that the sinner acknowledges God at the same time as he rejects Him. Therefore, since man is established in relationship and for the sake of right union with God, rebellion against the divine order is both (i) rebellion against personal integrity and (ii) an implicit recognition of divine sovereignty. Even though sin is spiritual suicide, the sinner gives glory to God.

Returning to Augustine's analysis of his theft of pears, he asks: what does it *really* mean to steal for the sake of stealing? It signifies that the thief desires to usurp the role of divine lawgiver. The adolescent Augustine arrogates divine omnipotence; by breaking God's law, he claims to be his own law – or, put differently, that he belongs to and is ordered to himself rather than to God. Like the biblical accounts of Satan and the first human couple in the Garden of Eden, the young Augustine wants to possess God's power to determine and enforce the distinction between good and evil. However, as his integrity depends on obeying divine law, what he 'gains' by disobedience is powerlessness to do what he ought, viz. to obey God's law. Since his desire to usurp the divine power depends, in the first place, on his participation in divine power – his very ability to act derives from God – Augustine's sin causes him to diminish his own power. By embracing what is unreal, a shadow, he becomes, in that respect, unreal himself. Augustine writes:

> Therefore in that act of theft what was the object of my love (*quid ergo in illo furto ego dilexi*), and in what way did I viciously and perversely imitate my Lord (*et in quo dominum meum vel vitiose atque perverse imitatus sum*)? Was my pleasure to break your law, but by deceit, since I had not the power to do that by force? Was I acting like a prisoner with restricted liberty who does without punishment what is not permitted, thereby making an assertion of possessing a dim resemblance to omnipotence (*tenebrosa omnipotentiae similitudine*)? Here is a runaway slave fleeing his master and

> pursuing a shadow (*Job* 7:2). What rottenness! What a monstrous life and an abyss of death! Was it possible to take pleasure in what was illicit for no reason other than that it was not allowed (*potuitne libere quod non licebat, non ob aliud nisi quia non licebat*)?[33]

Hence, what fruit (i.e. gain or pleasure) did the young Augustine procure from the sin? From the perspective of Confessor Augustine's objective account of the human person's relationship with God, the answer is nothing positive (*nihil*). On that basis, the 'pleasure' or 'thrill'[34] the young Augustine experiences is not a gain but a loss or negation. As a person (and therefore as ordered to perfect spiritual union with God), he is beset by deficiency, disorder, disintegration or privation; he is 'less human'[35] than before since his open hostility towards God means that he possesses a weaker disposition towards God.

Augustine's sin, therefore, is a *nothing* because it moves him away from his proper end of unity with God. In this sense too (i) the praise of the gang and (ii) Augustine's pleasure in his actions are *nothings* for these draw him away from virtue, true friendship, and right pleasure.[36] What Augustine and his gang identified as 'gain' is really a 'loss' of personal integrity. In his words:

> What fruit (*fructum*) had I', wretched boy, in these things (Rom. 6.21) ... above all in that theft in which I loved nothing but the theft itself? The theft itself was a nothing (*nihil*) and for that reason I was the more miserable. Yet had I been alone I would not have done it (*et tamen solus id non fecissem*) ... alone I would not have done it. Therefore my love in that act was to be associated with the gang in whose company I did it (*ergo amavi ibi etiam consortium eorum cum quibus id feci*). Does it follow that I loved something other than the theft? No nothing else (*nihil aliud*) in reality (*quid est re vera*) because association with the gang is also a nothing (*quia et illud nihil est*) ... my pleasure was not in the pears (*in illis pomis voluptas mihi non erat*); it was in the crime itself (*ea erat in ipso facinore*), done in association with a sinful group (*quam faciebat consortium simul peccantium*).[37]

Moreover, Augustine understands that the pleasure taken in defying God (and therefore, objectively speaking, in harming himself) was inseparable from the pleasure gained from recognizing the gang's approval of his actions.[38] In other words, *these two things together* constituted his satisfaction in the theft. This is important for *three reasons*.

In the first place, it confirms Augustine's assertion that his motivation in the crime was not simply for the lower goods of human friendship and glory but these were sought in conjunction with his primary interest to defy God. That 'he would not have done it if he had been alone' doesn't mean he acted simply for the sake of friendship and glory but that the type of friendship and glory he sought by his act of defiance would not have been available if he had acted alone. Augustine did not have two distinct motives but his primary motive had two intimately related components – *in this instance, to openly defy God is at the same time to seek glory from depraved men*.

MacDonald, therefore, is right that Augustine uses his doctrine of pride "to unlock a resolution to the central puzzle of the theft of pears."[39] In the long run, however, MacDonald[40] does

not adequately integrate the motivation of pride with the motivation for friendship because he neglects to acknowledge the metaphysical principle upon which Augustine's entire analysis rests, viz. that man is established in relationship and for the sake of right union with God and, therefore, with neighbor. What I mean is this. MacDonald's interpretation surpasses Wills' interpretation because while the latter ultimately identifies Augustine's principal motive as the pursuit of "a false ideal of companionship"[41] MacDonald holds that Augustine's "motivational state" is a "composite" of (i) the desire to claim for himself divine status, i.e. "a kind of limitless freedom and power," and (ii) the desire "to be included in the fellowship of rogues."[42] Unlike Wills, therefore, MacDonald identifies as Augustine's motivation both the explicit urge for divinity and the urge for false friendship. MacDonald, however, fails to relate together these two components of Augustine's motivation in anything more than an accidental manner. Although he acknowledges that these motives "work crucially together" in Augustine's analysis[43], his subsequent comments suggest the opinion that each of the aforementioned motives is sufficient unto itself and happen to converge in Augustine's mind in his theft of pears.[44] All things considered, this leaves MacDonald with the odd claim that Augustine both has and has not one motivation in his theft of pears.

These difficulties are cleared up, however, if we recognize and apply Augustine's organizing principle. For if man is established in relationship and for the sake of right union (or friendship) with God and neighbor, then the desire to arrogate the divine omnipotence necessarily entails that the neighbor (viz. Augustine and his gang) is elevated to the status of God and God is relegated to the status of creature. Or, put differently, the decision to embrace the gang's commands as absolute and binding necessarily requires allocating divine omnipotence to the gang. Most important, this insight allows us to see (i) that Augustine has essentially one motive with (as MacDonald rightly asserts) two inseparable components, and (ii) why these components "in his analysis, work crucially together."[45]

Starnes provides a more complete solution to the matter than MacDonald[46] but he seems to link together Augustine's twin motivations from the perspective of psychology rather than from the perspective of metaphysics. It is one thing to maintain that Augustine's desire for omnipotence depends on "some objective recognition that this was the case" and "in order to be established objectively it must in some way be recognized by someone other than Augustine."[47] But it is quite another to show the essential cause in which the aforementioned distinction participates. It is true that (i) (*pace* MacDonald) in Augustine's circumstances these motives were inseparable and (ii) (*pace* Starnes) these motives are inseparable psychologically. However, it is more precise to say that these motives are united since, *based on Augustine's account of the order of reality*, the divine and the human are spiritually united. In other words, Augustine's philosophical psychology unites the aforementioned motives for divinity and for friendship because his psychology is grounded in the metaphysical claim that man is spiritually established with and ordained for perfect spiritual union with God. If man is essentially theological, his thoughts and actions have theological meaning.

On this basis, the limitation of Starnes' psychological analysis is visible in two other areas. First, he thinks that Augustine could only have acted alone if he was insane (i.e. "to retreat into

idiocy") for in this instance there would have been no object to confer on him the 'divinity' he sought.[48] Starnes is certainly right that Augustine's particular sin requires the gang's presence since Augustine intends to gain glory from his like-minded companions through sharing with them the common medium of arrogating divine omnipotence. However, Augustine doesn't need the gang to *commit the sin of pride* and pat himself on the back for doing it. This is because if each individual is spiritually established with God then there is a way wherein every act of pride is carried out apart from human community. Starnes' analysis of *Augustine's particular sin of pride* is generally accurate but Augustine's sin is a species rather than the essence of pride. Starnes justifiably asserts that God will not bestow glory on the prideful (if that is what they seek) and that such glory can therefore only be received from like-minded others. Nevertheless, as Augustine claims elsewhere[49], the sin of pride is carried out 'before' God in advance of being manifested to men. Since pride occurs in the recesses of the human heart it is intrinsically social in one way, i.e. in terms of the sinner's relationship with God, before it is social in another, i.e. concerning the sinner's relationship with other men. In this respect, the proud person acts, i.e. exalts himself, before God in advance of acting before men and, to the extent that he sees the probability of attaining what he wants, he likely congratulates himself both before and after he receives glory from like-minded others. Hence, Augustine acted 'alone' in order to act before men because he glorifies himself, in the first place, to spurn God and, in the second place, to seek glory for spurning God from like-minded men.

Second, while Starnes identifies the fruit of Augustine's sin as "the love of those with whom he stole"[50] he neglects (perhaps because of his psychological perspective) to *consider sufficiently* why Augustine says that his fruit, i.e. his satisfaction and his gang, were essentially 'nothings'. Starnes justifiably identifies these as depraved realities[51] but, unrecognized by him, this distinction is ultimately made on the basis of the metaphysical principle that man is established in relationship and for the sake of right union with God. For according to the strictest application of this principle what moves the sinner away from God brings negation (disintegration) and what brings the sinner towards God brings something positive (integration). On this basis, we can see that Augustine's affirmation by his friends is a 'nothing' because the pleasure he takes in this is a false pleasure having the effect of diminishing his integrity. The point is not that nothing occurred –Augustine was congratulated by his friends and gratified by this; however, in terms of the *telos* of his personhood, what happened was a negative reality. Likewise, the gang Augustine loved is a 'nothing' for the same reasons as above. His companions are real persons joined together for a common goal but their orientation is for falsity and sin rather than for divine truth and law. As such, Augustine's love for the gang is a negative reality since it diminishes his integrity.

Therefore what one perspective classifies as 'deficient realities' the other perspective classifies as 'nothings'. These insights are obviously compatible but, from an ontological perspective, the former participates in the latter since to classify the aforementioned realities as 'deficient' depends on viewing them in light of the principle that man is established in relationship for the sake of right union with God. In other words, Augustine's pleasure and his gang are 'deficient' realities because,

viewed in light of an objective understanding of the nature and destiny of the human person, they are essentially 'nothings'. What Starnes says about these realities is illuminating and essentially correct on its own level but in this instance (as before) his analysis presupposes Augustine's first principle without making clear everything it implies.

That said, the second reason why Augustine emphasizes that his pleasure was composed of defying God together with gaining the gang's approval is because it shows plainly that he could not take from God the good he wants. *In reality*, Augustine cannot possess divine omnipotence[52]; he only has the appearance of omnipotence (in truth, the reality of impotence) because like-minded persons share with him the same goal – and therefore illusion. Since Augustine cannot possess the higher good he seeks, he procures some semblance of that good under the condition that others share with him the same vice. 'Alone he could not have done it' because, under such circumstances, the 'pleasure' Augustine sought after could not have been gained.[53]

And thirdly, the composite nature of Augustine's pleasure discloses that the gang has become his 'God.' This is because it has tried to usurp the divine prerogative to (i) determine the distinction between good and evil, and (ii) confer honor and glory upon those it deems deserving. The gang establishes itself as God so that its members can have the appearance of getting what they want.

As a result, Augustine and his companions have diminished their power to obey God. By trying to take from God–nay more, by claiming that they own themselves (i.e. are non-participated goods) and are therefore the ultimate goal of their actions – they end up taking from themselves. Hence, Augustine remarks that nothing can be more demeaning and unstable than subjecting oneself to the whims of a wicked gang according to which "As soon as the words are spoken 'Let us go and do it', one is ashamed not to be shameless?"[54]

Finally, these considerations allow us to weigh Crosby's provocative claim that Augustine's analysis of human willing contradicts the perennial doctrine that "the will has for its object the good so that it desires whatever it desires under the aspect of good and cannot desire anything under the aspect of bad."[55] In short, Crosby wonders: how can it be asserted that man is (i) ordered to God as his ultimate end and (ii) capable of rejecting Him? If we hold that 'to be ordered' is 'to be determined' (in the sense of what excludes choice of will) these claims appear contradictory.[56] Augustine's study of his theft of pears, however, asserts otherwise. To show this requires making three cardinal distinctions. In the first place, we consider various meanings of the term 'ordered' – as (i) determined or fixed, (ii) oriented towards (i.e. willingly ordered), and (iii) subject to (i.e. unwillingly ordered). Second, we distinguish ontological goodness from moral goodness. And third, we demarcate the character of will when it is joined with divine aid from when it is not therewith united.

To begin with, Augustine maintains that will (i.e. mind's power by which it seeks out and joins itself to goods for the sake of what pleases it) is ordered to good. Insofar as every good either is or participates in God (2.5.10) and to be human is to be established in relationship with created and uncreated goods for the sake of right union with God (2.6.13-14), it follows that will always tends

towards ontological goods. However, as considered immediately below, Augustine also understands that will does not always, i.e. in terms of its existential character, tend towards its *proper good* of morality. In other words, will always pursues good but it does not always pursue God, the Supreme Good, since it does not always want to enjoy participated goods in the right way, i.e. as ordered to God. The adolescent Augustine, for example, steals the pears because he wants the goods of divine power, human friendship and glory. The problem, however, is that he wants to possess them in the wrong way. As a result, he loses integrity. *Therefore*, insofar as Augustine holds that will always tends towards ontological good and every such good either is or participates in God it follows, in this respect, that will is ordered, in the sense of *being determined*, towards good but it is only implicitly determined towards the Supreme Good, God Himself.

Augustine asserts, therefore, that will is *subject to* the moral law (i.e. to moral goodness/God/relating properly to ontological goods) but does not always embrace – i.e. is not *determined to* – this law. Why is that? In one way will is structured, *qua* created, in relationship with God to explicitly love Him but, according to the nature of love, this requires will to explicitly subordinate itself to and co-operate with God. In another way, will can be weighed down by Original and personal sin since these can exacerbate a will's delight in ontological goods over moral goods. On this basis, will's negative inheritance and past actions can 'add' to it certain accidental or non-essential characteristics (including bad habits) that motivate it to behave contrary to its objective, i.e. divinely created, ordination. Will *as such*, then, is determined to choose (i) between ontological goods and (ii) between moral good and evil but, other things being equal, it is not determined to choose *this over that* ontological good, virtue instead of vice or God over man. Any of these would negate will's nature to co-operate freely with God.

Insofar as will, therefore, is subject to divine law and the latter either is or participates in God, it follows that will is 'ordered to' God in the sense of 'being subject to' and fulfilled in Him. Since (i) will is determined to ontological goods and to choice making and subject to moral goods, and (ii) all goods either participate in or are God, it follows that will is ordered to God as its end – not as determined to Him but as oriented towards and/or subject to Him. While will embracing divine aid (*e.g.* the repentant Augustine who writes *conf.* 2) is both *subject to and oriented towards* moral goodness, will rejecting divine aid (*e.g.* the Augustine who commits the theft of pears) is only *subject to* moral goodness. In both instances, will is *ordered* to God; in neither instance is it *determined* to Him. Only in the first case, however, is will willingly ordered (i.e. *willingly oriented*) to God. Hence, Confessor Augustine freely acknowledges his dependence on God so that his potentiality for perfect relationship with Him can be actualized.

Three clarifications are in order here. First, a more direct route establishing will's ordination to God is found by applying to it Augustine's doctrine of participation. Since everything exists in likeness to God *in terms of its existence, mode of existence, and development towards its end*, it follows, on Augustine's terms, that will is ordered to God as its end. To hold otherwise means that will is non-existent and therefore uncreated. However, since will can rebel against its end and requires right

development to be explicitly united with God, it is also apparent that will exists in a state of incompleteness (i.e. it is in a state of potency towards its proper end) that is exaggerated by its privative state since, as Augustine's theft of pears shows, will can have non-essential dispositions contrary to its proper end that are rooted in negative inherited and/or personal experience. Thus, the young Augustine's will has a limited orientation towards God.

Second, Crosby's nuanced analysis of Augustine's theft of pears causes him to claim that Augustine upholds two principles of which, in reality, he only upholds one. While Augustine agrees that will always retains some "connection with *bonum*..."[57], he denies that will "is not by its very nature tethered to the good...."[58] As we have seen, Augustine maintains that will is a good that always pursues what is ontologically good. But he would concur with Crosby's second assertion if the latter means that will is not determined 'to God'. On this score, however, Augustine would distinguish his will's divinely created nature, and consequently its objective orientation, from the essentially external or adventitious dispositions that his will's dependence on fallen Adam (which weakens will's objective character) and his own personal experience have added to (or subtracted from) itself and helped to motivate the young Augustine to contradict his will's objective orientation. So, by recounting how he rejected The Supreme Good in favor of created goods, Augustine claims that will is 'tethered to the good' apart from being tethered to the Supreme Good. As he argues in *conf.* 8, Augustine understands that the latter phenomenon requires the aid of divine grace.

What, then, causes Crosby to misinterpret Augustine? This is likely for three related reasons. First, Crosby does not distinguish between what is ontologically good and what is morally good – in the former respect, will always engages what is good; in the latter respect, will engages the moral law but can receive or reject it on account of its capacity to pursue the good(s) it judges to satisfy. Second, Crosby neglects to adequately consider the distinction between will's character *qua created* (which means it can fail) and will's character *qua* affected by past human choice-making (which can incline it towards failure). While Augustine holds that bad choices can dull or vitiate will's objective orientation towards the Supreme Good, Crosby's implied view of will's "very nature" suggests that will's previous choices, i.e. what originates from Adam and from the will's personal activity, are also divinely created. Third, and most important, Crosby does not uphold Augustine's primary metaphysical doctrine that man is a participated good who always engages created and uncreated goods. Put differently, Crosby neglects to consider both 'will' (and more generally 'man') and *bonum* within the relationship centered metaphysical framework of participation that Augustine employs.

On this score, Augustine's relationship principle is a key to answering Crosby's claim since it can account for the apparently contradictory phenomenon that 'will is tethered to good but not to the Supreme Good.' How so? While in the abstract God's Love necessarily exceeds human love and it is therefore highly probable that, in the long run, man will become 'tethered' to the Supreme Good by the mode of his special relationship with God, the relationship principle entails, on the divine side, that God can share His Love with man in a developmental or incremental manner and, on the human side, that man can, therefore, respond to/love God in a developmental/incremental

manner. This cannot entail that man should ever reject God or that he can ultimately reject Him. Nor can it be the case that God positively wants human will to reject Him since that would make Him the cause of moral evil. But it is certainly admissible to hold that God can permit will to reject Him (for a period of time) for the sake of some good – so that will, for example, comes to understand that it is love and He is Love, and to love Him as such. Therefore, depending on the circumstances, God might share His Love, in one way, wherein It is less powerful than human love (whereby It can be rejected by man for a duration) and, in another way, that It can be more powerful than human love (so that, as Augustine's notion of heaven would entail, It cannot be rejected because It is loved by man in and through Its Love). What human love is, then, is in one way constant, viz. the capacity to love. However, its existential character depends on the degree to which the aforesaid capacity is actualized and, therefore, on the nature of love's concrete relationship with God's Love. So, yes, human love/will is tethered, in a manner, to the Supreme Good, but this is by the mode of relationship. Most important, if love and Love, man and God, are relational, it can be explained why man, in one phase of will's relationship with God (i.e. the phase to which Augustine's theft of pears belongs), is determined to good apart from being determined to the Supreme Good.

Therefore, like those commentators holding that Augustine (i) is scrupulous and/or (ii) fails to provide compelling analysis for his theft of pears and/or (iii) offers a compelling explanation in terms of identifying two motivations, Crosby misinterprets key aspects of Augustine's teaching on the theft of pears because he underestimates Augustine's profound doctrine on the dignity of the human person.

Finally, our now developed analysis of Augustine's account of man's relationship-centered ordination to God renders more intelligible than before *conf.* 2.8.16's assertion that each of the adolescent Augustine's (i) attempted theft of divinity, and (ii) the pleasure he attained through the praise and friendship of the gang, were 'nothings' (i.e. *nihil*s). For insofar as Augustine pursues ontological goods and experiences 'pleasure' in his actions 'nothing' (*nihil*) cannot mean 'non-good/non-being' absolutely speaking (as if to say that he neither pursued nor enjoyed goods). Rather, it must mean 'the absence of good within good.' 'Nothing', in other words, signifies that Augustine both pursues and receives deficient forms of divinity, praise, friendship, and pleasure. In terms of the right ordering of his will, what Augustine both seeks and receives (and becomes present, as a phenomenon, to his will as a non-essential reality) is not gain but loss. The latter does not augment his integrity but negates or diminishes it. It is certainly the case that Augustine's behavior is purposely self-destructive but that presupposes that his will has some kind of natural orientation towards God which is recognized yet contradicted. As disorder is known though order and vice presupposes virtue, Augustine teaches that self-destruction is understood through awareness of the nature of personal integrity.

Augustine's account of moral evil in *conf.* 7.16.22 is instructive on this matter. He claims that "wickedness (*iniquitas*) is ... not ... a substance (*non ... substantiam*) but a perversity of will (*voluntatis perversitatem*) twisted ... away (*detortae*) from the highest substance (*a summa*

substantia) … towards inferior things (*in infima*), rejecting its own inner life (*proicientis intima sua*) … and swelling with external matter (*et tumescentis foras*)."[59] Augustine's point is not that will (which, for him, can be coterminous with mind, mindset, moral self, love, and wish or want[60]) is obliterated but that its disordered love for creatures causes it to somewhat bury its proper orientation towards God beneath what is essentially external (in the sense of contradictory) to itself. Augustine does not claim that will is replaced by a 'nill' (since that would entail an evil thing – and therefore an evil creator God). In other words, he asserts neither that a morally evil will *qua* will is a substance, i.e. a naturally occurring individual thing (e.g. as man and/or essential parts of man exist), nor that a will's morally evil disposition is an essential characteristic belonging therein (as quantity, in the form of weight, belongs to each man). Rather, Augustine maintains that will's disordered love for the created order causes it to weigh itself down with impediments. The latter – mental realities like (i) memories of bad deeds and/or influences or encouragements and/or (ii) bad dispositions or habits – are non-essential *essential-characteristic-like* characteristics or presences that obstruct will from acting as it should. Hence, will's misfortune and/or contradictory activity has added realities, in the manner of weight, unto itself that are essentially external to its proper orientation and either place it into a state of privation or exaggerate a pre-existing privative state. Moreover, the realities that the term privation describes are 'nothings' insofar as their *mode of being* is parasitic on substantial and essential realities. Therefore, just as rust depends on metal, a morally evil will depends on will. Like rust, moral evil is neither a substance nor an essential characteristic found either in substance or in an essential characteristic – rather, it is a non-essential characteristic belonging to the will. In this instance, privation doesn't mean *nothing at all* but *nothing positive*. By contrast, will's (i) adhering to strictly human good dispositions and habits and (ii) related assent to remembering strictly human good deeds and/or influences and/or encouragements would add *something positive* to will since these can help conform it to its proper end.

Based, however, on Augustine's consideration of his will's conversion to God in *conf.* 8, he doesn't seem to think that the above realities, if originated strictly by man, add something essential to will. He implies that they would fortify will's proper orientation since agreeing with and developing it. These realities, then, would be positive instead of negative non-essential characteristics; they would add positive, rather than negative, weight. On the other hand, Augustine's teaching in *conf.* 8.12-29—9.1.1 concerning God's direct action on his will claims that God's grace *in conjunction with* human effort (i.e. when man explicitly acknowledges and conforms to the nature of his relationship with God) adds something genuinely positive, i.e. *positive essential characteristics*, to will so that will becomes decisively fortified in conforming to its proper end. In this instance (or, at minimum, in terms of will's conversion), Augustine seems to designate some kind of permanent change for the better to will's ontological structure – it is less that positive weight is added to will (though that is, in a way, true) than that will's structure is positively altered. Indeed, it is from this perspective that Confessor Augustine analyzes the theft of pears he committed as an adolescent.

Hence, awareness of the dynamics of and difference between man's/will's implicit and explicit relationship with God enables us to better understand Augustine's meaning of 'nothing' in *conf.* 2.8.16. 'Nothing' does not mean the complete absence of good, in the sense of a complete absence of being, but the absence of the proper good within a good. Augustine's point is that although he was pursuing and enjoying goods, he was seeking deficiently deficient goods; and therefore, he received deficient goods and deficiency. In this respect – i.e. because of the ontological gap between what ought to have been and what was, his actions and their outcomes were 'nothings'. Augustine's pleasure was real but, other things being equal, it was qualitatively less real than what virtuous action would have elicited.

(iii) Conclusion

It is evident, therefore, that commentators on *conf.* 2 underestimate the profound dignity that Augustine ascribes to human nature as *imago Dei*. This is because adhering to Augustine's principal doctrine shows, on the one hand, that and why his analysis of the theft of pears is not scrupulous and, on the other hand, how he provides a persuasive account of wrong-doing in general and of the motivations behind the theft of pears in particular.

Why, then, does Augustine condemn so harshly the theft of pears? Against those commentators inclined to trivialize that theft, Augustine judges that his attempt to arrogate divinity reverses the order of reality. Whereas man and human society is properly *imago Dei*, Augustine and his friends claim that God is *imago hominis*. At bottom, Augustine and his friends did not steal to enjoy the pears or some other participated good to which end the pears were a means, but to reject the objective moral order established by divine law and substitute, in its place, a human order explicitly recognized as false. Their goal – though impossible to gain – was to scale the heavens and topple the regime. Augustine and his companions claimed divine status but received, fittingly, the status of slaves. The most they could achieve was a human regime or club that *claims* to defy heaven but *really* destroys the integrity of its own members.

According to Augustine's metaphysical perspective, every sin has the same essential structure; but the young Augustine's sin is especially blameworthy since, together with his companions, he *explicitly* rejects the divine order by arrogating divine omnipotence to himself and to his friends. The immediate effects upon the pears and the farmer who owned them are relatively minor. Nevertheless, the psychological effect upon Augustine's soul is devastating because even though he views his sinful action as a 'gain' it diminishes significantly his being. Augustine is 'less human' than before not only because he has sinned but also because this particular sin establishes him in self-conscious opposition to the order of the universe and, therefore, to his own fulfillment as a person. Augustine remains *imago Dei* but he has diminished his capacity to fulfill his nature, i.e. to be explicitly *imago Dei*.

Moreover, our study of Augustine's analysis of his theft of pears allows us to infer that he employs therein six governing principles (see below). Augustine's consecutive studies of sin in 2.5.10

and 2.6.13 suggest that, for him, principles (iii) and (iv) are first in the order of discovery and that these are followed, in some manner, by principles (v) and (vi). Nevertheless, Augustine's actual centerpiece is principle (i), viz. that man is *imago Dei*, since it distinguishes his notion of the concrete relationship with God that constitutes human being; and Augustine's second most important principle is (ii) since, following from principle (i), it details some of the key ontological dimensions structuring the dynamic relationship between man and God. Most important, this allows us to make clear the difference between Augustine's analysis of his theft of pears and that furnished by those commentators, whom we divided into two parties, sharing his view that the theft was a heinous sin. In general, both parties underestimate the depth of Augustine's metaphysical perspective. However, while one party views the entire matter within a structure of participation rooted in God but apart from recognizing that the apex of Augustine's structure consists in the spiritual unity of God and man, the other party shares the former's view of Augustine's participation structure but places man both inside and outside of that structure in its effort to explain his theft of pears. Therefore, whereas the one party fails to unify Augustine's motive for sinning because it lacks sufficient understanding of Augustine's primary doctrine that man is essentially theological the other party, for the same reason, claims that Augustine's analysis stands both inside and outside of a theocentric participation structure. Hence, in different ways, each party truncates Augustine's actual participation structure by failing to acknowledge that the latter is grounded in the claim that man is intrinsically *related* to God by the mode of spiritual union.

Looked at in another manner, the general distinction between Augustine's view and that of the commentators is this: whereas the latter analyzes Augustine's study, to greater and lesser degrees, by more or less agreeing with key aspects of his account of the order of discovery, his own analysis (which his experience shows is arrived at by the order of discovery[61]) is ultimately by what he understands as the order of being (and, for him, the order of importance). Therefore, while the commentators assimilate Augustine's hierarchically related analyses of sin apart from recognizing his governing perspective on the relationship between man and God, Augustine makes his overall analysis – which includes the aforementioned studies of sin – in light of his governing perspective. As Augustine's *confessio* mode of narrative underscores, he judges that apart from understanding that man has some underlying spiritual relationship with God and neighbor, i.e. that man is *imago Dei*, the fact, circumstances, and gravity of human sinning could not otherwise be ascertained.

I state below Augustine's principles according to what his *confessio* narrative shows is the order of importance.

(i) Man is a participated good of irreducible value because, as his awareness of the moral law and attraction to created and uncreated goods shows, he is (a) established by God together, i.e. in relationship, with God according to the mode of spiritual union and (b) ordered to right union with Him (and therefore with his neighbor) as his ultimate goal.

(ii) While the right ordering of goods *via* virtue brings man towards his proper end (or purpose) of unity with God, wrong ordering, i.e. sin, leads him away from this end. In particular,

whereas virtuous actions, with or without explicit divine aid, are a positive reality integrating the human person, sinful actions are a negative reality disintegrating or diminishing him. Other things being equal, however, while the person co-operating with explicit divine aid can be integrated essentially and/or non-essentially, the person co-operating with implicit divine aid can only be integrated non-essentially. By contrast, all those rejecting divine aid suffer and/or enjoy some measure of non-essential disintegration. In principle, however, disintegration can be worse for those rejecting explicit divine aid than for those rejecting implicit divine aid. Therefore, since man is intrinsically related, and therefore responding, to God, he is always either disintegrating or being integrated.

(iii) There are uncreated and created goods, of greater and lesser intrinsic value, to which man –a participated good of irreducible value – is innately inclined.

(iv) There is a Supreme (because Uncreated and Self-Sufficient) Good, i.e. God, in whom all created goods participate and who orders, through law, the relationship between these goods.

(v) Man should value God above all created goods for, as these participate in God, it follows that to embrace rightly God is, in principle, to embrace rightly all participated goods.

(vi) Man has choice of will, i.e. the power to embrace or reject the intrinsic value assigned to participated goods (including to himself) and to God. In other words, man can choose or deny his ordination to God.

Therefore while the commentators, following aspects of the order of discovery, omit principles (i) and (ii), Augustine places them at the outset. Furthermore, Augustine implies that principles (i) and (ii) can be discovered and, if so, be provisionally placed at the end of the list. However, once the order of being is understood, those principles are properly placed at the outset.

Additionally, as Augustine well recognizes, his overall analysis of sin requires a significant qualification concerning its claim that, objectively speaking (i.e. by understanding man as *imago Dei*), every sin participates in arrogating divinity and entails supplanting God with oneself and, consequently, a society ordained towards divinity with a society aiming otherwise. This is because, as *conf.* 2.5.10-11 shows, it is certainly not the case that every sin is motivated by arrogating divinity. Unlike the young Augustine and his companions, not everyone appropriates divinity. Many sin for the sake of what Augustine called 'the lower goods,' viz. for sensual pleasure and ostensible career goals, domestic peace, political peace, power, money, fame – and, by this claim, warrant a relatively milder penalty. Hence, just as Augustine's analysis of sin by the order of being respects, rather than negates, the order of discovery it also respects the order of experience.

Finally, it is reasonably maintained that Augustine's fundamental point in *conf.* 2 is not only that God is Truthful Love and Loving Truth and man is truthful love and loving truth but also that God, being what He Is, *permits* man to discover these matters by allowing him to reverse, for a time, the attributes belonging to the natures of God and of man. If this is so, Augustine is certainly not claiming that God positively wills sinning or that humans should sin. Rather, he would be asserting that God employs human waywardness to lead humans towards rectitude. Perhaps this helps to

explain why Augustine presents his teaching on the theft of pears by the mode of *confessio*. In any event, it is plainly apparent that Augustine's medium represents his message.

Endnotes:

1. Recent commentaries on this passage include: G. Wills, *Saint Augustine's Sin* (New York: Viking Penguin; 2003), 7-17, and *Saint Augustine* (London: Phoenix; 1999), 10-15; 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 K. Paffenroth and R.P. Kennedy, *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press; 2003), 25-34; C. Vaught, *The Journey Toward God in Augustine's Confessions* (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), 325-333; J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions*, Volume 2, *Commentary, Books 1–7* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1992), 104-144; C. Starnes, *Augustine's Conversion: A Guide to the Argument of Confessions I-IX*, (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfred Laurier University Press; 1990), 37-51; L. Ferrari, "The Pear-Theft in Augustine's *Confessions*," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 16 (1970), 233-241, 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), 51-59, and "Inner-Life Ethics" in G. B. Matthews, ed., *The Augustinian Tradition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; 1999), 140-165, 157-160.
2. All translations are from *Saint Augustine: Confessions*, translated with an introduction and notes by H. Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press; 1991). This passage is found in book 2, chapter 4, paragraph 9 and page 29 (2.4.9, p. 29). I have occasionally inserted Augustine's Latin into Chadwick's translation for emphasis and clarification. Augustine's Latin has been taken from J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions*, Volume 1, *Introduction and Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1992).
3. This response is typical: "Rum thing to see a man making a mountain out of robbing a pear tree in his teens." Oliver Wendell Holmes to Harold Laski, Jan. 5, 1921, *Holmes-Laski Letters (I),* ed. M. de W. Howe, 1953, 300. This is cited by Peter Brown in *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber; 1967), 172, footnote #5.
4. For example, Friedrich Nietzsche writes: "... I was just reading the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. ...What a high-flown wordsmith! Such tear-jerking phoniness! How hard I laughed, for example, over a "pear theft" of his youth, made the basis for his account of his student days." (This text is cited by O'Donnell [1992] vol. 2, 227, and translated by Wills [2003], 3.) Mann (1979), 51, characterizes well the notion that Augustine is scrupulous: "One is inclined to say that if this is the foulest sin that Augustine could muster from his repertoire, then he led an exemplary childhood."
5. *E.g.* P. Hallie, "The Evil That Men Think—And Do," *Hastings Center Report*, December 1985, reprinted in *Vice & Virtue in Everyday Life*, eds. Christina Sommers and Fred Sommers, (New York: Harcourt College Publishers; 2001), 36-46.
6. I have not encountered this objection to Augustine's analysis in the scholarly literature, viz. 'No one—whether joined with divine grace or not—can perfectly obey divine law; without grace the task of obedience is especially difficult; the young Augustine did not have grace at that time in his life; therefore it is to be expected—in fact, it is almost inevitable—that he break the law. On this account, his guilt is negligible. He ought to judge more harshly those who have divine grace yet break the law.' As we will see by the end of this paper, Augustine would reply that what he did was his own responsibility and very bad since he knew that he was rejecting God, but that someone does worse who rejects God while being joined with divine grace.

7. *Conf.* 2.1.1 and 2. 4.9, p. 29: "Such was my heart, O God, such was my heart. You had pity on it when it was at the bottom of the abyss. Now let my heart tell you what it was seeking there in that I became evil (*ut essem … malum*) for no reason (*gratis*)." Augustine thinks that his analysis of the theft of pears is not a study of mid-adolescence but of the *state of mind* or *moral character* he exhibited at that time. Most importantly, Augustine intends to elucidate the character of evil-doing *as such* by focusing principally *on the motivation* behind his theft of pears. On this basis, Augustine endeavors to distinguish the universal dimension of his behavior.
8. *Ibid*., 2.2.3 and 3.3.6-8.
9. *Ibid*., 2.7.15 and 2.10.18.
10. Augustine cites and analyzes motives for murder in 2.5.11. One reason he focuses on murder is because in his day, as in ours, murder is considered a classic instance of moral evil. Augustine's discussion of sin in 3.8.15-16 implies that murder is worse than theft because, other things being equal, it consists in the taking of innocent life rather than of someone's material goods.
11. Many scholars have noticed profound parallels between Augustine's analysis of his theft of pears and the primal sins of (i) Adam and Eve and/or (ii) the fallen angels. For commentary see: Ferrari (1970 and 1971); Starnes, 45; O'Donnell, *Commentary on book 2*, 126-28; Wills (1999), 13-15 and (2003), xv, 7-19, 73-92; MacDonald, 397-8, 407-9; Cavadini, 28-34; and Vaught, 57-60, 64-5. To my mind, the commentators are right to parallel Augustine's analysis of his pear-theft with biblical accounts of 'the Fall' but I argue that they underestimate the depth of Augustine's understanding of the relationship between God and man that permeates his analysis. In particular, I claim that Augustine decries his theft since it contradicted what he then recognized as his proper spiritual relationship with God and neighbor. This presupposes two important implications: first, that the primal sin of Adam and Eve vitiates but does not obliterate a spiritual relationship between God and man (a matter which I do not discuss), and second (a matter I discuss) that the adolescent Augustine's theft of pears knowingly attempted to reverse that relationship's proper order.
12. By 'metaphysical' or 'objective' I signify Augustine's understanding of the ultimate structure and meaning of reality and therefore of the human person. In *conf.* 2, Augustine emphasizes especially that: (i) man is made by God, i.e. by the Self-Sufficient and Good Creator of the universe; (ii) man is in relationship with and for the purpose of perfect union with Him; and (iii) man achieves right union with God by ordering rightly (i.e. to God) his thoughts and actions.
13. In other words, Augustine holds that pride (*superbia*) is the root of all moral evil. The subjective dimension is the sinner's motive, i.e. what kind of pride does he embrace? According to Augustine, every sin arrogates divinity but while lesser sins are carried out principally for the sake of some participated good, the greatest sins are done for the sake of arrogating divinity. Augustine claims that he committed a grievous sin since, generally speaking, he embraced pride for its own sake.
14. Although Augustine asserts it is by God's gift that he has become self-consciously united with God and is aiming for perfect spiritual union with Him in the future, he also claims that he has *always* been united with God. In his words: "Where therefore did I find you, so that I could learn about you? … Late have I loved you, beauty (*pulchritudo*) so old and so new: late have I loved you! 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, and I was not with you … You called and cried out loud and shattered by deafness … 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 for your peace" (10.26.37–27.38, p. 201). In fact, as 13.11.12 shows, Augustine ultimately maintains that each human being is *imago Dei* as *imago Trinitatis*. He writes: "Who can understand the omnipotent Trinity (*Trinitatem omnipotentem*)? … These three aspects (*ista tria*) of the self are very different from the Trinity, but … on this triad they [i.e. humans] could well exercise their minds and examine the problem, thereby becoming aware how far distant they are

from it. The three aspects I mean are being, knowing, willing (*esse, nosse, velle*). ... In these three ... let him who is capable of so doing contemplate how inseparable in life they are (*quam sit inseparabilis vita*): one life, one mind, one essence (*una vita, una mens et una essentia*), yet ultimately there is distinction (*tamen distinctio*), for they are inseparable, yet distinct. ... So, the divine being is and knows itself and is immutably sufficient to itself, because of the overflowing greatness of the unity" (13.11.12, pp. 279-80). Hence, Augustine teaches that human being *as such* is spriritually united with God; man, he claims, is essentially theological.

15. For further explanation see ahead n. # 29.
16. On the one hand, I will analyze portions of the arguments of the first three commentators instead of those by Cavadini and Vaught since the latter express views that are ultimately typical of the former. Each of these five commentators maintain that Augustine's analysis upholds the primacy of ontological goodness but do not go far enough. While Starnes, MacDonald and Wills maintain that man participates in God, Cavadini (30-2) and Vaught (54-5, 57-8, 60-5) suggest, at decisive points, that relationship with God is integral to human nature. For his part, Cavadini (31) claims that *conf.* 2.6.14 (i.e. where Augustine speaks of his sinning as a 'perverse imitation of God') "is in a way the key to the whole of Book Two ... [since] ... the governing themes of fornication, of turning away from God in the quest for a self-subsistent existence without God, the consequent lapse into the insubstantiality of shadow and death, and allusion to the Genesis text all come together." Likewise, Vaught (60-1) writes that "the pear-stealing episode represents ... [that] ... God and the soul that falls away from him are on opposite ends of an ontological continuum. ... From this perspective, the imitation of God is a negative reflection of omnipotence, which implies that there is no place we can depart from God completely." Nevertheless neither of these authors—like Starnes, MacDonald, and Wills—explicitly maintain that Augustine's analysis of his pear-theft is made in light of understanding that man *as such* is spiritually united with God for the sake of attaining perfect union with Him. On the other hand, I will analyze separately key aspects of Crosby's article since it agrees with Augustine's teaching but uniquely claims that Augustine's analysis denies, in crucial respects, the primacy of ontological goodness. Hence my thesis, then, is that both parties, albeit in different ways, lack explicit recognition of the high degree to which Augustine upholds the primacy of ontological goodness in his doctrine that man, by the fact of his spiritual unity with God, is essentially theological.
17. By divine or eternal law Augustine includes (i) what is commonly named natural law, and (ii) human laws representing legitimate extensions and applications of divine law. For a summary of his views on law together with some bibliography see R.J. Dougherty, "Natural Law," in *Saint Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. A. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans; 1999), 582-4.
18. *Conf*., 2.4.9, pp. 28-9.
19. See Augustine's discussions of law at 1.18.29 and 3.7.13-8.16. He thinks that everyone has some primordial awareness of the 'Golden Rule' and of the related precept 'to love God and neighbor.'
20. For further commentary see Starnes, 38-40.
21. *Conf.* 2.4.9, p. 29. Augustine writes: "Wickedness [to steal] filled me (*ego furtum facere volui et feci*). I stole something which I had in plenty and of much better quality. My desire was to enjoy not what I sought by stealing but merely the excitement of thieving and the doing of what was wrong (*nec ea re volebam frui quam furto appetebam, sed ipso furto et peccato*)....I had no motive for my wickedness except wickedness itself (*et malitiae meae causa nulla esset nisi militia*). It was foul (*foeda erat*) and I loved it (*et amavi eam*). I loved the self-destruction (*amavi perire*), I loved my fall (*amavi defectum meum*), not the object for which I had fallen (*non illud ad quod deficiebam*) but my fall itself (*sed defectum meum ipsum amavi*). My depraved soul leaped down from your firmament to ruin. I was seeking not to gain anything by shameful means, but shame for its own sake."
22. *Ibid*., 2.5.10, pp. 29-30.

23. I use the term 'soul' to signify the human person; 'soul' is a fitting substitution since that is the person's innermost self, i.e. the locus of consciousness, life, thought, feeling, conscience, decision-making, and action.
24. What is meant by 'participation in God'? At minimum, it signifies that every thing (i.e. substance) God makes (i) is like God and (ii) ultimately depends on Him for its existence, mode of existence, and development/fulfillment. Some passages from *conf.* 1.6.10 and 1.7.12 make this doctrine clear. While describing his coming into existence as an infant, Augustine maintains that (i) since nothing mutable—i.e. what comes into existence and passes away (plants, animals, minerals, humans, galaxies and universes)—can bring itself into existence (it is plainly evident that no plant or species of plant brings itself into existence); and (ii) since mutable creatures are characterized by definitive attributes like existence, life, form, and beauty; it follows (iii) that the existence of mutable creatures (and therefore the attributes they possess) depends on the existence of an immutable God in Whom there is no distinction between what He is and what Existence, Life, Form and Beauty is. In other words, it is because of and for the sake of God that everything (that is not God) exists. Apart from Him nothing else would be; since God 'Is', everything/substance that is is (*n.b.* Augustine doesn't classify 'evil' as a substance [7.12.18]). Therefore, every non-divine substance and its essential characteristics exist by participation in God. By contrast, certain non-essential characteristics found in things, like evil dispositions, exist by the mode of privation.
25. *Ibid.,* 2.5.10, p. 30.
26. *Ibid*., 2.5.11, p. 30. Augustine writes: "When a crime is under investigation to discover the motive for which it was done (*qua causa factum sit),* the accusation is not usually believed except in cases where the appetite to obtain (or the fear of losing) one of those goods we have called inferior appears a plausible possibility. They are beautiful and attractive even if, in comparison with the higher goods which give true happiness (*prae bonis superioribus et beatificis*), they are mean and base. A man committed murder. Why? Because he loved another's wife or his property; or he wanted to acquire money to live on by plundering his goods; or he was afraid of losing his own property by the action of his victim; or he had suffered injury and burned with desire for revenge. No one would commit murder without a motive, merely because he took pleasure in killing."
27. *Ibid.,* 2.6.12, p. 30.
28. *Ibid.,* 2.6.12, p. 31.
29. *Ibid*. Augustine writes: "And now...I inquire what was the nature of my pleasure in the theft (*quaero quid me in furto delectaverit*). The act has nothing lovely about it, none of the loveliness found in equity and prudence, or in the human mind whether in the memory or in the senses, or in physical vitality. Nor was it beautiful in the way the stars are, noble in their courses, or earth and sea full of newborn creatures which, as they are born, take the place of those which die; not even in the way that specious vices have a flawed reflection of beauty."
30. *Ibid.*, 2.6.13, p. 31. In Augustine's words: "Pride (*superbia*) imitates what is lofty (*celsitudinem imitator*); but you alone are God most high above all things (*cum tu sis unus super omnia deus excelsus*). What does [the sin of] ambition seek but honor and glory? Yet you alone are worthy of honor and are glorious for eternity. The [sin of] cruelty of powerful people aims to arouse fear. Who is to be feared but God alone? What can be seized or stolen from his power? When or where or how or by whom? ... [the sin of] Curiosity appears to be a zeal for knowledge; yet you supremely know all.... [The sin of] Idleness appears as desire for a quiet life; yet can rest be assured apart from the Lord? [The sin of] Luxury wants to be called abundance and satiety; but you are fullness and the inexhaustible treasure of incorruptible pleasure.... [The sin of] Avarice wishes to have large possessions; you possess everything. [The sin of] Envy contends about excellence; but what it more excellent than you? [The sin of] Anger seeks revenge; who avenges with greater justice than you?"
31. *Ibid.,* 2.6.14, p. 32.

32. This is especially Mann (1979), 56-7.
33. *Conf*., 2.6.14, p. 32.
34. Apparently following Von Hildebrand, Crosby (331) names this "subjective satisfaction."
35. By 'less human' I mean that the agent is less oriented than before to his proper end of perfect spiritual union with God. I do not mean that he loses his human nature as such, ceases to be in the image and likeness of God, or forsakes completely his capacity to be united with God.
36. Note again Augustine's profound metaphysical standpoint—while a person's orientation towards God is a positive reality the orientation away from Him is a negative reality (i.e. a nothing [*nihil*]). In the first instance, the subject undergoes a positive change; in the second instance, he undergoes a negative change (or privation). Augustine makes this distinction in light of his objective understanding of the human person.
37. *Conf*., 2.8.16, p. 33.
38. *Cf.* Starnes, 44-5.
39. MacDonald, 407.
40. *Ibid*., 404-11.
41. Wills (2003), 12.
42. MacDonald, 410-11.
43. *Ibid*., 410.
44. *Ibid.*, 410-11.
45. *Ibid*., 410.
46. Starnes, 44-5.
47. *Ibid*., 44.
48. *Ibid*.
49. *City of God*, 14.13.
50. Starnes, 44.
51. *Ibid.*, 45.
52. As we have seen, Augustine maintains that every person participates in divinity insofar as he/she is established in relationship for the sake of right union with God. However, one participates rightly in divinity by ordering oneself to God rather than by ordering God to oneself, i.e. by acknowledging that God is First Cause and that one is therefore a secondary and properly co-operative cause. One of the central themes of *conf.* is that the path to authentic (and therefore to complete and perfect) divinization is by humility rather than by presumption (see 7.18.24). When Augustine steals the pears he is presumptuous; as he writes about his theft he is humble.
53. *Cf.* Starnes, 45; Cavadini, 32-3; and Vaught, 63-5.
54. *Conf*., 2.9.17, p. 34.
55. Crosby, 326.
56. *Ibid*., 325-33.
57. *Ibid*., 330.
58. *Ibid*., 332.
59. *Conf.* 7.16.22, p. 126.
60. For consideration of Augustine's account of will (*voluntas/amor/consensus*) together with an extensive bibliography see M. Djuth, "Will," in *Saint Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (*op. cit*.), 881-5.
61. E.g. *conf.* 7.10.16; 17.23 and 9.10.23-25.

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On the Applicability of the Semiotics of Passions in Images

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Abstract:

Recent research in semiotics has foreseen analyzable units on the basis of the context instead of the text. In addition to language-based and psychologically-based semiotics (Saussure 1959), today semiotics has introduced the epistemological grounds on visual signs as well. My aim in this paper shall be to introduce the acting subject into such a context, which in my opinion can transform the states of visual expressions, as shown in their various shapes, from one to another. In such a context I shall exemplify the applicability of the subjectivized objects for the purpose of interpreting images (exemplifying thus concrete works of art) which can produce passions as semantic results (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993). The questions which I advance shall be the following: how can such passionate taxonomies, transformed into feelings and seen as feedback information, interact socially? And due to the openness of the work of art, as Eco (1962) claims, where do the limits of visual artistic expressions' interpretability lie?

Keywords: semiotics; passions; images; interpretation; meaning

Introduction

Treating relational issues based on social and cultural contexts, as well as their comparative and representational results aimed at decent interpretative possibilities, has always been a challenge for a semiotician. Depending on the view and methodology one takes as an example, semiotics today has shown an attempt to overcome many of the different theoretical views, thus trying to establish a decent application framework that would otherwise aim towards a meaningfulness of its deduced units. Owing to the fact that each approach should contain its justifiability and/or skepticism – as rightfully shown in modern epistemology [as for instance, explained in: (Goldman 1986)] – a scholar should present at least some of the reasons to search for a determined method for a certain approach, such as the following:

1) Relations and correlations have long ago pushed semioticians to detect the exact instances of the dichotomy optionality, so as to establish what one may call structure;
2) Having overcome structures and/or the structural method, a semiotician concludes that not just one discipline may be semiotically covered;
3) The micro-units opposed to macro-units [such as explained in: (Eco 1968)], which emerge from structures (be they narrative or non-narrative), can have a multifold semantic specter,

which allows the analyzable transformational units to be seen within their imprecision instead of their precision.

The discussion of the text and/or context relationship has established new realities within the semiotic methods; these have, expanded semiotics' domain, thus enabling it to be applicable in many social phenomena. Socially minded contexts thus cover such expressions as, for instance, artistic ones, be they expressed in a textual or a non-textual way, grounded on a variety of psychological processes. In addition, one may establish different semiotically analyzable concepts, to enable the changeability of a semiotic phenomenon, from a signifying one to a conceptualizing one. Perceiving different kinds of contexts as part of artistic expressions definitely covers the visual expression and/or the visual arts themselves, as well as their expressivity in concrete issues. The questions that a semiotician would answer in relation to the mentioned contexts are of the following manner: how should one intend such seen or visualized context in order to produce text? How can unseen or undisclosed structures, intended in the shape of "absent structures" [see: (Eco 1968)], transform themselves into explicit structures, to show relational attitudes and/or narration? Besides, can such entities as an image or a process of its visualizing bring to the transformability of states from one to another?

My aim in this paper is to introduce the *acting subject* in the frames of the mentioned context, which can transform the states of visual expressions from one to another. Basing myself upon such theoretical grounds, I shall try to exemplify the applicability of the subjectivizing objects (and/or acting subjects) for the purpose of interpreting images that can produce passions as semantic results (see: A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993).

This paper asserts that it is semiotics that is primarily concerned with the process itself, taken either from the aspect of its linguistic conceptualizing or from the aspect of its contextual perceiving. The question that theoretically should be advanced is the following: how can visual representations (among other semiotically treatable issues) become narrative? In addition, why should they be narrative, to become passionate? Moreover, how can deduced passionate feelings socially interact as feedback information, and where do the limits of the visual arts' interpretability lie?

On a possible methodological approach

In order to have a clear-cut picture of the possible discussable methodologies, one should bear in mind that a wider theoretical elaboration is required. To be precise, this is meant in the sense that one of the analytical methodologies should be a part of the deduction possibilities of determined semantic units. One can think of the Russian Formalists [see for instance: (Beker 1986), as well as of the Greimasian models of the trajectory of deducing meaning, see: (A. J. Greimas 1973; A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993)]. My reasons for this choice are the following: first, through the Russian Formalists, semiotics could also analyze the works of art as an object of analysis. Their initial division into form and content [seen as a binary opposition, which has earlier existed in other shapes, as for instance represented by linguistically based semiotics, see: (Saussure 1959)], enabled that a formal

analysis be performed, as opposed to the content's aspects of a work of art [see: (Beker 1986; Ivič 1970)]. Except for this division, which later was widely applied [such as in the field of literature and folklore; see for instance: (Chatman 1978)], distinctive features could be disclosed, which in turn brought about knowing and cognizing the semantic micro-universe, in the sense of the decomposition of its constituent parts [my paraphrase; see: (Innis 1985)]. Formalizing a microstructure into smaller units, one can easily determine what is semantically relevant and what is not. In conclusion, semiotics in this sense of analysis can provide for the redundancies' reducing processes, to the extent it is semiotically possible (with a sole aim of deducing meaning).

Second, the other analyzable methodology is based on Greimasian models. Basing thus semiotics upon discursive and epistemological grounds, Greimas and Fontanille (1993) have produced a systematic paradigm for the deduction of meaning. According to such a paradigm and/or theoretical hypothesis, and alongside the earlier-established narrative structures [such as explained in: (Greimas 1973)], such units, aimed at perceiving of, conceptualizing and finally adding the meaning component into them, have become transformable, thus producing different levels of semantic results.

In this context, one may advance the following question: how then can one apply such a methodology within what one visualizes? Is it, in the semiotic sense of the word an object, or a subject under analysis? Semiotically speaking though, one can treat phenomena as either objects or subjects. I aim to treat the mentioned phenomena simultaneously in this paper, trying thus to show the applicability of the semiotics of passions [as shown in Greimas and Fontanille (1993)]. Enacting a semiotics of action, through a subject of doing, proves the application method of the mentioned theory. As has been observed:

> It is not therefore surprising that the best-explored, and perhaps the most efficient, level of the generative trajectory is, in fact, situated in the middle area between its discursive and epistemological components. We are referring, above all, to the modeling of narrativity and to its actantial organization. The concept of an actant, freed from its psychological frame and defined only by its doing, is the sine qua non condition for developing a semiotics of action. (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993, XVI-XVII)

If semiotic phenomena are seen as objects on one hand, then they are themselves moveable (and/or transformable) as such, in the sense of describing and/or re-telling facts of different kinds. They are therefore narrative or, in another sense of the word, readable. The term of the "readerly" itself (Barthes 1992), is of a semiotic nature. Conceptualizing such an imprecision in terms of the text as a whole, one can apply the same feature to a visual expression. It is exactly such a readability that I am interested in.

If they are seen as subjects, on the other hand, then they contain the subjectivizing component (out of the objective external reality), and they finally become moveable and interpretable by way of enacting semiotic processes. The mentioned component enables such phenomena to show an action, as rightfully described by Greimas and Fontanille (1993), therefore

enabling the *active subject* to produce, a passion taxonomy by way of utilizing the "modality in action" and the *subject of doing* [italics are mine] as tools towards the explicit results of deducing meaning.[1] As Gremials and Fontanilla (1993) observed

> At a deeper level, the narrative subject's semiotic doing is reduced to the concept of transformation – that is, a sort of abstract punctuality, emptied of meaning and producing a break between the two states. Narrative unfolding can hence be considered as a segmentation of the states, defined only by their "transformability".(A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993, XVII)

The term "moveable"[2] and/or transformable itself, as shown in the citation above, is of interest to a semiotician because it is in this way that such a phenomenon can be subdued to a multiple meaning's choice, a choice that is semiotically produced from the layers of the different meanings. If such a hypothesis is taken to be true then one might ask: what is objective or objectivity in terms of artistic expressions? If this is one of the conceptualizations of the visual expressions, then one can definitely justify the "epistemological and discursive level" (p. XVI-XVII) mentioned above, as well as the action and/or subject component, as it is foreseen by the semiotics of passions.

What is a visual expression?

A fundamental question should be advanced: is everything that we see a visual experience? Is it a psychological process, or just a result of what we have experienced? Both terms as may be concluded belong to the psychological ground. Experiencing a context is a process that one generally performs. The difference, however, lies in the following: some of the mentioned processes may be inherited, whereas some others may be acquired. Such a conclusion is a truth for all human behavioral patterns [see: (Piaget 1969)][3], be they communicative, emotional, creative etc. It is also true, however, that visualizing belongs specifically to psychology or, perhaps it is better to state that it is a process which we physiologically and organically possess. If one makes such a hypothesis scientifically confident, then it should belong to a precise informational processing (even from the neurobiological viewpoint), and therefore to semiotics (if one conceptualizes it in the frames of its communicational and informational level).[4] Science can conceive such a vision, specifically in terms of unequivocal messages [as explained in: (Eco 1976,)] that can be foreseen in different social contexts of analysis.

How does semiotics perceive a visual expression of an artistic nature? Images, photographs, social media, can be numbered within instances of visual expressions. The question then, as to whether such an expression contains the aesthetic value or not, depends on those who experience such a vision, or better: on those who interpret it.

There are two issues to discuss here, out of the semiotic viewpoint: one, the expression itself (which is the text), and second, its meaning (which at this instance should be deduced from its context). The uniting of the two components is what has to be seen as a process of semiosis.

Another question follows: how can one convince the audience of a certain expression, so as to make it artistic? Be it a text, an image, a video expression using technology, or any other issue (as we said either an object or a subject), it has to provide for its being observed, being seen, or being analyzed. A semiotician should insist on such a dichotomy: the first one being the process, and the second one the result (with, of course, the first one belonging to psychology[5], and the next to the logics of science[6]).

As we can conclude from the aforementioned, a semiotic discourse regarding visual artistic expression specifically in this context can have a twofold nature: the first one has to compare, contradict, or concord, and the second one has to represent. If such a theoretical paradigm of a twofold conceptualizing of the semiotic objects has to be overcome, then a multifold meaning deduction is required, which is a process that lies on cognitive as well as on epistemological grounds.

Exemplifying a visual expression

Besides the human ability to visualize through one's innate biological and organic capabilities, contexts can be lived, told, narrated or retold, [see: (Griffin 2003, 72-3)] in many ways. These do not necessarily have to duplicate reality but may contain imaginative and creative elements: "stories lived are the co-constructed actions that we perform with others. *Coordination* takes place when we fit our stories lived into the stories lived by the others in a way that makes life better. Stories told are the narratives that we use to make sense of stories lived". [italics, quoted from the original:(Griffin 2003, 71)][7]. This conclusion, in fact, explains also a semiotic discourse within, which can be thus explained: first, the realistic seen (and/or experienced) "picture" of a semiotic object (an image at our instance), and second, the way in which one describes an image. Both "psychological actions" if seen united (or as one), as I may be encouraged to call them, enact a semiotic process that (in the case of our discussion) still has to be resolved.



Fig. 1 'We Miss You!", Fahredin Spahija.

The first example we are interested in is a photograph, taken by a photographer.[8] Women are seen in the photograph: showing another smaller photo, where some young children are visible. The photograph has its title: *"We miss you!"* Who misses whom? Which is the undisclosed message intended by this photographer? In order to conclude such an issue, one has also to present the "pre-expressive" stage of the artist's work, which I shall name here *contextual circumstances.* [See: (Eco 1968, 1994a), italics mine].

The second example is also a photograph taken from the work of the same photographer. A child's face is visible with both of his hands: meanwhile, another hand holding his head can be seen, which presumably is in movement. It has a title too: "*Life is sweet!*". Does this young boy want to transmit a message, or does he show an emotion? Is it a concrete situational issue, or just a reaction to someone or something he may have seen? I shall try exemplifying the applicability of the semiotic method simultaneously in the frames of both examples.



Fig. 2 "Life is Sweet!", Fahredin Spahija.

There is no question that such examples can also be interpreted from an existential point of view. Searching for the existence of the non-existence, (through previously established "pre-existential signs") (Tarasti 2000) may also in this respect represent a semiotically-analyzable paradigm. Issues, however, should be methodologically presented in a gradual process of their analyzing. Here is the explanation for the first example.

After the bombardment of the territory of Serbia in 1999, many houses were emptied, many inhabitants were gone, and a refugee crisis was created. Such a situation caused the ex-Yugoslav Province of Kosovo to change its structure in architectonic, demographic, infrastructural, and linguistic terms, among others.

Many people were killed at that time. Such a crisis (and/or conflictual situation in the mentioned geographical area) had especially been intensified after the Serbian suspension of Kosovo's autonomy in 1989. In the frames of the war crisis we are discussing, understandably many people who were killed were buried elsewhere, in mass graves. Consequently, people—indeed, family members and relatives—could not find the graves of friends or loved ones.

The photograph that we are dealing with shows women sitting down and protesting in front of the Government, as one may suppose. In a smaller photograph, one of them has in her hands, we see some children. Why do we see the children there? Do they want to transmit a message to the viewer?

Such a state of affairs as shown in this photograph remained unchanged for years, as it did not depend on the contexts shown or perceived, but rather, on other matters that belonged to other related contexts. An example of these contexts would be the impossibility of the local government to help people who were in desperate need, and the unwillingness of the Serbian government to undertake actions to resolve such an issue on a humanitarian basis. A relation of contradictoriness [see:(Gremials 1973)] between the two is more than obvious. One can notice a lack of meaning in case issues that are perceived at this level. In order to create a relational attitude, actantial relations should be established. It should be understandable here, that each part or each actant in this "story" told by the photographer, has and/or holds its own narrative element (or, semiotic-ally expressed, narrative structure).

Our second example represents a complex situation. Differing from the first one, which may represent a generally known context, especially for the ones that have "lived' it, the second one may be said to represent a human state of emotionality. Here the semiotic preconditions are already created, owing to the fact that a subjective reaction is visible. Is this boy struggling for something? In my opinion, the context may be disclosed: a counter-emotion based on some sort of a stimulus, which in this instance can have a twofold nature: one, which is owed to an automatic reaction (due to a physical stimulation, which may have been performed unconsciously), and the next owed to a conscious reaction (performed in an emotional response towards what realistically the boy might have experienced). Such a relational attitude, in terms of both reactions opposed to one another

creates a semiotic process which at this stage, relying on hypothetical grounds (as it still relies on levels of abstractions), represents a lack of meaning in the frames of the deep structure.

Naturally, the application process is not yet performed at this stage, either in the first or in the second cases. As we shall see, a process of transformation has to follow, so that such a situation becomes moveable, as well as presentable within the surface structure. Yet one may ask: why should such a visual expression become "moveable"? By this term, except for the foreseen processes of transformation, I intend the gradualness of "becoming", i.e., the changeability from one level to another (in terms of approaching the meaning units).

As we shall see, the transformation that makes the visual expression moveable is due to the necessity of establishing and/or introducing an active subject[9]. It is semiotics' task to provide for determined procedures to deduce meaning, which, understandably, in the field of arts (among other related issues) is frequently decided by determined contextual circumstances.

The mentioned "textual" presentation (and/or representation) through a photograph dependent on its contextual perceiving can certainly deduce a sense of *anxiety,* as one of the potential taxonomies to apply later. The mentioned "anxiety" lets us know that "a wanting to do, a wish to explain", is what preconditions such units, thus ready to utilize the modalization process. Thus, a message that has started the way, on one hand, can be noticed, and on the other, its destination is not yet reachable. Such an established semiotic precondition [see: (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993)] entails the use of the process of modalization. Expressed another way: "the recognition of the tension that characterizes phoria enables us to envision a first representation of the generation of modalities, which presumably become; at the level of narrative syntax, and the modalization of doing and being" (p.9). The preconditions expressed in the above citation allow that a "tensitivity" notion be introduced, which would further transform itself into final meaningful units, which shall later represent their surface structure.

Seeking for a "movability" of states

After establishing a narrative structure (Greimas 1973), or after wishing to reconstruct events so as to reach possible narrative units [italics and paraphrasing mine], (Eco 1994b), we can find ourselves in front of a semiotic situation, which represents an object of our analysis.

The narrative structure in this context means building a story from the "stories lived and stories told" on one hand [see the citation above, in:(Griffin 2003)], whereas on the other, reconstructing events is an applicable methodology in the field of arts generally (as well as specifically) in the field of visual expressions. Basing ourselves in such methodologies, is it not then true that a semiotician can utilize a wider range of interpretational predispositions? It can at least prove two semiotic preconditions as theoretical paradigms: first, that a work of art can be regarded as open, because of its "indetermination" [see: (Eco 1962)], and, second, a semiotic process can be based on epistemological grounds (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993).

Such a semiotically perceived state allows us to conclude that some of the messages are already processed within our examples, whereas some other ones still need to be processed. Methodologically speaking, we are approaching the meta-communicational level, which means that some processes need to be finalized. Such processes, undoubtedly, need to pass through determined semiotically definable stages and/or levels.

A state of anxiety, unwillingness, sadness, is more than visible in the faces of the children shown in the first photograph. The reason to draw the above conclusion lies in the fact that one sees the sitting women, as well as supposedly foresees their waiting for an answer. In a word, the sense of tensitivity can be noticed. That concept should enact a modality in action, which in fact introduces the active subject, ready for the states' transformability. Procedurally speaking, the situation here is in full compliance with what we explained in the previous citation [see: (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993, 9)].

In the second example, we use the strategy of reconstruction of events to establish possible narrative structures. In Eco (1994b) it is named a strategy, and it certainly represents a theoretically-discussed method to analyze narration or situations which can be a subject to inter-textual interventions and various time references (Eco 1994c). Here, though, one can use it for a possible interpretation or for penetrating into the photograph's possible *worlds* [see: (Eco 1994c). A possible world for Eco is a "flow of events" [the paraphrasing is mine, 128]. This idea, in Eco's own formulation, is: "Siccome alcune di queste proprietà o predicati sono *azioni*, un mondo possibile può essere visto anche come un *corso di eventi"*.(Eco 1994, 128) [Or: "because of the fact that some of this proprieties or predicates represent *actions,* a possible world can be also seen as *a course (flow) of events"* {the translation is mine, italics as in the quoted work}].

Interpreting a work of art, to the extent, it is semiotically possible, includes imagined states, which would assist their movement from one state to another. The reliability in the states, so as to reach the transformational point (after the peak of tensitivity), entails the existence of the subject's semiotic doing [the paraphrasing is mine; see: (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993)]. Such would be the way to perform the application within our second example.

Is this boy touching a glass wall? Can he not escape? Whose shadow can be seen behind him? What is the constraint behind and/or in front of him, provoking his impossibility of communication with the rest of the world? These are the preconditions for the modalization process, as described: which is a way to introduce the active or knowable subject.

What one can hypothetically presume in such a context is that the boy is "closed", or prohibited to get out of where he is. The title of this photograph, provided by the author "Life is sweet", is in fact in a complete relation of contradiction with what we actually see in it. In addition, one can recognize here the known contradiction between *appearance* and *reality* [see: (Eco 1994b; A. J. Greimas 1973)]. The axis of reality is represented by the "text" of this photograph; or, one might better note, by what I regard to be a semiotic object, i.e. the conscious reactions of the boy, as explained above. The axis of appearance, on the other hand, is represented by the "textual message"

of the photograph, which in essence is its title, i.e. the possible unconscious reaction of the boy, as feedback information to what he might have seen. The impossibility of avoiding the situation — as well as the gestures of the child — implies a context experienced by him, which, as the photograph shows, is not disclosed to us. Owing to this last reason, an interpretation must occur. Our semiotic comprehension enables, as we said, transformation, as well as the use of the subject of doing. Thus such a subject (which here we shall name an active subject)[10] takes into account either the relevant contextual circumstances or the undisclosed structures (which may not be visible in the example). Taking all the elements together as well as enacting a semiotics of action with them, results in the changeability or transformational procedures or, as the semiotics of passions provides for, a transformation from the state of affairs to the state of feelings (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993).

Towards a state of feelings: some possible passionate experiences

Differing from a state of affairs, a state of feelings regards a surface structure. In other words, a subject emerges after the establishment of the relations in axes, as well as after the modalization process described above, either expressed in a semiotic square or expressed because of relational attitudes among actants. "Then it would be possible to deduce modal syntax of the passional configurations from tensive modulations and the homogeneous interpretation can be proposed of all modalizations" (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993,17). In a word, the mentioned modalities[11], such as: "wanting to do", "wishing to explain", "wanting to become", represent the beginning of the subject's semiotic doing, or the process of transformation itself. That 'someone' and/or "something" (which) who enacts the moving process (or, semiotically, the transformation process) is, as a matter of fact, the active and/or the knowable subject. Let us now return to our own chosen examples.

I shall call an 'active subject" *the one* [my emphasis] who is presumably holding and/or moving the child's head, in the second example. This is due to the fact that, besides their modalization, subjects can be "virtualized" (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993,26). One can thus open doors to the imagined situations semiotically described, so as to produce passion taxonomy: "In other words, the so-called active subject's being is characterized by the realization of the performance itself, a characterization that in no way bears on 'modal competence' proper" (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993,27). In conclusion, the active subject here shall represent the subject of doing in distinction to the subject of being, which is represented through the child's non-verbal expressivity. Above I have called such an expression, such an emotional reaction, a state of anxiety and/or of being anxious. In such circumstances, in the frames of the reality axis (which is predominant in this example, and shall deduce its semantic units, as it belongs to the conscious child's reactions), a contradiction may be noticed between the subject of doing and that of being, thereby bringing about a state of anxiety as a manifested semantic unit in the surface structure. This finally is ready for its transformation into a state of feelings. In order to emanate a "passional configuration" (see: A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993), one has to foresee simulacra, which means building "modal simulacra". The deduced changeability of states, in my view, regards introducing

and/or emanating such notions, which may only be hypothesized or provided for by the semiotics of passion, thus proving its epistemological competence. In conclusion, only such kind of modeling narrativity (into decomposable chains of patterns) can bring about passion taxonomy (specifically speaking, in contexts where such structures are not initially evident). Out of such stimulation, the child transforms himself into an impassionate subject, ready for passionate experiences. Thus, if a conscious stimulus has occurred, as we suppose, then the subject of doing causes the child in the photograph to produce a lack of meaning. It looks to us as if the child were questioning: "Why do you do this to me, why can't I be at your place?" His "wanting to do" means enabling himself to communicate with the rest of the world. The passions we can deduce in this context are *envy* and *greed.* Let us now return to our first example.

We have already established a relation of contradictoriness between the "two sides of the story", as we explained in the first example. I shall call an axis of appearance what can be seen and/or visualized in the first example: the protesting women and the sad expression, visible in the faces of the children. I shall call an axis of reality the impossibility and/or the gradualness of the problem's solution. In difference to the first axis, the second one is not visible to viewers of the photograph. The action element is provided by the "other contexts", as above, which can only be hypothesized. Out of such a deep structure (as we have supposed), gradual becoming of the semantic units can be deduced. The "becoming" finally expresses an attempt of the semantic units' establishing in this example. In conclusion, one should ask: which would then be the semiotically possible result?

To our understanding, the phenomenon, which emerges because of a determined social group's protesting (in this instance), can only be taxonomically resolved in terms of its gradualness. This occurs in the following way: if one single relative of the protesting people has been found, it means a relief, a pleasure, within a state of anxiety, and/or expectedness, which can be seen in our first example. Therefore, anxiety, anger, hatred is what should be placed in the axis of appearance, and expectedness in that of reality. I shall call an active subject in the context of this example, *the one* who intermediates the return of the dead bodies to the protesting close relatives. If one has to name such semiotically perceived "active subject" it has to be clear that, within the context of the first example, the internationally significant factors in the situation (i.e. the politically intervening subjects), have to represent that notion. The situation in question, as it should be clear, remains partially resolved. In conclusion, the repetitive passions shall prevail as long as a long-term contextual solution occurs.

Conclusion

From both of the examples provided one can conclude that the semiotic method is definitely applicable in the field of visual arts generally, as well as within images as artistic expressions, in specific instances. One has to remark in addition that not only one single semiotic approach within the execution of the signification process is possible. This hypothesis mentioned as a final and procedural performance of a semiotic function has to be justified.

First, uniting form and meaning, as a characteristic of what used to be called "semiology" [among other related issues, see: (Saussure 1959)], shall for us represent an applicable methodology for the following fact — seen or experienced visual impressions (either conceptualized as impulses, or, parts of determined nervous synapses within human brain, or, eventually chaotic and unprocessed signs) get gradually processed. This occurs due to the communicational processes accomplished. Each seen segment is being added a meaning, representing either a result of a certain motivation or a result of a presumed factual situation. Consequently, this vision would justify the relation between the signifier and the signified.

Second, not only in terms of images (but also in other forms of visual expression), one performs determined psychological processes, but they, in turn, may be interpreted, such as was the case in our analysis. Greimas' contribution brought about the recognition as well as the conceptualizing of the subject and the subjectivizing processes (in the frames of their "epistemological' perceiving)[12] within the semiotic method in general. By the term "interpretation" in the context of our examples, I mean such an imprecision in terms of semantic units deducing that allows other interpretative and cognitive possibilities as processed results. This is due, above all, to the openness of the work of art, and its "indetermination". Eco's (1962) terming of this concept emerges from the multifold nature of conceptualizing a work of art, thus aiming at the difference, and/or differentiation of its constituent parts as a semiotic concept. It confirms the thesis that there is no such a thing as a unique or a uniform perception and/or vision of the objects and subjects around us. It is for such reasons that I consider that the chains of transformational units, aiming at a variety of semantic results, represent an omnipresence of the applicability of the semiotic method, thus as well, contributing to the "unlimited process of semiosis" (see: Peirce 1960; Eco 1962).

Endnotes:

1. These terms belonging to Greimas and Fontanille (1993) shall be explicated later in this contribution.
2. This term is mine. By "moving" from one state to another, I mean the process of transformation, not in the Chomskyian sense only, but as well in a sense of performing an action.
3. It should be observed here that Piaget implies "reading" and "interpreting" images, even at the very early stages of a child's development: to be precise, starting from the age of 18 months.
4. It should be understandable that such a thesis can be supported by arguments such as in the case of biosemiotics. (See: Merrell 1996) As far as the motivational attitude of such signs' processing is concerned, it may belong to an interpretative process which, in terms of the artistic process (and/or in terms of other semiotically discussable contexts), may overcome what one calls a semiotic process in terms, naturally, of their communicative competence. If issues are put on cognitive grounds, however, then interpretation as well becomes a part of the semiotic process (due to a possible multilayered meaning's deduction, (such as explained, for instance, by Greimas, 1973).
5. Such as in linguistically and psychologically based semiotics (See: Saussure 1959).
6. Such as in philosophically based semiotics, (See: Peirce 1960).
7. The last sentence is not Griffin's own. As quoted in the original: Pearce and Pearce: "Transcendent Storytelling".
8. Fahredin Spahija authors the photographs. His collection of 14 photographs is named "Portraits" ("Portrete"), published in Prishtina, The Kosova Art Gallery, Kosovo, December 2010.

9. Another term used by Greimas and Fontanille (1993) is "knowable subject'.
10. Similar to the "knowable subject", provided by Greimas and Fontanille (1993).
11. Alternatively: "modal expressions". This term is mine, and it is aimed at explaining Greimas's and Fontanille's concepts.
12. For other matters related to a semiotic process resulting into a subjectivity as a philosophical concept, thus contributing to the process of semiosis, (see: Deely 2009). I distinguish between the two ways of a semiotic treatment of the 'subject" and "object"; it is in conclusion, for these reasons that the matter here is not elaborated in details.

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Cicero and Libertarianism

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Abstract:

In this essay, I focus on Cicero as the father of libertarian private property entitlements and how his position on that matter connects to his outlook on natural law, the common good, the primary function of the state, and the class structure of Roman society. Finally, I provide a summary evaluation of Cicero's aristocratic conservatism that concludes that, unfortunately, at times even the greatest Romans forgot that where human beings are concerned our most resplendent excellences, if torqued too tightly, can degenerate into our most vile shortcomings.

Keywords: class structure, class warfare, common good, economic redistribution, libertarianism, principle of proportionate equality, principle of rectification.

To overrate the historical influence of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) is a formidable challenge. He was recognized throughout the centuries after his death as a "leading culture-hero of the age; revered as a great philosopher and superb stylist, hailed as a distinguished popularizer, and praised as a humanistic skeptic who scourged superstition; a courageous statesmen and dedicated patriot, the ardent defender of liberty against tyranny". (Wood 1988, 3)

Cicero was all of these things and much more as evidenced by the impact his work exerted on the likes of Machiavelli, Grotius, Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, Hume, Smith, Burke, Adams, and Jefferson, among countless others.

In this essay, I focus on Cicero as the father of libertarian private property entitlements and how his position on that matter connects to his outlook on natural law, the common good, the primary function of the state, and the class structure of Roman society. Finally, I provide a summary evaluation of Cicero's aristocratic conservatism that concludes that, unfortunately, at times even the greatest Romans forgot that where human beings are concerned our most resplendent excellences, if torqued too tightly, can degenerate into our most vile shortcomings.

Libertarian Private Property Entitlements. Cicero celebrated an aristocratic society grounded in class distinctions. A regiment of social and political principles anchored this conviction.

- The preservation and maintenance of private property is the primary motivation animating the establishment of states and municipalities. (Cicero 2000, 2. 73)
- Amassing property for survival needs and in order to fulfill desires is instinctive and therefore natural for human beings who distinguish common from private property prior to the inauguration of states. (Cicero 2000, 1.11-12, 21-22, 151)
- However, property is not private by nature, but private property arises from enduring occupation, the spoils of war, by contractual arrangements, by law, and other conventional means. (Cicero 2000, 1.21)
- The primary responsibility of state officials is to ensure "that the individual keeps what is his". (Cicero 2000, 2.73)
- National stability requires harmony among the various socio-economic classes that it turn presupposes that "every individual should maintain free and undisturbed control of his possessions". (Cicero 2000, 2.78)
- The imposition of property taxes, cancellation of existing debts, agrarian laws regulating the division of public lands, and other redistributive intervention of government undermine the foundations of the state. Such political machinations are tantamount to a theft of private property by one's neighbor. (Cicero 2000, 2.78-84)
- Rendering aid to the destitute is almost always a function of private charity and not a responsibility of the state. (Cicero 2000, 1. 49)

These seven principles constitute Cicero's libertarianism regarding private property and its proper relationship to state government. He provides historical evidence, theoretical ruminations, and practical speculations in support of his conclusions.

Historical Evidence. As historical evidence of the folly and injustice of state redistribution he cites the agrarian law reform proposed by tribune Lucius Marcius Philippus (141-73 BC). Although the redistribution measure was defeated in the senate, Cicero viewed the effort as paradigmatic of destructive demagoguery. Particularly noteworthy was that Philippus, a preeminent orator of his day, argued that in a country of around 500,000 inhabitants "less than two thousand persons in the state owned property." Although Cicero did not dispute or even address Philippus' calculations, he was outraged at the self-serving populism that presumably underwrote the tribune's message and the class warfare thereby threatened: "This was a pernicious speech, promoting as it did the equalization of property; what could be more baneful than that?" (Cicero 2000, 2. 73) Whether Philippus actually proposed the equalization of property or whether Cicero was extrapolating wildly from the trajectory of the tribune's remarks is unclear.

Cicero also reminds readers of the political disaster that followed the popular reforms of the Gracchi brothers, who "failed to gain the approval of good men, and in death they are numbered among those who deserved to be slain" (Cicero 2000, 2.43). Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (163-133 BC) and his brother Gaius (154-121 BC) were tribunes who over the course of years proposed a host of agrarian reforms and economic redistribution policies. Much public land had come into

the hands of a few wealthy proprietors and speculators, who had enlarged their holdings further by repelling peasants from their farms. These displaced peasants became the idle poor as slaves worked their former lands. Wage-labor was scarce in a slave society and the disenfranchised peasants became a class without an economic home — lacking the property qualifications to enter the military, lacking highly specialized skills, and stripped of their modest territories.

Tiberius Gracchus invoked an obscure ancient Roman decree that limited the amount of acreage owned by any one person and proposed that the holdings of the wealthiest land barons be carved up and redistributed to the urban poor consistent with that archaic precept. His recommendation met an icy reception in the senate, which consisted of many of the prosperous land barons whose holdings would be subject to confiscation. These are the "good men" whose "approval" eluded the Gracchi. Class warfare broke out in earnest. Eventually, Tiberius and a few hundred of his supporters were battered fatally in the Roman Forum.

A decade later, Gaius Gracchi enlarging his base beyond the urbane poor to a segment of the equestrian class, lobbied for expanded political rights for provincials and generous grain price rates for all citizens, as well increasing prosecutions of senators malfeasant in their duties while administering the provinces. After a lengthy period of oscillating political fortunes, Gaius committed suicide after learning that a mob of assassins was approaching. For agitating against the political and social *status quo*, and thereby promoting class warfare approaching civil war, the Gracchi were numbered, for Cicero, "among those who deserved to be slain."

In contrast, Cicero extolled the virtues of those who either rolled back government redistribution efforts or who were obdurately opposed to state meddling in private economic affairs. Accordingly, Marcus Octavius, a political rival of Tiberius Gracchus, and who later repealed the reforms of Gaius Gracchus, gains special mention (Cicero 2000, 2.72), as does Aratus of Sicyon (271-213 BC) for restoring the fortunes of hundreds of formerly wealthy exiles who had been disposed of their holdings by tyrants. (Cicero 2000, 2.81)

Cicero may, however, recognize an exception to his general prohibition against the redistribution of private property. He first rejects, seeming applying natural law along Stoic lines, the proposition that a wise man taking sustenance away from an idle, useless person in order to feed himself and prevent his own death is morally permissible: the biological survival of the wise man is not more important than the prohibition against harming others for his own benefit. (Cicero 2000, 3.29) But Cicero's conclusion changes if the wise man can greatly advance the common good and the state generally. Here the wise man is justified in depriving neighbors in order to advance his interests but only from the motive of promoting the common good.

> If on the other hand you are the sort of person who can greatly benefit the state and society in general by remaining alive, and if with this motive in mind you deprive your neighbor of something, your deed is not blameworthy . . . to desert the path of communal benefit is opposed to nature, because it is unjust . . . what is vital for life should be diverted from one who is idle and useless to one who is

> wise and good and brave, for the death of the wise man will be a great loss to the common good. (Cicero 2000, 3.30-31)

Cicero apparently considers these cases on only a *personal* level. What one individual, anointed as "wise and good and brave," should do when requiring the goods of another person, disparaged as "idle and useless," for survival. He even adds the obvious addendum: "Always supposing, that is, that self-regard and love of self do not exploit this ordinance as a pretext for committing injustice" (O 3.31). Yes, the strong human proclivity in such circumstances is to conclude that (a) I merit the designations "wise and good and brave;" (b) you are "idle and useless;" and (c) upon my survival rests the salutary future of the common good.

Cicero also observes that "if a good man could avoid dying of cold by robbing that cruel and monstrous tyrant Phalaris [the cruel, allegedly cannibalistic despot of ancient Akragas] of his clothing, surely he would do it." (Cicero 2000, 3. 29) Although he announces descriptively —what the person in need of clothing would do — Cicero seemingly endorses the actions of the "good man" prescriptively.

Combining the differing conclusions in the three cases, Cicero's moral position may well be captured: natural law requires that the survival needs of one person, even if "wise and good and brave" are insufficient morally to justify depriving another person, even one who is "idle and useless." Even the idle and useless maintain the rights of fellowship within the human species. However, the survival needs of the "wise, good, and brace" are sufficient morally to justify depriving a person, such as a cruel tyrant, who has renounced and eviscerated shared fellowship within the human species. Finally, the survival needs of a "wise and good and brave" person whose death would greatly enervate or whose continued existence would greatly amplify the common good are sufficient morally to justify depriving another person who is "idle and useless," even though such a person maintains the rights of fellowship within the human species. Accordingly, Cicero's interpretation of natural law upholds the interest of society and the fellowship of the human race and communal benefit in all three cases.

From such observations nothing directly and logically follows concerning *state* action. But given the overriding Ciceronian purpose of the state — the preservation and maintenance of private property — to conclude that under the circumstances at issue the state should not only refuse to punish the "wise and good and brave" purloiner but perhaps even facilitate the transfer of goods in the prescribed cases is not unreasonable. This is especially relevant as a way to curb the partially and bias inevitably accompanying merely personal assessments of the merits of specific cases and conditions. At least in principle, a state mechanism for adjudicating such transfer of property claims could offer a measure of objectivity and produce a record of precedents for future decision-making. In that vein, the following, admittedly imprecise, principle stands as a Ciceronian exception to his general prohibition against state redistribution of private property.

- To transfer property in service of the survival of a person who would greatly benefit the state and wider community is sometimes permissible. (Cicero 2000, 3.30-31)

Cicero is perhaps the first proponent of a generally libertarian vision of property entitlements. He does, of course, evince decidedly non-libertarian faith in the common good, state action, and fellowship of the human species that goes beyond the confines of protecting natural, negative rights. But his audacious celebration of the establishment and maintenance of private property as the primary function of the state, and his implacable opposition to economic redistribution schemes should warm the sockets of flinty, libertarian palates. Even Cicero's probable exception to the prohibition against state economic redistribution relates only to the few (such as Cicero?) whose survival offers *great* benefit or prevents *great* harm to the common good.

Theoretical Ruminations. Cicero's theoretical ruminations involve additional social and political principles and corollaries to his libertarian property axioms.

- Although all human beings are morally equal, they are not factually and socially equal. (Cicero 1998, R 1. 43, 53, 69; 2. 39-40, 56-57; L 3.24-25, 28, 38-39)
- Principle of Proportionate Equality: social and political understanding and implementation of existing, significant factual differences in quality, merit, and desert are crucial requirements of justice. (Cicero 1998, R 1. 43, 53, 69; 2. 39-40, 56-57; L 3.24-25, 28, 38-39)
- Any state or government that obliterates social distinctions or that aspires to a classless society thereby violates natural law justice. (Cicero 1998, R 1. 43, 53, 69; 2. 39-40, 56-57; L 3.24-25, 28, 38-39)
- Proportionate equality is attained when citizens are ranked by *dignitas* (worth, merit, reputation) from the lowest to the highest into a scale of political and legal orders. Each citizen occupies a particular station in this rank order. (Cicero 1998, R 1. 43, 69)
- Every citizen has the opportunity for some political input, but those of higher *dignitas* have conclusive authority. (Cicero 1998, R 1. 43, 53, 69; 2. 39-40, 56-57; L 3.24-25, 28, 38-39)

Practical Speculations. Cicero's practical speculations include the suspicion that currying the favor of the masses through economic redistribution is counterproductive to a demagogue's political designs. The wealthy who have been disadvantaged by redistribution remain socially influential and will be resentful, while the poor who have been advantaged will be insufficiently grateful and remain socially insignificant. Thus, economic redistribution will stymie the social strategy of its proponents:

> [T]he person who is robbed of his property becomes an enemy, and the man who is given it goes so far as to pretend that he did not want it; above all, he hides delight at the remission of his debts in case it appears that he was unable to meet them. As for the man who has sustained the injustice, he both remembers and makes known his resentment, and even if those who have dishonestly acquired the money outnumber those from who it has been unjustly taken, they are not on that account also

> more influential. It is not numbers that count in these situations, but the weight that men bring to bear. (Cicero 2000, 2.79)

Cicero's libertarian property axioms and his social and political principles foster ramifications. To label them logical "implications" may in certain cases be too strong, but they nevertheless arise from his deepest commitments.

- Property holdings, lineage, and overall wealth are prime indicators of social superiority.
- Success in Rome is connected tightly to factual and social superiority.
- Poverty is a stigma that signals larger failings of character (e.g., dishonor, idleness, moral deficiency, criminality, baseness).
- Aspiring to equalize the distribution of private property is unnatural and unjust because doing so ignores the natural rank order of human beings, as well as qualitative differences in the respective *dignitas* of human beings.
- Given the justness of differential property holdings, human beings should be content with their station in the rank order and not manifest resentment or envy toward those of higher economic or political status.

Having digested a generous portion of Cicero's philosophical entrée, populist historians often castigate the erstwhile senator's unsqueamish invocation of aristocratic privilege. For example, Michael Parenti offers the following harsh but instructive evaluation:

> A self-enriching slaveholder, slumlord, and senator, Cicero deplored even the palest moves toward democracy . . . He regarded the people as worthless groundlings, akin to criminals and degenerates, 'the common herd,' the 'masses and worst elements . . . many of them simply out for revolution.' He denounced those of pedestrian occupation, 'the artisans and shopkeepers and all that kind of scum' who align themselves with dangerous demagogues, 'the wretched half-starved commoners who attend mass meetings and suck the blood of the treasury.' To him their restiveness was an outgrowth of their own personal malevolence rather than a response to unforgiving material circumstances . . . During his tenure [as consul], Cicero lifted not a finger on behalf of the people and vigorously opposed all reform proposals. (Parenti 2004, 87-88, 92)

Principle of Rectification**.** Any libertarian or quasi-libertarian view on private property must confront a pesky empirical problem: No state has ever enjoyed a context where everyone has all and only that property to which they are entitled within the libertarian normative framework. Critics need not appeal or attempt to justify non-libertarian moral or political principles in order to insist that a principle of rectification is required to supplant the basic libertarian program regarding the distribution of private property. On the contrary, all they need do is invoke a form of immanent critique: reminding libertarians that they must fulfil the promises of their own political agenda. In the instant case, where goods and property were acquired or transferred in violation of Ciceronian principles of natural law, redistribution is required in the interests of justice. The vexing snag is that

a broad principle of rectification, one that could genuinely set things right, may well require governmental intervention into economic distribution far too extensive to maintain libertarian process values generally, while a narrow principle of rectification, one that is administratively plausible, may well be insufficient to restore libertarian understandings of just acquisition and transfer. Thus, libertarianism seems ambushed between the Scylla of self-destructive intercession and the Charybdis of ersatz reclamation.

Cicero does not address the matter directly, but he does offer and analyze an historical example that showcases the direction of his thought on this matter. (Cicero 2000, 2.81-83). He warmly endorses the rectification actions of Aratus of Sicyon as a model of reasonable negotiation and fair economic dealing. To summarize Cicero's account: For fifty years, Sicyon had suffered tyrannical rule. The patriot, Aratus, clandestinely entered the city, through surprise attack he defeated the extant despot, Nicocles, and seized control and restored political freedom. Aratus invited six hundred former citizens, who had been exiled by the tyranny, back into the municipality. Members of this throng were among the wealthiest residents of the *status quo ante*. What was Aratus to do? He could neither welcome the returning exiles as the permanently dispossessed nor could he capriciously evict a generation of extant landowners in Sicyon who had acquired the properties of the exiles and whose reasonable economic expectations were settled.

> But then [Aratus] took note of the severe problem posed by the ownership of properties. On the one hand, he considered it wholly unjust that the exiles whom he himself had restored, and whose possessions others had seized, should be deprived of them, but on the other, he thought it hardly reasonable to dispossess those whose ownership was of fifty years' standing, for after that lengthy period many properties were possessed innocently by inheritance or by purchase or by dowries. (Cicero 2000, 2.81)

Thus, Aratus faced squarely the problem of crafting a principle of rectification in a tense political circumstance. Cicero applauds the solution Aratus hatched: "He accordingly decided that [the extant] occupants should not be deprived of [their properties], but that the previous owners should be paid compensation." (Cicero 2000, 2.81) Only one hurdle to justice remained: funding! Aratus understood keenly what contemporary libertarians are fond of reminding us: economic goods are not "manna from heaven." (Nozick 1974, 198) How might the successful warrior secure the money to implement his Solomonic resolution of repatriation?

Aratus journeyed to King Ptolemy II of Alexandria, informed him of the situation, and secured a "huge subvention of money from the wealthy king." (Cicero 2000, 2.82) Aratus then returned to Sicyon and fashioned an appropriate process for judging the land problem on a case-by-case basis.

> He called in fifteen leading citizens to advise him, and with them he reviewed the cases of those who were occupying properties not their own, and those who had lost theirs. He put valuations on the

> properties, and was able to persuade some to accept money and to abandon their occupancy, and others to regard it as more convenient to be paid the value of their properties rather than to have them restored to them. Harmony thus prevailed; all went off without complaint. (Cicero 2000, 2.82-83)

In this fashion, through seraphic jaw-boning, affable arm-twisting, conjoined to the munificence of a friendly, foreign patron, Aratus earns Cicero's highest tribute: "What a great man [Aratus] was, worthy of having been born a Roman!" (Cicero 2000, 2.83) We must imagine Aratus basking in posthumous glory. Cicero, ever the political opportunist, cannot resist contrasting the wisdom of Aratus with the ignoble confiscations of property transacted by Lucius Cornelius Sulla (139-78 BC) and Gaius Julius Caesar (100-44 BC).

And so the story ends, happily. But a principle of rectification we still lack. In Aratus' case it turns out manna does flow, not from heaven surely, but from the coffers of an opulent, distant monarch. What the episode highlights and which Cicero seemingly endorses is the need for occasional economic rectification through the agency of government. However, we must agree that congenial negotiations between aggrieved citizens and state officials, underwritten by a "huge subvention of money" from foreign potentates falls far short of a practical, general principle of rectification — if for no other reason than the number, resources, and magnanimity of well-disposed alien rulers are markedly limited.

A commonly invoked principle of rectification, broadly consistent with libertarianism, would restrict compensation only to specific individuals whose property rights were violated. The aspiration of such a precept would be to establish the economic pattern that would have existed but for the unjust acquisition or transfer of money or goods. Rights to rectification would vest only in those directly victimized and would thus evaporate rapidly over time. Such a principle could not claim to set things right as such; the vestiges of a measure of past injustice would persist. But this principle may well be the best libertarianism can do given the practicalities and exigencies at issue. After all, libertarians, might argue if one is satisfied only with perfect procedural and substantive distributive justice, he or she boards an express train to the *cul-de-sac* of permanent disappointment. No political program, even in theory, can ensure that ideal.

Of course, virtually insurmountable epistemological problems abound when trying to implement such a principle on a large-scale. The three most obvious uncertainties are relevant time boundaries, measure of damages, and funding of justified claims. How far into the past should rectification peer? Given the currency in slogans such as "behind every great fortune lies a great crime" and "there is a little bit of larceny in us all," we can probably all lodge reasonable claims to being victims of the effects of oppression and wrong-doing should we travel back along ancestral histories. Not even the most rabid libertarian insists that all (almost all? most?) past economical exchanges comply with just principles of acquisition and transfer. Thus, the choice of time boundaries is critical. Also, the measure of damages in most cases of rectification is unclear, especially

the farther back in time of the economic injustice and the more speculative the effects of the inequity.

Robert Nozick offers the following, admittedly vague, advice:

> The principle of rectification presumably will make use of its best estimate of subjunctive information about what would have occurred (or a probability distribution over what might have occurred, using the expected value) if the injustice had not taken place. If the actual description of holdings turns out not to be one of the descriptions yielded by the principle, then one of the descriptions yielded must be realized. (Nozick 1974, 152-153)

That such quantification would appeal to Romans is unlikely. More probable is the sort of negotiating exemplified by Aratus wherein the respective parties strive for a mutually acceptable accommodation to a gnarly quandary bereft of a precise solution.

Finally, whatever time horizons and damage measures are in play, the critical question is funding of legitimate claims. Cicero at times is sensitive to the need for a modest economic safety net or some level of welfare provisions for the destitute. Beyond private charity, he advises funding such projects from tapping the resources of the usual sources: the provinces. (Cicero 2000, 2.74)

Most important, Cicero is not trying to solve an unresolvable philosophical problem, the theoretically proper scope of a principle of rectification. Instead, he confronts a practical exercise. Given what he does say and the trajectory of his thought, I would conjecture the following principle might be acceptable to him:

- Where significant and clear economic gain has occurred in violation of principles of just acquisition and transfer, rectification may occur under the following circumstances: the victims (or, possibly, their direct heirs in the next generation) of said violation are living complainants and file timely claims against the direct beneficiaries (or, possibly, their direct heirs in the next generation) or perpetrators (or, possibly, their direct heirs in the next generation) of the economic transgression; the measure of damages, if possible, will be determined by negotiation of the affected parties under the supervision of a designated senator; if negotiation is not possible, then a designated board of state officials will determine the measure of damages after compiling all relevant information; funding for awards will derive, if possible, from the direct beneficiary or perpetrator (or their direct heirs in the next generation) of the economic transgression; if this is not practicable, then the state will maintain a compensation reserve endowed by provincial revenues.

The resulting program falls far short of establishing a just economic scheme, even on Ciceronian principles. Countless past unjust economic acquisitions and transfers will remain unrequited. But an implementable rectification project must include a sunset clause or, in effect, a statute of limitations on the filing of claims. For Cicero such a project should not deplete the tenuous

state treasury, nor require taxing citizens generally, which for him would constitute yet another unjust acquisition and transfer. He is less fretful about putting the arm on provincials who presumably gain so much from their Roman affiliation.

Cicero has at least one advantage over contemporary libertarians. Although he is perhaps the first acolyte of libertarian property rights, he is not otherwise an advocate of a minimal state. On the contrary, political and military activities, honorably conducted in service to Rome, are the most reliable channels to merited personal glory. Thus, where, as in the case of Aratus, extensive state involvement is required for economic rectification that poses no conceptual challenge to Cicero's perception of the proper functions of the state. Moreover, as Philippus' oration reminds us, the number of Roman landowners far exceeded the sum of slaves, disenfranchised peasants, artisans, and the like. Where past economic distribution had occurred, because of the presumably despicable efforts of the likes of the Gracchi, Sulla, and Caesar, such unjust meddling into the arrangement of private property is also eligible for rectification under Ciceronian principles. The principle of rectification, then, does not apply merely to redressing further advantages the wealthy have gained over the poor, but also the reverse. Indeed, Cicero is a tenacious champion of minority property rights — always prepared to defend the economic claims of the few "good men" against the thievery of demagogic politicians and the envious horde of "idle and useless" human parasites!

Common Good. The expressions "common good" and "public interest" exude prodigious rhetorical currency. What person of high rectitude could sneer at such invocations? The most cynical pundits are prone to sentimentality in the face of such concepts, even if retaining their skepticism about their political realization. Few major historical thinkers summon the "common good" more frequently than Marcus Tullius Cicero. How, though, does the Ciceronian common good cash out?

Surely, Cicero does not equate common good to the aggregation of all individual interests in the state or to the sum of the interests of all individual citizens. Cicero disparages appeals to numerical equality and the equal consideration espoused by representative democracies. As the apostle of proportionate equality, Cicero fashions the common good in accord with aristocratic Roman values of the rank order of *dignitas*. Despite the fact that the Roman senate was comprised of around 600 men and the entire aristocratic class (senators, equestrians, and decurions) in Italy consisted of just over 42,000 men, Cicero, when applying his principle of proportionate equality, characteristically finds their defining power of the common good greater than those of citizens at large. Elsewhere I described it thusly:

> The Roman aristocracy had hijacked the common good: What was good for the *optimates* ["best men"] and their fellow travelers was good for Rome. This theft was not contrived cynically and self-consciously. Instead, three ideological dimensions converged to design the result. First, the romance of civil socialization: the grand parables and heroic epics of how brave Romans and founding fathers had resisted kingly oppression both internal and external in forging centuries of world supremacy. Second, isolation from the core of Roman life: the aristocracy willingly profited from slave labor and

> poorly paid free labor, but had little or no understanding of the legitimate grievances less fortunate people embodied. Third, the universalizing of their own class interests as the common good of the entire polity: the aristocracy deluded itself that the privileges and prerogatives its members enjoyed were the natural outcome of the rule of law neutrally applied. (Belliotti 2009, 165)

For Cicero and those of his ilk, the stability of the state and the well-being of the entire Romanized world depended upon the "best men" successfully pursuing and attaining traditional Roman values: engaging in ruthless, zero-sum, competition in military and political settings; striving for deserved, enduring glory, as well as fame, honor, and *dignitas*, by advancing the goals of the state; and emulating and amplifying the glorious deeds of past Roman icons. For Cicero, the principle of proportionate equality was not a device allowing the most privileged Romans to merely enlarge their own material coffers. That of itself would not advance the common good. Instead, the principle of proportionality was required to establish and maintain a state powerful enough to confer security, order, glory, and the splendor of external validation upon the entire body politic.

Roman Class Structure. Around the time of Cicero, almost 1,000,000 people (of whom over 300,000 were slaves) populated the city of Rome; Italy contained 6,000,000 inhabitants (2,000,000 of whom were slaves); and the total population of the entire Roman Empire was almost 50,000,000 (almost 20% of the world's population). (Wood 1988, 16-17)

Italy remained mostly a rural society with around 70% of the population residing in rustic locales, engaged mainly in agriculture. The provinces outside of Italy were even more densely inhabited by peasants. Combining the statistics in Italy with those of the provinces brings the total population engaged in agriculture to over 80% of the total population of about fifty million.

Thus, as described by Neal Wood:

> Agricultural land remained the foundation of the economy and agricultural wealth derived from the exertions of independent and dependent peasants and agrarian slaves was the foundation of power and prestige. A very small, leisured, aristocratic class, whose members were of varying degrees of wealth and influence, owned or controlled the productive land of Roman Italy and had succeeded in dominating state and society. (Wood 1988, 16)

The ruling political and social class in Rome, the aristocracy, consisted of three strata of the "best men" and their families. At the pinnacle of the aristocratic hierarchy were the 600 hundred senators, whose *dignitas* was grounded in their genealogy, wealth, education, and public accomplishments. Their massive "collective wealth came from inheritance, rents, the exploitation of slave labor on large landed estates, commercial investment at home and abroad, and the enormous profits reaped from holding posts in the provinces." (Wood 1988, 16) A significant measure of the "profits" garnered from administering the provinces arose from taxing provincials exorbitantly, confiscating their property, and lending money at usurious rates. (To his credit, Cicero's provincial

administration, as a quaestor of Western Sicily, was a model of fairness, honesty, compassion, and economic austerity.)

The second aristocratic rung, one enjoying far less prestige and influence than the senatorial fraternity, consisted of about 2,000 equestrians. Some were quite wealthy, but they lacked the noble lineage and higher political connections distinguishing senators: "Most equestrians were country squires, living on their estates and perhaps owning a townhouse in Rome . . . the richest . . . made large fortunes by being public contractors, engaging for private profit in numerous state enterprises and services: provisioning, building, mining, banking, operating the postal system; and collecting taxes, custom duties, and rents from public lands. Yet their wealth was firmly rooted in landed property." (Wood 1988, 16-17) Other members of this category engaged in private banking and commercial trading.

The third stratum on the aristocratic hierarchy was the decurion class (not to be confused with Roman cavalry officers designated by the same title). The decurions were "the one hundred leading proprietors in each of the 434 municipalities [of Italy] who sat in the local councils". (Wood 1988, 17) The decurions were the most powerful local politicians who oversaw public contracts, public entertainment, religious rituals and festivals, and tax collection within their city.

Beneath the aristocratic strata were the seemingly boundless swarms of peasants, urban poor (consisting of freeborn, mostly displaced peasants, and more recently freedmen), and slaves. Within the city of Rome, more than 90% of the population consisted of urban poor and slaves. Outside of Rome, around 60% of the inhabitants were peasants. Their lives anticipated Thomas Hobbes' imaginings of life within a state of nature: nasty, brutish, and, too often, short. Engaged overwhelmingly in a bestial struggle to survive, peasants worked the land of the leisured rich and allowed these "best men" to vie for eternal, deserved glory. They labored without expectation of upward mobility along with considerable anxiety about retaining their meager *status quo*: "For all his labors in the service of the ruling class, the peasant . . . was rewarded with [economic] displacement by the increasing use of agrarian slaves; dispossession of his land, often through forcible seizure and confiscation, and of his rights to common land; indebtedness; and ever greater hardship and poverty." (Wood 1988, 18)

The urban poor, especially those inhabiting the horrifying slums of Rome, were menial laborers, construction workers, tradesmen, and professionals. They were the butchers, bakers, candlestick-makers, dock workers, carters, builders, metal workers, teachers, painters, household agents, and most everything else. Even the more fortunate of these sons did not rise to middle-class status. Only a precious few gained the resources and connections to move up the social hierarchy.

At the bottom of Roman society were, of course, slaves, who amounted to more than 30% of the population of the city of Rome. They performed functions similar to those sustained by peasants and the urban poor, but endured lower legal and social standing. In sum, peasants, the urban poor, and slaves were the productive forces that fueled the economy of Rome and the entire Empire. To label these the exploited classes is to describe too daintily the obvious.

Accordingly, "[t]he 40,000 or so decurions headed by the 2,600 senators and equestrians formed a ruling class (including families) of about 3 percent of the entire Italian population [numbering around six million], controlling the destinies of nearly fifty million souls in the Empire." (Wood 1988, 17) Lucius Marcius Philippus' rough calculations, it would appear, were not far from the stone cold truth. What Cicero disparaged as fomenting class warfare may well have been little more than the audit summary in an annual report of the state of the Roman nation.

Evaluating Cicero. At this point, to conclude that Cicero was nothing more than an overly-educated, self-congratulatory, supercilious prig zealously protective of class privilege and ever innovative in concocting exploitive economic schemes and self-promotional literature is scrumptiously seductive. But is reality truly so simple and retrospective investigation genuinely so accurate?

Cicero also exalted the duty of generosity, the obligation of private charity, as a crucial requirement of natural justice. Within the dictates of our own resources, the fellowship of human race behooves us extend ourselves to others. Prudence militates that we should not subsidize others to the point of marginal utility — where we diminish our resources to the point that we become virtually as needy as those we have just helped — but those who fail the duty of charity merit moral disapprobation.

Here, as ever, we must recognize the principle of proportionate equality: those who are in need but who have contributed or could contribute more to the common good (i.e., the ruling aristocrats in rank order) are more deserving than those in comparable need who have contributed or could contribute less to the common good. Natural justice levies, among others, a positive moral duty to care for others in proportion to their worth and in accordance with our resources. (Cicero 2000, 1.15, 20, 23, 42-45) Those able to fulfill the duty to charity, invariably aristocrats, should look first to those of their ilk prior to benefiting the urban poor. Cicero concludes, "The interests of the community and its coherence will best be served if our bounty is bestowed most of all on those most closely connected with us." (Cicero 2000, 1.50)

Cicero draws clear delineations among the circles of concern enclosing the fellowship of the human species.

> There is the closer link [than to the entire human species] between those of the same race, nation, and tongue, which unites men intimately. Within in this group lies the closer union of those from the same city-state . . . and beyond these, the circles of acquaintances and close friends, and the many who have connections with each other in public affairs and in business. Closer still is the social bind between kindred. (Cicero 2000, 1. 53)

A hasty conclusion would insist that this is more of the same: Cicero bleating on compassionately about the temporary material setbacks of the most fortunate segments of society while consigning the ongoing tribulations of the disenfranchised to the back of the ox cart. But Cicero is unsparingly critical of greedy acquisition, relentless accumulation for its own sake, and the

pursuit of individual glory outside the context of community aggrandizement. (Cicero 2000, 2. 71, 77; 1998, R 1. 27-28) For Cicero, the pivotal value in charitable endowments is, as always, the common good. By prioritizing those who can better advance of the agenda of the state we are thereby subsidizing communal interests. Just as the pursuit of glory unfettered to Roman communal values is mere celebrity or fame lacking normative moorings, material accumulation and charitable donations fail the fiats of natural justice when they are uprooted from grounding in the common good.

Cicero's allegiance to the common good remains unrepentantly aristocratic: What advances the aristocratic class facilitates the interests of the entire Roman world. He imagines a Rome, Italy, and world where the senate is stripped of authority and *dignitas* and he shudders. He does so not merely out of fear of relinquishing class privilege, but also for what would become of the peasants, urbane poor, and even slaves under such circumstances. Would they suddenly rise to higher life prospects? Would they enjoy greater protection , more security, increased possibilities for upward mobility? Or would their lives embody even starker destitution without the derivative glory of being or having the possibility of becoming Roman citizens?

Cicero's greatest failing may have been myopic vision and failure of imagination. He accepted too readily the familiar as the inevitable. He was trapped in the false necessity that any substantive change in Roman political institutions must constitute social degeneration. A scion of the equestrian class, he knew only too well the vast social canyon between those brandishing genetic ties to the Roman senatorial class and those, however seemingly capable, who lacked such pedigrees. Only through unprecedented rhetoric skill, political maneuvering and alliance, legal brilliance, opportunistic marriage, and preternatural scholarly industry could a *novus homo* (new man, one lacking genetic ties to the Roman senate), such as Cicero, scurry up the prestigious rungs of Roman society and punch his ticket to secular immortality.

That Cicero was able to ascend the *cursus honorum* – the course of honors defining the sequence of Roman political offices — and become a quaestor, curule aedile, praetor, and consul, holding each office at the youngest age of eligibility, both vivified his soul and deepened his insecurities. He remained "only" a *novus homo*. The entire process, however, deepened his commitment to fundamental Roman values and allegiance to the social and political system within with he was affirmed.

Throughout his political and philosophical life, Cicero was tormented by at least five often conflicting vectors that coalesced uneasily in his practical and theoretical analyses. (Belliotti 2009, 19) He was drawn to the epistemological underpinnings of the Skeptical Post-Platonic Academy that renounced dogmatism and certitude, and accepted the authority of probabilism as a guide for action. Cicero was also drawn to the fundamental tenets of Stoic ethics that accepted human wisdom, grounded in virtue in accord with natural law, as paramount for leading a good life. He was further convinced that republicanism in politics, rooted in proportionate equality and safeguarding entitlement to private property, was the demonstrably superior form of government. The fourth

vector was faith in the practical tests of Roman history. By appeal to historical examples, drawn mainly from the glory days of Roman republicanism, extant traditions, customs, religious rituals, and social sentiments could be sustained and intensified in service to the common good. Finally, Cicero's own pre-theoretical aspirations including faith in the marriage of moral virtue and human fulfillment, in the inextricable bond between moral rectitude and social expediency, and in the standing of moral virtue as the only genuine human good.

Cicero challenged himself and his fellow aristocrats to approach the standards of past Roman ideals, the *mores maiorum* (the ancestral ways). He was undeniably imprisoned by the past and too inflexible to swim with the changing tides of political exigency. Blinded by his allegiance to an increasingly archaic class structure, he sought solution to government maladies only in crafting abler aristocrats who would revive the idyllic social interpretations that retrospective falsification had cultivated within him. A zealous patriot and (relatively) virtuous statesman whose own success had only confirmed his fidelity to the *mores maiorum*, Cicero, ultimately, provides unwittingly a human-all-too-human moral and political lesson: Our most sublime virtues and excellences, if wrung too tightly, can deflate into our most pedestrian shortcomings.

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Welfare Theory: A Critique of Concepts

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Abstract:

In this paper, the author contends that the notion of a 'welfare state' cannot be regarded as a meaningful concept unless it is thought of as an ideological construction. Important elements in that construction are traced back to T. R. Malthus, whom the author holds to be the decisive figure in the build-up of the paradigm of bourgeois social science dominating up to the present day. "Welfare" politics are analysed as a reflection of the accumulation of capital, and severe criticism is made of concepts like "commodification" and "de-commodification", as they are being commonly used in "welfare theory".

Keywords: Welfare, State, Marxism, De-commodification.

As a concept, the "welfare state" first met daylight in 1939. It was formed as a counter-concept to the expression "warfare state". However, it had been foreshadowed by expressions like "welfare manager", "welfare policy", "welfare work" and "welfare centres" – all of them conceived in the years between the two Russian revolutions. The "welfare" addition to the vocabulary was indeed a consequence of the fact that new kinds of mass participation in bourgeois politics had made words like "charity", or expressions like "poor relief", unacceptable in public discourse (Williams 1976, 281).

This background of political tactics suggests that the expression "welfare state" simply does not represent a concept, in the full and traditional meaning. A "welfare state" is primarily an ideological construction. Taken as a real reference, it never existed under conditions of modernity. If one were not aware of the needs that make such constructions possible and necessary, one might be justified in feeling shocked by the superficiality with which "philosophers", historians, economists and sociologists unanimously use the expression without ever explaining or justifying it. Instead, one should regard this calamity as a token of an oppressive society as well-endowed with mechanisms fitted to conceal its own true content, as with plethoral money to finance the academic foundations of a silence.

I. Welfare as class warfare

However, even if one adopts a Marxian definition of the state as a product of the implacability of class antagonisms, it will not be *a priori* nonsensical to talk of a "welfare state". On

the contrary, such a term will have definite meaning if applied, for instance, to the Greek city-state of Athenian type, where the system of oppression is tied to the existence of liturgies, in which the social superiority is expressed explicitly through relations which give the inferior a formal guarantee of welfare (*eudaimonia*) distributed from above. In principle, something similar could be said of the feudal states of Europe.

Now, these types of "welfare state" are related to ideas of elitism as well as to existent picks that are popularly thought to distribute welfare in their capacity of being naturally superior. The so-called modern society, that is, bourgeois society, is a community based on presuppositions that are (and were) antagonistic to such constructions. These presuppositions, whose mode of existence is a deep-rooted, Christian inspired, popular conviction of the equality between all men, are partly based on an illusion: the status equality between all members of the bourgeois class is ideologically projected to all members of society. Still, such a projection has been possible only because of the fact that this same society *is* pervaded by a real similarity between all its members, namely, their formal freedom. To take the most important case: The *formal* freedom of the workers, and *a fortiori* of all strata of the working population, is itself *real*, and a necessary prerequisite for the functioning of the economic base of society itself. The selling and buying of labour power cannot be present without it.

Under such circumstances, it should go without saying that the concept of a 'welfare state' is purely ideological: the state is an apparatus of oppression, so that its possible "welfare" character would have to be of an elitist kind; but such a kind of reference for the concept of 'welfare' is unrealistic, as long as the state is bourgeois. Rather, it is of vital importance that this latter kind of state cover up its oppressive character.

The conclusion is thus rather that the notion of a 'welfare state' is very well fitted to veil a certain kind of oppression. It mirrors a society whose authoritarian, yet anti-elitist feature, a gift from the Reformation, makes it possible gradually to transfer insurance-based welfare benefits from the family (and related corporations) to the state, thus creating the erosion of the family institutions which latter-day Protestants persistently use in their political agitation against that state.

There is still more to gain from a comparison between the bourgeois state and pre-capitalist state forms. The state is always meant to be, and is always thought of as being, the prime upholder of internal peace and order; it is, also, in itself always the result of specific historical processes – processes of a kind that make the state an entity with a vital connection to those phenomena that we traditionally describe with the rather unapt term "social change".

Pre-capitalist (or pre-modern) societies, like the Greek *poleis* or the social network of the European feudal system, could be termed "natural economies" in comparison with bourgeois society. As has rightly been said (Marx), the historical development of such economic forms is based on foundations laid by nature itself (climate, fertility, power sources) – as opposed to the bourgeois form, whose development is characterised by historically created elements.

Now, the specific natural element which has the prime significance to politics and the state

is the mass of human population itself: its change, growth or decline are results of the connection of human fertility with the source of labour power, which in its turn is the principal power source, generally speaking. It is a mass making up the very essence of the productive forces, as well as the core of the relations of production: every human being is a potential owner as well as a potential worker.

The overall importance of relative over- or under-population in primitive types of society is seen in the crucial consequences of plagues and famines, in colonisation movements, in wars of conquest, in the genocidal practices of twentieth-century Central Africa and Cambodia as well as of fourteenth-century Central Asia. It is ideologically reflected in sayings of Oliver Cromwell and Pol Pot as well as in writings of Plato and Aristoteles.

In pre-capitalist societies, the dominating tendency is towards conservatism in technological development, and consequently to uphold, or even to reduce, a given rate of survival. This fact decisively influences the corresponding definition of, and actual practices of, the (pre-modern) state. The fundamental change of paradigm in the history of the state institution is thus seen in the ideology of the mercantilist state from the sixteenth century onwards. Here, population *growth* is considered a goal in itself – a fact that reflects the dawn of a new mode of production, and, inserted therein, of new relations of domination, where the old ties of dependence and obligation are vanishing, to be eventually substituted by the relation between capital and wage labour.

Great weight could be put on population growth only because there now existed a powerful state apparatus, which was in the position to abstract from the suffering of the masses, and mercilessly to further the production of human beings regardless of their eventual destiny – as wage earners or as paupers and vagabonds. However, this reliance on the pure and mere existence of human beings in the course of the development of bourgeois society was to undergo a transformation to the kind of humanism we know from the Enlightenment. And with the introduction of large-scale industry and disciplined work processes, the bourgeoisie, through men like Kant and Hegel, even adapted theories that essentially postulated a real, not just formal, equality between all possible members of society.

However, the peak performance of this kind of philosophy coincided with the first class-conscious revolts of wage-earners. The ensuing fear in the propertied classes led them to seek comfort in Kierkegaardian concepts of Dread, in existentialist, Kafkaian-Freudian concepts of Death, or in Darwinian-Malthusian concepts of death rates.

In the course of time, however, the ruling classes gained consciousness of the necessity of building up a welfare superstructure that would be able to justify public expenses designed to keep the working population in check (that last term should be especially noted), and possibly to divert it from revolutionary aims to a worldview of a reformist-utilitarian kind of socialism. From these decades springs the upper-class socialism of Europe, developed from the utopianism of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen, fostering individuals whose high-spirited aloofness was perhaps the only factor that could ensure them a political momentum.

In fact, the summit of bourgeois philosophical and analytical thinking, which had been reached by Kant, Hegel, Smith, and Ricardo, had resulted from the smashing of the pre-capitalist paradigm, which rated population magnitude as an independent, determining. And with the vanishing of this paradigm, albeit it was "true ideology" for times now gone, humankind's theory of its own life for the first time really saw the light. And what it felt, without seeing it clearly (for the light is the most difficult thing ever to apprehend), was that the working population, as Marx was to point out, was no longer to be thought of as an independent variable, setting limits to the growth of social wealth. On the contrary, the magnitude of capital, privately owned wealth accumulated through alienated labour, had become an independent variable, making population size a dependent one (cf Marx 1968, chapter 23).

Thus an implicit experience made by members of the capitalist class was that the liberating paradigm was a dangerous one. If it pointed out society's relative independence of the natural growth in the mass of its members, it at the same time stigmatised society's dependence on exploitation of alienated labour. But such a relation of dependence implies that economic crises are necessary ingredients of this same society. That insight was *de facto* propagated by Ricardo, in his last edition of the *Principles*. Though he felt reassured of its benefit for landlord and capitalist, he professed himself "convinced that the substitution of machinery for human labour is often very injurious to the interests of the class of labourers" (Ricardo 1969, 264). This was too much for the "manufacturing classes". Evidently, Ricardo's insight cannot be taken as a lone stroke of genius; rather, it was the authorised last drop in the overfilling of the glass, full of experiences of rick-burning and machine-breaking, culminating with Peterloo: it reflected a general mood already existing, the spectacle of the bourgeois' understanding of his own mode of production going asunder. There came to the fore an immediate need for a reversing of the paradigm.

II. Paradigm lost, paradigm hidden

In fact, a reversing model had already shown itself. The need for it had evolved gradually. In the theory of T. R. Malthus, an apparent revival of the pre-bourgeois population paradigm was to be made *salonfähig* for bourgeois "science". Malthus' theory of basic tendencies in population development, of misery, vice, check and moral restraint, has dominated bourgeois "social science" from about 1830 to this day. Or rather, its use, often disguised or unconscious, has been the one feature that decisively has branded the user as a bourgeois ideologist.

The social theorist who to a higher degree than any other worked out the conceptual framework of the politics of a "welfare state", J. M. Keynes, once wrote that "if only Malthus, instead of Ricardo, had been the parent stem from which nineteenth-century economists proceeded, what a much wiser and richer place the world would be today" (Keynes 1972, 106 sq.). But Keynes, in all his admiration for Malthus, was wrong as regarded the impact of the latter's ideas on bourgeois theory. In fact, it was the Malthusian paradigm that changed that theory into an ideology.

And, curiously, neither Karl Marx, albeit all his contempt for Malthus, and albeit he made a

reasonably detailed study of his economic theory, apparently did capture this point. In the time passing since his death, things have evolved which make that an easier task.

Now, it is fairly clear that Keynes misunderstood Malthus' special theory of money and distribution. But the important thing in Malthus is, as has been said, the turning of a fundamental paradigm.

As is well known, this paradigm has the form of Newtonian lawmaking: Malthus' population law presupposes the possibility of a geometrical growth in population and of an arithmetical one in agricultural output. Of course, these axioms do not pretend to describe what happens in history, but what would be the case if forces did not operate which were counteracting the tendencies expressed by the axioms.

As counteracting forces Malthus reckoned periodically accelerated death rates and/or reduced birth rates, and, secondarily, restraint from marriage as well as from intercourse outside it. The first of these "checks" (as he called them) has periodically been adapted as a conscious political means, in ways Malthus could not reasonably have foreseen. The latter two can to some degree be conciliated with liberal, bourgeois politics. It is worth noting that the introduction of "welfare" ideology in the Nordic countries was accompanied by "sexual enlightenment" campaigns as a most important feature. That this alleged enlightenment also took the form of authoritarian eugenics, seems by now to be a generally accepted fact. Examples are *legio* from national politics all over Europe. But as soon as this kind of benevolent "socialism from above" is reproduced on the arena of international politics, even more spectacular consequences show up. When Keynes in 1914 condemned the military rivalry in Europe, he did not mean it as a polemic against imperialist wars, but against their apparent current issues. According to Keynes, the "white nations" rather would need to protect themselves against the higher fecundity of "non-whites", even to the point of waging "racial wars", wars which, this time, would be about "substantial issues" (Keynes 1914, Skidelsky 1992, 429 sq.).

It is worth noting that Keynes did not propose to accelerate the birth rate of "whites". Evidently, such a means would run counter to the propagandistic heritage of nineteenth-century (neo-)Malthusianism, to the effect that the working population show the self-discipline of keeping its numbers in check, adequate to the needs of capital. It is, indeed, precisely this heritage which accounts for, and partly consists in, the flourishing of "scientific" eugenics and of Freudian "psycho-analysis", which essentially was born out of an agitation for sexual self-discipline.

From Malthus is derived a kind of vulgar economy whose conceptual framework soon came to function as a paradigm for the whole bourgeois social science. It is a paradigm of bourgeois self-criticism: not only is the world not perfect; there is also no principle of perfection inherent in it. (Malthus' argument against utopistic utilitarianism (Godwin) is the same that Darwin later used against Lamarck.) The ruling class, fundamentally, is not in any position to create progress, let alone to secure social stability. To effectuate such tasks, it needs assistance of working-class organisations and institutions. On the other hand, to the enlightened observer the working class appears like a

rude, ignorant crowd – a populace to be feared, as Kierkegaard (significantly the founder of most latter-day bourgeois "philosophic" thought) had it, when he wrote that "a crowd in its very concept is the untruth". It, therefore, had to be refined and educated by picks with bourgeois or aristocratic origins.

The history of capitalism in the twentieth century evolved from such a kind of "class" co-operation. Its nineteenth-century forerunners were also distinctively Malthusian: movements for education and enlightenment (adapted, of course, to reformist aims), for hygienic improvement, for "social" housebuilding, and temperance movements, which in Protestant countries were the most important of them all.

From the outset, the Malthusian paradigm was an individualistic one: Social improvement, always dependent on procreation control, should be a result of moral restraint on part of individuals. In the "welfare societies", such a restraint is thought to be the responsibility of individuals connected to a class. This corollary should not surprise anyone: the paradigm does not deny the existence of classes; rather, that concept is as vital to it as is the concept of restraint. The classes, particularly the purely working one, are (is) thought of as centre(s) of propaganda for restraint among their (its) individual members, and the paradigm takes the form of a will to ensure social restraint in all relevant areas. Of course, this goes particularly for those relating to the direct opposition to capital; "moderation" in demands on working conditions and wages thus becomes an essential paradigmatic element.

The main point is that the "welfare state" does not introduce a state of welfare, but a state that makes possible the transfer of certain benefits to a majority of the population, and which smoothly – because of its connection with working-class institutions – allows withdrawal of claims to those benefits.

Consequently, it is in no way paradoxical that the founder of the way of thought that led to the conception of a "welfare state", was also the one who most vehemently rejected any proposal to the effect that the population had any right to "welfare". On this point, the uncompromising Malthus has got his way: where there is welfare to be found, it should always be possible to remove it. (Quite consistently, he developed a theory of "effective demand", recommending public works in the depression following the Napoleonic Wars.)

As has been said, the conviction of the existence of a fundamental equality between all men is a necessary prerequisite of the capitalist order. This conviction can only be nourished on the basis of some degree of freedom in the negotiations on what is sometimes called the "labour market" since, for most humans, labour power is their only commodity – if they have got any at all. Now, the course of capitalist development that necessitated the first varieties of the "welfare state" is also perpetually necessitating restrictions in the said kind of practical freedom. The liberality of bourgeois society is here most decisively at odds with itself. From this crucial point on, the compulsion to employ further measures of coercion emerges and spreads itself.

For a social science worthy of the name, its paradigm is a critique of the existent ideological

superstructure. Conversely, the paradigm of a social science unworthy of the name is just that superstructure, by which it is transformed into ideology. But what about the existent "welfare" superstructure?

The bourgeois society based on industrial production is in itself a dichotomy of the factual, personal freedom associated with the individual's existence on the market, and the unfree and subjugated position it takes on after the market transaction, inside the factory gates. The whole superstructure of liberalism is dependent on the popular confusion between these two states. On the other hand, the bourgeois' acknowledged juridical power inside the gates, his liberal freedom to rule by decree, is a relation that is accepted as a matter of course. From here springs the tendency to accept illiberal coercion and structures of command also in the civil society at large; the states are confused, and so perforce are the limits between decree and individual freedom. In such circumstances, one must allow that it was a rather sympathetic kind of self-criticism which was shown by those capitalists who, as Marx tells us, were shocked by the prospect of socialism, since they felt it would make the whole of society "look like a factory" (Marx 1968, 377).

The original liberal aims became unified in a theory of history that proclaimed the possibility that they should once be materialized. By Kant, that thought was related to what he called the "realm of ends". The idea itself, and the kind of practical demands it posited for mankind, went to seeds in the Malthusian framework. As is clearly shown in its Darwinian variant, Malthusianism is alien to any possible teleology. It concentrates on the individual's adaptation to competitors and markets, with no higher aim whatsoever. The best possible adaptation still does not guarantee anything but a survival of the existent condition. Therefore, action here can be said to go on for its own sake, seemingly contingent as in a field in quantum mechanics. "Evolution" refers to nothing but change in the outer decorum of individuals or individual entities.

There is a conspicuous parallel from here to the view of action that was so symptomatic of existentialist movements with affinity to fascism. There is also a striking resemblance to the theory typical of reformist socialist movements from the nineteenth century on. Bernstein's dictum: "The movement is all, the end is nothing" describes it very properly. Such slogans ushered the political development that explains why bourgeois teleology now takes the misrepresented form of naïve developmental theory, why the concept of freedom degenerates to one of welfare and the concept of rights to one of subjugation.

Still, bourgeois thinking has to operate with concepts of aims, freedom, and rights; it cannot do without them. That is the reason why it not only can never escape a critique of the constructive kind but is also doomed to generate it. Those concepts are ever there to be worked on. Even for them, theories of a "welfare state" ultimately are counter-productive.

III. The commodity fetish and the concept of "de-commodification"

It is now time to look more closely at the practical use of the notion of "welfare state", and how it helps to generate equally ideological theses about state and civil society in modern capitalism.

Among the key functions of the bourgeois state is the construction and maintenance of an infrastructure that in tendency secures a smooth accumulation of capital. An aspect of this activity is to keep the working population in a fluent state so that workers can cross borders between production spheres as well as between individual firms, younger people become workers in the first place, labourers from primary sectors move into industrial occupations, and so on.

The "welfare state" is best understood in such a background. Its "welfare" character is then just an aspect of tasks common to each and every bourgeois state in the history of the last three hundred years and, in addition, common to many an absolutist state before that – namely, the expropriation of the immediate producers and their subsequent continued exclusion from traditional forms of ownership. In this process of expropriation, which goes on continually in bourgeois history, older extant forms of social organisation are either changed into more functional ones or abolished altogether. Here the family institution is especially important, perhaps most closely followed by churches and other forms of religious organisation.

Indeed, one absolute prerequisite for the establishment of the bourgeois order was the victorious Protestant Reformation movement, which in its tendency involved dissolution of all church organization as distinct from the members of the congregation. It led, as Marx pointed out in his critique, to a condition where religion was considered a private matter exclusively – and especially so in the United States, where capitalism evolved with fewer traditional obstacles than elsewhere.

Given the traditional symbiosis between Catholicism and family structure and institutions, the rise of Protestantism necessarily led to a weakening of family ties. This development was not followed by any movement capable of strengthening such ties on a new basis. The temperance movement, the movement for sexual enlightenment, and others, rather seem to have had the effect of strengthening the hold of state ideology and institutions over the remnants of the traditional family structure. Their effects coincided with the effects of capital accumulation in general. The family-based system of compensation, insurance, and welfare was replaced by a state system of welfare, functioning as an anonymous power distributed evenly to all members of society, regardless of family background. (Quite in accordance with the Protestant conception of God as an absolute person posited in equal relation to every single member of the Church.)

However, this element of welfare, its existence being beyond doubt, is not so important or so unique as to justify a theory of a separate period in capital accumulation called "welfare society", implying the existence of a "welfare state". And even less is it justified to talk about "welfare states" in bourgeois nations (Catholic, often) where capital accumulation has not reached a momentum that thoroughly does away with the family system of welfare.

This point of view certainly is antagonistic to conceptions put forward by many a theorist of the "welfare state". However, there is no good reason to insist on using the same "welfare" label indiscriminately on two kinds of state as different as these. They are rather just two forms of the bourgeois state type – though the one definitely is more functional than the other, as regards the

accumulation of capital.

Still, it is true that "welfare" theorists in later years have begun to feel the necessity of re-evaluating the criteria for the use of the label "welfare state". For instance, in a work by Gøsta Esping-Andersen from 1990, it is said that "[e]very theoretical paradigm must somehow define the welfare state". This somewhat hyperbolical declaration is followed up by a remark to the effect that "we cannot test contending arguments unless we have a commonly shared conception of the phenomenon to be explained" (Esping-Andersen 1990, 18). It is further underlined that "[s]ocial scientists have been too quick to accept nations' self-proclaimed welfare status" (Esping-Andersen 1990, 20).

However, useful as such reminders may be, they scarcely touch the heart of the matter. For evidently, the very concept of "welfare state" is here being accepted without question, and the whole of Esping-Andersen's discussion in so far rests on a *petitio principii*.

This is all the worse since the work in question, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* is the one where Esping-Andersen most coherently describes the theory of "de-commodification", as an *explanans* of the so-called welfare state. "De-commodification" is here seen as a result of "social policy", and *defined* in the following way:

> [T]he concept refers to the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation. (Esping-Andersen 1990, 37)

Of course, this definition implies a close link between "markets" and "commodities". If a person is dependent on "markets", it is indicated that she/he is "commodified" (Esping-Andersen 1990, 21, and *passim*), while an independence of "markets" indicates (at least) that a subject is "de-commodified".

Now, it is necessary to clarify the concepts of 'commodities', 'markets', and 'individuals' here used. To begin with, it should be noted that Esping-Andersen contends that:

> [i]n pre-capitalist societies, few workers were properly commodities in the sense that their survival was contingent upon the sale of their labour power. It is as markets become universal and hegemonic that the welfare of individuals comes to depend entirely on the cash nexus. Stripping society of the institutional layers that guaranteed social reproduction outside the labor contract meant that people were commodified. In turn, the introduction of modern social rights implies a loosening of the pure commodity status. De-commodification occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market. (Esping-Andersen 1990, 21–22).

Here it is supposed that *wage workers* can be commodities. At the same time, however, quite another thing is said, namely that they rely on sale of labour power. Some sentences later, it is said that the same workers, *qua* "people", are being "commodified".

This leaves things decidedly unclear. If a person sells her labour power, then obviously she cannot herself be a commodity. On the contrary, she is a subjective entity selling a commodity. Also, it is in no way acceptable to relate the dependence on a cash nexus immediately to "the market". Such thinking overlooks the fact that the "market" may be considered a result of a social and technical division of labour quite as much as vice versa.

Esping-Andersen's difficulties in identifying the object of commodification are clearly shown also in other parts of his text. We are told that in modern times "both human needs and labor power became commodities", but this same process is then described as a "commodification of both wants and people". Thereupon, the author presents some arguments to the effect that "workers" are "commodities", even declaring this to be a Marxian point of view. Further, the author goes on to talk about an alleged "commodity status of the worker", only to identify it with a *third* entity, namely, as he says, "the commodity status of labor" (quotes from Esping-Andersen 1990, 35, 36, and 37, *passim*). This last is also called (or is that a fourth variant?) "[t]he labor commodity" (Esping-Andersen 2000, 41).

We have already touched upon the crucial difference between the worker and his labour power. It is overlooked by Esping-Andersen, who evidently also confuses the concept 'labour power' with the one of 'labour'. Labour power is the capacity or potency to "labour", that is, to work. The labour itself cannot be sold (nor, of course, be a commodity), since it is a concrete (or abstract) activity, not given as an entity with value. It has, though, got the potency to create value.

For Marx, the discovery of the commodity character of labour power turned the tables in his discussion with classical political economy. For Esping-Andersen, on the other hand, it is merely an expression among others. He is not giving it any priority in relation to the abovementioned alternatives. Rather, he subsumes it under the representation of the working subject taken as a commodity. This is clearly shown by at least two points in his exposition: Firstly, he contends (as we have seen), that "social rights" are affecting the commodity status in question, which implies that the commodity is thought to be a *subject*. Secondly, he says that "[s]imply by definition, commodities compete" (Esping-Andersen 1990, 44). On the contrary: competition is effectuated by commodity owners, and of course not by commodities *per se*. Esping-Andersen's remarkable definitorical implication means that not only the commodity labour power but *any* commodity, is seen immediately as subject.

In the face of this conceptual fog, critically resembling the structure of "commodity fetishism" as described by Marx, it is necessary to point to the equally untenable proposition that "human needs" or "wants" can be commodities. Under no circumstances is such a relation possible. In bourgeois society, needs and wants are being satisfied (tentatively, at least) by things that have acquired a commodity form. My need for relaxation is not a commodity, but I might try to satisfy it by reading a book that I have *bought* – no matter how absurd its contents may be.

Esping-Andersen's practical identification of the human subject with its *objects* (in commodity-form) naturally strips that subject of its freedom. This be said explicitly here, for the

author contends that the Marxian concept of the worker's formal freedom "is a freedom behind prison walls, and hence fictitious" (Esping-Andersen 1990, 37).

This involves the thought that capital accumulation essentially goes together with a situation where workers have no kind of freedom at all (and consequently will have to be "defended" against the all-pervasive pressure of "commodification"). But this is impossible since labour power would not be a commodity in the first place, were the workers not free to sell it. By Esping-Andersen, we find a crucial confusion between "having" and "being". A wage worker cannot be a commodity at all. He may own or have got a commodity – primarily his labour power, his working.

Here, it becomes plain how erroneous it is to relate the individual worker's lack of freedom immediately to the "market", as does Esping-Andersen. On the contrary, in bourgeois society, it is the *freedom* of the worker that immediately is shown through his market position. His *lack* of freedom is something immediately shown only inside the factory gates – in a position where the labour power is "decommodified".

IV. Metamorphosis of the commodity – and of society

A product is no "commodity" unless it is there to be sold. A sales act, on the one hand, is a buying act on the other. That being so, the universally accepted destination of any commodity is to be abolished as such; that is, to be transformed into an ordinary use value, which means: into consumption.

Such a consumption may be individual in character. When a worker buys a sausage because he is determined to get it eaten, it is transformed from a commodity to a useful product, pure and simple. When it is consumed, it is then consumed not as a commodity, but as a use value. In its consumption, the product is negated as a commodity. To use the Esping-Andersen term, it has been "de-commodified".

This "de-commodification" of the sausage, and *a fortiori* of every commodity (for a commodity which is not sold, is "de-commodified" by wear and tear, by conscious destruction, or by being transformed into a gift), is brought about with no other institutional means than those inherent in the conditions under which it was produced. No political superstructure is needed here.

If we turn to an analysis of the other significant form of consumption, namely productive consumption, as it is brought about by capital in the production period, a similar relation will appear. In fact, no commodity is consumed, but many a commodity is abolished as such as capitalist production starts. A welding firm making and selling commodities consisting of metal, needs metallic raw material, tools, and gases in its production processes. These factors are to be found on the market and are bought as commodities. Having been bought, they are commodities no longer; they simply are joined together in a process whose usefulness appears in the finished product.

What physically brings them together in the said process, is another separate factor, namely human labour power. However, this power is then seen not as the static force which is its form of appearance on the market, but as a force being actively used, as concrete labour. Consequently, it

has been, and is being, "de-commodified", like all other use values bought for productive consumption. Nor in this case is there any apparent need for a political superstructure to bring about such a result. On the contrary, "de-commodification" is a necessary aspect of capitalist production itself, and reveals how it is based on contradictory determinations, of which the class antagonism is just one among many.

This inherent self-abolition in the commodity world is still, however, the perhaps most important factor when it comes to explaining the functions and tasks of the state apparatus, and consequently the politics adopted by the state. What Esping-Andersen calls "de-commodification" is simply a transitory stage in what Marx called "the metamorphosis of the commodity". To ensure an efficient marketing of products, reliable and continuously functioning power sources for production and transport, to further the development of communications to shorten the time of circulation, and so on, the state has to be active and intervening. But such a state activity is then a function of a metamorphosis which *ab ovo* is essential to capital and bourgeois production. Consequently, it does not seem reasonable to provide it with any special epithet – "welfare" or other.

This last remark is not only a conclusion, but also an anticipation of the result of an analysis of that special part of the commodity world that consists of human labour power. In contradistinction to all other commodities, labour power cannot possibly, and neither partly nor completely, be a product of a capitalist production process. However, it naturally passes through all stages in a commodity metamorphosis. Its "de-commodification", a process which, as we have seen, is vital and essential to its continuing and steadily reproduced existence as a commodity, is a fact. We have looked at one of the phases in this process, namely, the "de-commodification" that the labour power undergoes from the point in time where its working day starts. This phase, naturally, ends when the working day is over. Now, since the (exchange) value of labour power is dependent on its having a use value, it is – for theoretical purposes – justified to say that it has not got any value at this moment of time: it is exhausted. Consequently, it is still in a stage of "de-commodification". It now enters a new phase in its de-commodified existence: the period needed to get rehabilitated and recreated. A certain amount of rest, sleep and food etc. is needed. From the moment of complete recreation on, this individual labour power can be said to be a commodity anew. And in most cases, this moment is practically identical with the start of a new working day.

Thus, all the phases of individual "de-commodification" in reality are transitory stages in a process of "commodification". This is clearly seen also in other aspects of the fate of members of the working class. One of the implications of the "de-commodification" theory, namely that the "welfare" state is necessary to prevent that a part of the population becomes outcast, has a strange sound – not least to-day, when the pauperising effects of capital accumulation, precisely in those societies where the said accumulation is rendered effective by the "welfare state", are so blatant. But anyway, this *Pauperismus* is just a traditional result of accumulation, extant from a point in time long before any idea of a modern "welfare state" was even conceived. It represents the lowest layers of the relative surplus population – the strata below the industrial reserve army, human beings

dysfunctional as a work force, but functional as bugbears in front of class – and self-conscious workers.

In a society dominated by capital accumulation, all individual labour powers are seen as population elements pure and simple; they are there to be Malthusianly manipulated. Possible disruptions in their working careers, like illness, parenthood, old age and unemployment, are looked upon just as inconveniences or as periods of dysfunction, and in most cases the "welfare" system taking care of those who are thus disrupted, aims at making them fit for a functioning in the system – be it as workers or as bugbears.

By the same token, arguments to the effect that the existence of trade unions and political parties with working-class backgrounds all have "de-commodifying" effects, seem to be utterly misleading. It is by use of their "free" will that workers choose to be union members. Did they not have precisely this freedom, they could not function as working men possessing labour power in "commodified" form. *A fortiori*, the same is valid for the relation between workers and organizations of the "Labour Party" type. And naturally, it is not without significance that unions/organisations of this kind have had an essential role in establishing the state "welfare" structures. As regards the effects of trade unionising, it is fairly clear that modern production scales, with their need for investments of a titanic size, make capitalist entrepreneurs, as a class-group, effectively dependent on a unionized number of hands. And the social system so misleadingly labelled "welfare society" is dependent on industrial activities on this scale.

Conceptually, the expression "labour power" contrasts with "labour". To ascribe to labour power the capacity of being a commodity, must mean to deny such a capacity to "labour", since these expressions are related to each other as *dynameis* and *energeia*, potentiality and actuality, respectively. *A fortiori*, this use of the concept 'labour power' must lead to some kind of acceptance of the Marxian theory of surplus value, and to acceptance of the view that free labour *power* is, in entering the production process, transformed into unfree *labour*. Further, since this is a transformation initiated by facts bound up with the commodity status of labour power, it might seem reasonable to expect some related transformation in the circulation of any commodity – that is, to expect just a metamorphosis of the kind we have tried to describe above.

Thus, if the monstrous welfare state theory of "de-commodification" is to be upheld, one has to try to think of labour (not labour power) as a commodity. However, this would make us victims of all the well-known difficulties involved in conceiving of a fluent, value-producing entity that is at the same time existing as a fixed quantity of value. Hitherto, those difficulties have constituted an unsolved problem.

Let us, for the sake of illustration, think of a worker who is receiving social insurance money from the state during a period of unemployment. That payment has not got the form of a wage and, consequently, one could be tempted to look at the transfer as "de-commodifying" her labour power.

Such a temptation should be resisted. In fact, if she had not got any payment from the state or municipal institutions, what would have been the case? Perhaps she would starve. If so, her labour

power clearly is "de-commodified", since its use value disappears abruptly. Likewise, if her working comrades collect money to her, making her continued existence possible, one would certainly, from the premises developed above, regard it as a "de-commodifying" act.

Firstly, a problem regarding explanatory force comes to the fore here: We are looking at different ways of action, which all can be regarded as alternatives to the way of doing things typical of the "welfare state"; if these ways can reasonably be regarded as typically effecting the same phenomenon as does the "welfare state" in the same circumstances, then it is difficult to see how the said theory (of "de-commodification") tells us anything specific at all about the "welfare state", neither about its causes, nor about its effects.

Secondly, the form of the argument suggests that Fabianist-Malthusian aloofness makes itself felt: it would seem that "de-commodification", in the theory under examination, is meant to indicate an act graciously performed by official "welfare" agents, whereby persons are freed from excesses of economic laws of the "market": freed from starvation, freed from humiliating charity. However, such phenomena are not in themselves specific for the capitalist order, nor for the "market", that is, for the order that the theory wishes politically to analyse. On the contrary, they are general, with widespread validity at least for all class societies. Again, "de-commodification" theory seems to be in danger of losing specialised explanatory force.

What is worse, this factual absence of a clearly defined and determined historical object might lead the "de-commodification" theorist to ignore the specific, historically progressive function of capitalism in its totality. Such ignorance may, as already mentioned, methodically go together with an upholding of Darwinian evolutionary theory. *In casu*, it paradoxically strips the said theorist of precisely that object to which his leading term verbally should be best suited.

The point is that as the capitalist mode of production develops, it organises the production of use values in a way that definitely frees it from the symbolic, religious and prestigious overtones typical of the pre-capitalist products and production processes. More than any other relation, this is a sign of the civilising effect of capital:

> Hence the great civilising influence of capital; its production of a level of society in relation to which all the earlier ones appear just as *local developments* of mankind, and as *idolatry of nature*. Nature now becomes pure object for man, pure object of utility. (Marx, 1953, 313)

But, then, what is this, other than precisely the real process of "de-commodification", so necessary for the metamorphoses of commodities – in this case for the transformation of labour power in the production process? Such metamorphoses demand the transformation of exchange value into its opposite, which is use value; this presupposed opposition is itself a relation which seems to develop towards a totality in the course of the history of capitalism. Consequently, one might call the modern, developed production process a "de-commodification" *per se*, and tentatively add the implication that as such, it cannot even be discovered by its own theorist.

By such arguments, one might stress the point that capitalist production and capitalist

society develop in a totality where all factors are interdependent through and through. In this society, it is hard to discover any "de-commodification" which is not suited to the demands of capital. It seems to be a strange thought that the social insurance should "de-commodify" the powers of a worker, when the same payment makes her able to retain those powers, thus keeping her ready for employment and guaranteeing her possession of an exchange value (a commodity). All the more so, since the "welfare" state will not pay her unless she is willing to start working on the first occasion.

Postscript:

To receive a letter of invitation from an intelligent new journal is in itself bound to give a nice impression. All the more so, when at the next crossroads it accepts an article whose factual protagonist is Karl Marx.

As I pointed out in an article (Sandemose 2016) on the latter's methodological construction of macro-level values and prices, it is a documentable fact that common understanding of Marxian theories is at a deplorable level among 'professionals', even making possible, at least occasionally, outright grotesque evaluations from referees – not unusually selected by innocent-appearing, ignorant editors. If such conditions had prevailed in the field of general philosophy, warning signals would have been jacked up long ago. Economics, however, contains in it the immediate conditions of life and death for the bourgeoisie. Self-appointed 'Marxists' and other pseudo-revolutionaries are of course at the bottom level line of its defence. For, as said Frederick the Great: 'Of all Jesuits, the Protestant ones are the worst'.

This article was written in 1998, to an international seminar on problems relating to 'welfare' politics in Lillehammer, Norway. Restated, it was used as a chapter (entitled "The scandal in welfare theory") in a book of mine from 2002. After sending it as an article to a well-groomed journal in the UK, I got a stern refutation, *inter alia* lamenting that it was "counterproductive" not to have summed up standpoints of "other Marxists" regarding welfare theories; furthermore, it was deplorable, I learnt, not to have checked if Slavoj Zizek had any viewpoints on the matter.

I hope the reader will excuse me, but I could not refrain from using such an illustration. Elementary definitions, even those relating to commodities, *are* definitions. They are not postmodernist theses produced through will-o'-the-wisp reasoning. The fact that a whole welfare theory is built on internally contradictory definitions, does, alas, not verify it. This is not a matter for the world so popular in British coloured magazines. What is verified, is rather the fetishism pervading social science.

Of course, there is a background significance for pulling out the said illustration. For more than ten years, a traditional capitalist production crisis and its aftermath has defined the development of the bourgeois world. But in the world of quasi-Marxists and they retainers, that crisis is called a "financial crisis" echoing the mindset of a mass of ideologists without industrial experience of real commodity production, but filled with phantasies of apparently exiting and charming financial "derivates" while constructing little but shenanigans about the power of paper assets. The relative popularity of such authors is, thank Heavens, diminishing. May that contribute to progressive analysis of the real forces of development in all advanced social forms – the *concrete* relations between capital and labour.

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Politics of the Voice
(Note on Fanon's Decolonization of Clinics)

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Abstract[1]:

It has become indispensable to refer to the work of Franz Fanon when analysing both the colonial making of bodies and, in turn, those material and discursive operations that combine together the racialisation, sexualisation, and pathologisation of such colonised bodies. This entails, too, reflecting upon an issue which Fanon placed at the heart of the militant praxis: that is, the transformation of the forms of corporeality central to the position of a decolonial subject. This article reexamines this topic in the light of a Fanonian text, which introduces an additional element that complicates the dialectical approach which generally governs, both in Fanon's work and in that of his critics, the narrative function that is accorded to the body in analysing the processes of liberation.

In *This is the Voice of Algeria* (1959), Fanon draws attention to the fact that colonised bodies are more than just racialised bodies subjected to extreme colonial violence and then projected as a paroxysmal location where the reversal of a counter-violence against oppression occurs. They are also *speaking* bodies, and Fanon attempts to describe how they claim ownership of what Jacques Lacan called their *parlêtre* dimension. We need them to describe their specific materiality of such a dimension and the constraints of the circumstances which allow (or act as obstacles to) the incorporation of the voice in a subject of political enunciation. I will draw on Franz Fanon's studies of how the radio was used in the Algerian liberation struggle, in which, as a part of undertaking his analysis, Fanon was forced to address the "metapolitical" issue of the incorporation of the object *voice* in the problematic emergence of a political subjectivation in which instinctual and technical dimensions are inextricably linked.

Keywords: Fanon, voice, Lacanian *object a*, decolonization, subjectivation, political psychoanalysis

The French linguist Jean-Claude Milner proposes in a recent book that politics exists wherever there are *parlêtres*, i.e., speaking bodies, silenced rather than eliminated (Milner 2016). Such a sharply axiomatic formulation immediately appears extreme and come to a decision in an undecidable situation. For silence is never certain: how can one be sure that there are no inaudible murmurs, or that those who remain silent do not continue to enjoy the words that they keep to themselves? Indeed, it is extremely difficult to silence speaking bodies except, precisely, by exterminating them. Even so, clinics of melancholia and the political consequences of "*malemort*"

(hideous death) clearly reveal that, rather than eliminating their voices, the extermination of bodies exposes those who survive to the relentless return of bodyless voices. To avoid these two extremes — maintaining the exercise of power at a distance from its thanatological horizon, and keeping the voices at a distance from their spectral return — numerous procedures may dissociate bodies and voices. In this way, *Voiceless bodies* are thus produced. This may occur, for instance, when these bodies annoyingly invade the public space and are perceived as growls rather than as voices, or when these voices can only be heard "off-stage", by a paranoid ear that only hears the "manipulation" of the assembled bodies by a "foreign party." *Bodiless voices* are also produced through reported discourse that gives a voice *in absentia* to all sorts of common names (the people, the masses, the population, the French, the English etc.). Equally, they are also produced through the art of ventriloquism, which excels the media's pairing of a political space reduced to the reproduction of statements of opinion, cut off from the actual conditions of an utterance.

Politics thus needs more than speaking bodies exposed to both suffering and the enjoyment of the effects of their speech. There is politics when there is such an interval between body and voice, and when this gap becomes problematic for the capacity to speak or to have a body. In this sense, politics involves neither the management of mute bodies that work, consume and circulate, nor the administration of opinions or statements abstracted from those subjects who speak up; meaning those who expose in their speech — by showing and thus putting at risk — their bodies. Politics is a space of conflict in which the very disparity between the body and the voice is put back into play, and where this disparity is both challenged and displaced.

Undoubtedly, these propositions are too broad to lead to any unified formulation of the problem of *political enunciation*. They nevertheless provide a space in which to analyse the political production and staging of discourses. This can be done, however, neither simply from the perspective of their ideological "content" nor from that of "generalised rhetoric" (as in the model developed by Ernesto Laclau), but must be done from the perspective of how such productions and stagings use and treat the object *voice* and the material operations that "machinate" voices onto bodies, amplify them, or, on the contrary, disconnect them so as to produce disembodied voices or voiceless bodies. My main objective is to identify the political and subjective ambivalences of these operations. I believe that this can best be achieved by analysing individual cases rather than by attempting to fix in place a general formulation. To this end, I will analyse here just one singular voice, and describe its specific materiality and the constraints of the circumstances which allow (or act as obstacles to) the incorporation of the voice in a subject of political enunciation. I will draw on Franz Fanon's studies of how the radio was used in the Algerian liberation struggle, in which, as a part of undertaking his analysis, Fanon was forced to address the "metapolitical" issue of the incorporation of the object *voice* in the problematic emergence of a political subjectivation in which instinctual and technical dimensions are inextricably linked.

It has become indispensable to refer to the work of Franz Fanon when analysing both the colonial making of bodies and, in turn, those material and discursive operations that combine

together the racialisation, sexualisation and pathologisation of such colonised bodies. This entails, too, reflecting upon an issue which Fanon placed at the heart of the militant praxis: that is, the transformation of the forms of corporeality central to the position of a decolonial subject. The text to which I shall refer introduces an additional element which complicates the dialectical approach which generally governs, both in Fanon's work and in that of his critics, the narrative function that is accorded to the body in analysing the processes of liberation. In "This is the Voice of Algeria", a chapter of *A Dying Colonialism* (Fanon 1959), Fanon draws attention to the fact that colonised bodies are more than racialised bodies subjected to extreme colonial violence and then projected as a paroxysmal location where the reversal of a counter-violence against oppression occurs. They are also *speaking* bodies, and Fanon attempts to describe how they claim ownership of their *parlêtre* dimension (Lacan 1975; Lacan 1979). In his writing strategy, Fanon must then anticipate this *speaking out* (*prise de parole*) that counters the colonial "taking of land" (*prise de terre*), by using a specific stylistic approach that gives a voice to these bodies on the path to emancipation.

This is also, in some respects, a central issue in the slightly later *The Wretched of the Earth*. In his famous foreword, Sartre wrote that "the Third World discovers itself and speaks to itself through his voice" (Sartre 1961, 433); but prior to that Fanon had already begun to create this voice of the colonised in the nexus of his writing, highlighting its diffraction through a complex, disparate and conflicting polyphony. Hence, the significance in the *Wretched of the Earth* of free indirect discourse which echoes the structure of thought and enunciation introduced by Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, implementing "through writing alone plural 'voices' inherent in the phenomenological movement, or achieving its objective to 'give a voice' to the very subject whose constitution and history is presented" (Balibar 2012, 215). Nothing portrays this better than the addressing of this issue in the name of the Nation, if we underscore the extent to which, in Fanon's text, the signifier "national" is inseparable from its own transformations and is expressed in neither the same form nor content. On the contrary, it is presented through a series of figures that are different on each occasion and are effective in different ways, figures of "conscience" and "being", of subjectivation and of the achievement of the march towards liberation. The progression of the figures of decolonial consciousness thus mobilises a pragmatics that indexes the master-signifier "Nation" in a way that is each time inseparable from the collective contexts which irrevocably attaches it to speech acts whose illocutionary effects have an impact on both those who produce them and those to whom they are destined. For instance, when "acculturated" intellectuals and leaders of urban political parties began to speak the language of the "Algerian nation", "independence" and the "people's sovereignty", Fanon highlights the ruse of the decolonial reason through which these signifiers, immediately reappropriated by the peasant masses, were transmuted from innocent words of honest congresses into intransigent "order words", had new content imposed upon them, and thereby ended up bearing demands uncontrollable by those who had put them forward in the first place.

In the *Wretched of the Earth*, however, it is not the object *voice* that is called into question. It is useful here to call upon the distinction between *incorporation* and *introjection* articulated by the

Budapest School of Psychoanalysis (Abraham and Torok). Indeed, the Fanonian phenomenology of decolonial conscience places itself outside its problematic incorporation or appears to have resolved it from the outset by turning towards introjection or the symbolic internalisation of the signifiers of liberation (if only in order to note its contingent appropriations and undecidable futures). An exception to this may be that, in the clinical vignettes which conclude the book, the figures portraying melancholic conditions reveal auditory hallucinations, suggesting that not all voices are internalised in the same way. Some voices penetrate the body with the traumatic violence of an unsymbolisable Real, which is also the unassimilable "remainder" that escapes the dialectic of the book as a whole, and which thus marks its radical limit.

This remainder is precisely the object of analysis that "This is the Voice of Algeria" focused on two years earlier, and which has, in this sense, a meta-theoretical meaning for Fanon's writing itself. It is in this text that Fanon analysed for itself the problematic incorporation of *the voice* into the process of decolonial subjectivation by focusing on its excessive and complex materiality — phonic materiality and instinctual materiality that affects the enjoying body, as well as technical and techno-political materiality —, because this text focuses on the transformation in the relationship to the radio and the role of the program *The Voice of Fighting Algeria* in the mass mobilisation against the colonial regime. Several dimensions of this were are interwoven into his initial observation: "In Algeria, before 1945, the radio as a technical news instrument became widely distributed in the dominant society. It then [...] became both a means of resistance in the case of isolated Europeans and a means of cultural pressure on the dominated society." (Fanon 1959, 307) From the colonists' perspective, Radio-Alger was a paranoid "*machine désirante*" (Deleuze-Guattari 1972) which maintained a discrete core of homogeneity against the constant threat of interbreeding, of "Arabisation" and of dissolution into the hostile and foreign indigenous milieu. "On the farms, the radio reminds the settler of the reality of colonial power and, by its very existence, dispenses safety, serenity." (Fanon 1959, 307). The statement that Fanon puts into the mouths of the colonisers sums up the fantasy, accentuated at the oral-drive pole, whereby knowing what one eats and drinks, and in which beverages and words are mixed together, also acted as a shield to protect oneself from one's own incorporation by the native Other: "without plonk and the radio, we should already have become Arabised." For Algerians, the negative value of the radio is primarily expressed by "a dull absence of interest in that piece of French presence", a passive resistance summarised in the Algerian humour as "Frenchmen speaking to Frenchmen" (Fanon 1959, 307).

It is the shift to active resistance that makes it possible to interpret and retroactively elucidate the muffled resistances that were already operating during the colonial period. It is initially the global context — "the awakening of the colonial world", the setting up of broadcasting stations in Syria, Egypt and Lebanon, the "first skirmishes in Tunisia" in 1951-1952 — that made the Algerian people feel that it was "necessary to increase their news network" (Fanon 1959, 309). The modernist tendency of Fanon's thought is palpable in his insistance on showing the extent to which the struggle for liberation rid the colonised conscience of its magico-religious screens and of the inertia of

traditional social structures previously exploited by colonial domination. Because of the liberation struggle, the colonised face the challenge of regaining the rationalities and technologies shaped by European modernity, while reversing their expected outcomes, or reinventing their emancipatory potentialities. Here is obviously a perfect example of the power of *rationalisation* that Fanon often assigns to struggle for national liberation as such: from the transfer of the almost magical powers that the colonised associate with the radio (much like by the European colonisers themselves, in some sort of mirrored paranoia), to the appropriation of an instrument of information and communication indispensable to the organisation of militants, to the logistical structures of resistance, and the emulation of the masses or People.

Nevertheless, the final pages of the article undermine this largely linear representation. They begin with an observation by Fanon the psychiatrist noting the frequency, before 1954, of radio voices in the formation of delusional and hallucinatory experiences. These aggressive, inquisitive, "metallic" and "insulting" voices revealed the oppressive valence of the radio perceived as the materialisation of the hostile voice of the oppressor[2]. The psychopathological mechanism thus exhibited what the "normal" situation of the colonised hardly showed: the radio voice occupied the airwaves much as the French army occupied the territory. Its "speech is not received, deciphered, understood, but rejected" (Fanon 1959, 322); rejected, or following the Lacanian translation of *Verwerfung*, "foreclosed". This "voice of the enemy", impossible to inscribe "within", can only come from "outside" in the form of external perception: i.e., through auditory hallucination. From 1956, however, rather than the pure and simple disappearance of these hallucinatory symptoms, the strengthening of the liberation movement implied the transformation of these symptoms' phenomenology and thymic values. The radio increasingly ceased to be perceived as an anxiogenic "evil object". Receiving stations lost their coefficient of persecutory hostility and were stripped of their "character of extraneousness". "In hallucinatory psychoses, [...] the radio voices became protective, friendly. Insults and accusations disappeared and gave way to words of encouragement." (Fanon 1959, 322–3) It would be erroneous to understand this as a simple observation unrelated to the political appropriation of the radio technique for the purposes of information, propaganda and the coordination of Algerian resistance. On the contrary, Fanon suggests that a hallucinatory process was at the heart of this very appropriation by examining how the French army responded to the use of radio by Algerian fighters. Since interference on the airwaves rapidly made the programs of *The Voice of Fighting Algeria* inaudible, "tracts were distributed recommending the Algerians to keep tuned in for a period of two or three hours. In the course of a single broadcast a second station, broadcasting over a different wavelength, would relay the first jammed station." "A new form of struggle had come into being", writes Fanon (1959, 319–20).

Three remarks should be made at this point:

First, from the moment *the Voice* is blurred, the scene of the confrontation itself shifts. (Fanon deliberately plays with the abbreviation of the radio channel *The Voice of Fighting Algeria*, which is the pure phonic event of an act of speech — "the voice" of the Revolution, of the Algerian

Nation, of the masses liberating themselves by liberating their voices etc.). It is embodied in the material situation of hand-to-hand combat in which the operator, ear glued to the post, must demonstrate its tactical sense when tracking the changing waves on which the Voice will ultimately be heard. By enabling remote communication, the radio device comes into close physical and muscular contiguity with a listener struggling with the receiver and modulating the channel to foil the enemy's interference with the airwaves and return to the frequency of *the Voice*.

Second, although rendered inaudible, *the Voice* hardly loses its effectiveness. On the contrary, given that its meaning becomes unknown and its signifier indistinct, it increasingly tends to be assimilated with the pure dynamic support of collective speech which, to be heard, has to be rebuilt by filling in the gaps, helping neighbours understand the ambiguities, collectively reflecting on the silences, doing one's best to glue back together the "fragments of sentences" captured, recounting "more and more glorious battles" in which "the collapse of the occupying power is pictured vividly. The enemy lost its density, and at the level of the consciousness of the occupied, experienced a series of essential setbacks. Thus, the *Voice of Algeria*, which for months led the life of a fugitive, which was tracked by the adversary's powerful jamming networks, and whose 'word' was often inaudible, nourished the citizen's faith in the Revolution." (Fanon 1959, 321)

Third, it is all the more important to reconsider the hallucinatory investment of the invocatory drive (*la pulsion invoquante*), even where Fanon refrains from pathologising the revolutionary process, but where his writing itself serves to draw attention to the "*impolitic" dimension of the symptom* to which this process is inevitably linked.

> By its phantom-like character, the radio of the *mujahideen*, speaking in the name of Fighting Algeria, recognized as the spokesman for every Algerian, gave to the combat its maximum of reality. [...] This voice, often absent, physically inaudible, which each one felt welling up within himself, founded on an inner perception of the Nation, became materialised in an irrefutable way. Every Algerian, for his part, broadcasted and transmitted the new language. The nature of this voice recalled in more than one way that of the revolution: present in 'the atmosphere' in isolated pieces, but not objectively. (Fanon 1959, 321)

This fragmented sonic body, however inaudible, that "each one felt welling up within himself", and that stemmed from an "inner perception" of some new big Other (*grand Autre*), transformed the radio voice into a metonymic object of the Nation in person. This absent cause of the revolution is made intensively present through the spectral modality of a sizzling sound that reveals the desire to hear the resistance of a collective voice opposing its own obliteration by the occupier. Here, Fanon implicitly speaks to the question of the extent to which politics incorporates a dimension that remains irreducibly *heterogeneous* (in Bataille's sense: intractable, unassimilable, if not sacred). It is, in fact, Fanon's writing itself that stylistically highlights this impolitic dimension, at the threshold of his political analysis made on the basis of manifest significations.

> All the voices picked up by the receiver now revealed to the Algerian the tenuous, very relative character, in short, the imposture of the French voice presented until now as the only one. The occupier's voice was stripped of its authority.
> The nation's *Speech*, the Nation's *Word* shape the world while at the same time renewing it. (Fanon 1959, 329)

This "*Speech*", this "*Word of the nation*" (*Verbe de la nation*) — which is emphazised as much as the Johannine statement of the absolute beginning — could not signify more clearly that stripping the occupier's voice of its authority corresponds to a powerful movement of *displaced idealisation*, the political operability of which remains in suspense. I am not suggesting that Fanon resolves this problem — anyway it is doubtful that it could find a solution only on the terrain of theoretical writing. He does, however, keep the problem open by puzzling over the materiality of struggles (which requires one to formalise their contradictions and development tendencies) and the instinctual machinery of the voice (partially removed from the field of political calculation and decision). In doing so, Fanon suggests the impolitic vectors that his own narrative strategy conceals. He reveals what reinforces the political reality of his position, *and* the limits these impossible dynamics impose on his ability to code them strategically. Such dynamics are especially impossible to "control" from a political perspective and place the undecidability of the subjective processes that the political struggle must take into account within the actual discursiveness of his text.

Endnotes:

1. This lecture paper was pronounced in the Conference "*Lalangue and the Intersections of Politics, Law, and Desire*", at Birkbeck College, University of London, Tuesday 25th & Wednesday 26th April 2017. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Serene Richards and Leticia Paes for their invitation, and to Lucie Mercier and David Cunnigham for revising the translation.
2. "The radio, on the normal level, already apprehended as an instrument of the occupation, as a type of violent invasion on the part of the oppressor, assumes highly alienating meanings in the field of the pathological." (Fanon 1959, 322)

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In Defense of Fanon's Conception of the Struggle to the Death

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Abstract:

In this paper, I examine two competing interpretations of Hegel's "master-slave dialectic" from his classic text, *The Phenomenology of Spirit.* These interpretations, offered by Frantz Fanon and Ato Sekyi-Out respectively, disagree on what they see as the central feature of the process of obtaining mutual recognition, as Hegel understands and presents it in *The Phenomenology*. While Fanon upholds the importance of the violent nature of the struggle "to the death," Sekyi-Otu criticizes this endorsement of violence and aims to highlight instead the features of reciprocity and mutuality. I argue that Fanon's focus on the violent nature of the struggle can withstand this criticism, seeing it as essential that oppressed groups play a role in obtaining their own recognition from those occupying dominant positions in oppressive systems. Considering this claim in contemporary social contexts allows us to shed light on current resistance efforts, and how true independence and the possibility of recognition for marginalized groups often requires the willingness to "risk one's life" or "struggle to the death" for recognition. As such, I endorse Fanon's reading of Hegel's dialectic and consider how it can be applied to contemporary social movements.

Keywords: resistance, oppression, recognition, phenomenology

> "He who is reluctant to recognize me is against me. In a fierce struggle, I am willing to feel the shudder of death, the irreversible extinction, but also the possibility of impossibility." (Fanon 2008, 193)

Despite the age of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's influential work, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (originally published in 1807), the text is still viewed as having many relevant aspects that are still being reviewed, analyzed, and contested in contemporary contexts. One particularly illuminating passage comes out of the description of the form of consciousness that Hegel calls "Self-Consciousness" (Hegel 1977, 104).[1] In this passage, Hegel articulates the relationship between two self-consciousnesses[2], each attempting to validate their own self and elevate their subjective certainty to objective truth (as cited in Sekyi-Otu 1996, 57).[3] Each form of self-consciousness desires to be recognized by the other, for each self-consciousness exists "only in being acknowledged" (Hegel 1977, 111). Hegel seeks to explain the process that aspires to bring about mutual recognition

between the two self-consciousnesses, an aim that is ultimately unsuccessful by the end of the dialectic, whereby the desired mutual recognition is not achieved.

Throughout this section, Hegel makes clear that the process of attaining mutual recognition necessarily involves a violent struggle between the two self-consciousnesses, and a willingness of each to risk their lives in the struggle for recognition. He states in paragraph 187: "The presentation of itself as the pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing... that it is not attached to life" (Hegel 1977, 113). This being unattached to life is two-fold, viz., each self-consciousness "seeks the death of the other. But in doing so, the second kind of action, action on its own part, is also involved; for the former involves *the staking of its own life*" (Hegel 1977, 113, emphasis not in original). These aspects of the "life-and-death struggle" (Hegel 1977, 114) for recognition between competing self-consciousnesses (the violent struggle, the willingness to stake one's life for recognition) have been taken up by various theorists who analyze Hegel's now widely cited articulation of the master-slave dialectic, and many have come to competing conclusions about the relative importance of each aspect to the overall dialectic. One important reading of Hegel's master-slave dialectic has been advanced by philosopher and critical theorist Frantz Fanon (2008), who addresses the centrality of the *violent struggle* in the process of slaves obtaining recognition from their masters, both within the theoretical master-slave dialectic and in real world accounts of master-slave relations. However, not all scholars who examine the dialect attribute a similar degree of importance to the *violent* nature of the struggle, and others who have analyzed the passage have criticized Fanon's account.

One important criticism of Fanon's analysis of the dialectic has been raised by Ato Sekyi-Otu (1996) who rejects Fanon's emphasis on the violent nature of the struggle for recognition. Sekyi-Otu interprets the dialectic in such a way as to highlight the importance of reciprocity and mutuality in the recognition process, minimizing the emphasis on the role of violence in the struggle for recognition. In this paper, I will be defending Fanon's analysis of the dialectic, lending support for his claim that when "recognition"[4] is merely given to the slave by the master, without the slave independently demanding it, the hierarchical power dynamics are reinforced, such that the master exclusively is in a position to recognize the slave (or not). Following Fanon, I contend that when recognition is bestowed on the subordinate self-consciousness by the dominant self-consciousness, the hierarchy is maintained such that the dependence of the slave on the values and determinations of the master is reinforced. Recognition, then, remains in the master's control, which deprives slaves of the mutuality of being recognized *on their own terms*. Without the slaves playing an active role in demanding their recognition from masters, recognition can never be truly mutual, and will always necessarily be one-sided in favor of the masters. Even if the type of mutual recognition that Hegel's dialectic aspires to reach were met, Hegel's account still leaves the slaves falling short of reaching full subjectivity. The master does not need to be recognized on their own terms, but this is crucial for the slave who realizes that the master is dependent on the slave and the products of the slave's labor. Full recognition of the slave as an independent self-consciousness requires recognition of the

complex aspects of their violent struggle to the death for recognition, which are not necessary in recognizing the master.

I. Fanon's Account of the Dialectic: On the Violent Struggle to the Death for Recognition

In order to understand Sekyi-Otu's criticisms of Fanon's position on the violent struggle for recognition, it is first necessary to examine Fanon's argument. Fanon's account of the centrality of the violent nature of the struggle for recognition is given in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008)[5]. In the section entitled "The Black Man and Hegel", Fanon presents his understanding of Hegel's theoretical master-slave relationship, arguing that historically, Hegel's theoretical dialectic was inconsistent with the historical realities of how things actually played out between French slaves and their masters. Fanon suggests that the recognition of French slaves was achieved without conflict, viz., without this recognition being demanded by the slaves themselves. Rather, recognition was granted to slaves when masters *decided* to "raise the animal-machine man to the supreme rank of *man"* (Fanon 2008, 194). Fanon argues that this weak recognition, given to the slaves by the master rather than struggled for and demanded by the slaves themselves, is useless. To enforce his point, Fanon quotes Hegel himself, stating that, "Action from one side only would be useless... *they recognize themselves by mutually recognizing each other*" (Fanon 2008, 192)[6]. Fanon's direct citation of Hegel's *Phenomenology* helps to illustrate his point that this type of recognition, that which is granted to the slave by the master without a struggle on the part of the slave, will not lead to mutual recognition. Granting of recognition to the slave by the master simply reinforces the dominance of the master and does not allow for the slave to gain independence through the process of demanding to be recognized. As the passage from the *Phenomenology* articulates, these instances of one-sided recognition are useless if the goal is to obtain the mutuality Hegel's dialectic sets out to achieve.

Fanon argues that a slave's active struggle or demand for recognition from the master is necessary to gain true independence. He again quotes Hegel's *Phenomenology*, which states, "It is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained." (Hegel quoted in Fanon 2008, 192) Fanon interprets this to mean that independence of affirmation of self can only be achieved through conflict and at times, may even require armed violence. Fanon illustrates this by arguing that when French masters decided to recognize slaves as persons, the slaves did not have to struggle or fight for this recognition, and thus, according to Fanon, cannot be truly and meaningfully free or independent.[7] Being given recognition and being declared free by their masters affords slaves the *illusion* of freedom, but genuine independence belongs exclusively to the master, who had the power to freely choose whether or not to recognize the slaves as free, independent selves. Fanon states, "The black man is a slave who was allowed to assume the master's attitude. The white man is a master who allowed his slaves to eat at his table." (Fanon 2008, 194) Note Fanon's usage of the phrase "was allowed" in reference to the slave, whose actions have to be permitted by the master, implying that the slave is not genuinely free or independent. The master, however, is in a position to do the allowing; the master is able to grant permission to the slave to sit at *his* table (note that the ownership is also in the

hands of the master), and so it is by the will of the master only that the slave is able to assume an *illusion* of independence. Fanon's brilliant selection of words illustrates his point that in the absence of conflict and violent struggle on the part of the slave, the illusory freedom granted the slave does not afford the slave a true independence; the slave is unable to gain independence from the master. The slave is not recognized as an independent equal in the eyes of the master (again, note Fanon's intentional usage of "is allowed" and "allows"). Thus, the slave is not truly free at all, even upon the master's declaration of their freedom, and the two self-consciousnesses fall short of mutually recognizing each other, the goal of the dialectic.[8]

Given that Fanon has illustrated the impossibility of genuine mutual recognition and true independence for the slaves when their "freedom" is merely bestowed upon them by their masters, Fanon goes on to emphasize the importance of slaves' *activity* in obtaining their recognition from the masters, as opposed to merely being *acted on.* Slaves must come to know the cost of freedom (Fanon 2008, 195), and must be willing to risk their lives in pursuit of it. Furthermore, Fanon understands that this struggle for recognition of independence is often violent in nature because the colonizing practices that enslaved so many people were violent in nature. For Fanon, violence – and sometimes armed violence – is justified, and indeed often necessary, for the colonized to free themselves from their colonizers and to be recognized as independent selves. He also points out that colonizers use violence and oppression to gain recognition as masters from those they are colonizing. The struggle for recognition then, demands a violent response from the colonized to force the colonizers to recognize their true independence. He states, "we are told that none of this is given free" (Fanon 2008, 196). Genuine independence of self and freedom for slaves will never be given, it must be demanded and taken from the masters.

II. Sekyi-Otu's Objection: A Rejection of the Role of Violence in the Dialectic and a Turn Toward Mutuality

Given this understanding of Fanon's interpretation of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, Ato Sekyi-Otu finds Fanon's account overly pessimistic; Sekyi- Otu rejects Fanon's claim that the "freedom" that is merely "given" to slaves by masters is not actual. As Sekyi-Otu points out, given their subordinate status, this is the most likely route of enslaved persons obtaining freedom and this method requires no conflict, struggle, or death. Why then does Fanon insist on slaves' active role in obtaining their own freedom, endorsing means of violent conflict, if it is possible for slaves to obtain freedom (not necessarily genuine independence, but at least non-slavery) without it?

Ato Sekyi-Otu poses this question in regard to Fanon's insistence on the violence within the struggle for freedom. In *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (1996), Sekyi-Otu analyzes Fanon's application of Hegel's master-slave dialectic to colonial racial systems. Whereas Fanon emphasizes the violent aspects fundamental to the struggle for recognition, Sekyi-Otu argues that this is not actually the most essential part of the dialectic. Instead, Sekyi-Otu (1996) takes the essential part of the dialectical experience of master and slave to be *reciprocity*, or the recognition of the mutual

dependence on one another (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 56). Sekyi-Otu argues that Fanon is recalling and focusing on the violent aspect of Hegel's passage about the process of searching for mutual recognition at the expense of considerations for the importance of reciprocity. While Sekyi-Otu is willing to acknowledge that the violent aspect Fanon emphasizes can certainly be found in a reading of this section of the *Phenomenology*, he disagrees with Fanon's insistence on its critical importance. He also points out that the "result of this violent confrontation, however, cannot be the death of one partner and the survival of the other. The death of one participant would eliminate the possibility of recognition by the other" (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 57). Mutual recognition requires both parties, so the struggle cannot actually be "to the death." In this way, Sekyi-Otu believes that the violent conflict Fanon sees as essential to mutual recognition can indeed hinder mutual recognition, or even render it impossible.

Sekyi-Otu argues that Fanon's account of the master-slave dialectic underscores the primacy of the notion of reciprocity, or the idea that the slave and master are dependent upon each other as well as the idea that slaves obtain a sense of independence through their labor and their ability to see themselves in the things they create in the world. Sekyi-Otu takes these aspects of Hegel's dialectic to be absent in Fanon's analysis, leading him to read Fanon's work as unnecessarily pessimistic, insofar as it does not allow the independence of the slave to be redeemed through their labor in the ways the dialectic in the *Phenomenology* suggests (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 58-9). Additionally, Sekyi-Otu considers Fanon's claim that freedom is exclusively dependent on the proclamation of the master, leaving the slave entirely inactive in the process, is problematic insofar as it ignores the possibility of the slave gaining independence through recognizing him/herself in the objects of their labor. He argues that Fanon's account is not really representative of Hegel's theoretical bondsman from the dialectic, but is actually closer to Nietzche's conception of the slave (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 60-61). Sekyi-Otu points out that interpreters of Fanon have largely disagreed about whether or not Fanon's application of the master-slave dialectic is an appropriate interpretation of Hegel or a total misreading of Hegel. Those who think Fanon has unfairly applied Hegel think so primarily because they hold that Fanon has largely disregarded the redemptive property of slave labor, and the possibility of independence through the objects of that labor. Sekyi-Otu points out that Fanon has written that the slave might even abandon the object of his labor, a suggestion that Sekyi-Otu calls an "aborted dialectic" – a move so far from Hegel's intended meaning of the dialectical interaction that it is no longer interpreting the dialectic as Hegel presented it (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 60-61). Abandoning the object of labor, Sekyi-Otu argues, removes the ability for redemption of the "inessential" slave to a status of "immanent necessity" (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 60-61). He thinks Fanon's interpretation could not be further from the "story of liberation which Hegel's dialectic enables the *Phenomenology* to tell" (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 60-61). Instead, Sekyi-Otu thinks Fanon is telling a story closer to that of the conflictual portrait of human interaction painted by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. If his reading of Fanon is indeed correct, then it would seem as if Hegel's dialectic

is unable to accurately portray the historical reality of slaves and masters in the colonial context (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 60-61).

Sekyi-Otu is highlighting an important ideal by trying to recapture the significance of the notion of reciprocity in the dialectic; this ideal is relationships of mutuality and reciprocity among individuals regarded as equals, though of course, this is not where Hegel's dialectic leads us. However, just as he accuses Fanon of ignoring the centrality of reciprocity, Sekyi-Otu ignores the importance of the violent struggle to the death that is just as equally a part of the dialectic Hegel presents. It seems problematic to ignore *either* aspect of the dialectic when an accurate reading of the passage would surely require attention to both. Just as mutuality is the end goal of the dialectic, the violent struggle is an essential means of moving towards that end. For instance, Hegel presents the staking of one's life as central: in the passage, self-consciousness had to risk going "beyond life toward an ideal that is the transformation of subjective certainty of my own worth into a universally valid objective truth" (Fanon 2008, 193). This is indeed a struggle to the death, and only a willingness to die is strong enough to confirm the desire to be recognized and affirmed. If the slave is never able to demand this recognition of the master, or never able to stake his life, he will never have a true sense of his own independence, and the master will not take him seriously as an independent consciousness. If the slave's freedom does not come by the slave's own demands but instead comes by the decision of the master, this reinforces the independence of the master, not the slave. The slave's fate is once again in the hands of the master. For this reason, it is fair and justified for Fanon to argue that this is not true independence for the slave, which makes mutual recognition impossible.

III. Defending the Appropriateness of Fanon's Reading through Historical Considerations

In defending Fanon's interpretation of Hegel, it is useful to consider the background conditions of Hegel's writing of the *Phenomenology*, and how the context might suggest that Hegel did indeed intend to emphasize the role of resistance and at times even violent resistance, in his analysis of the master-slave dialectic. For example, there is historical evidence to support the idea that Hegel was fascinated by resistance efforts among slaves in their attempts to demand freedom and recognition. In fact, historical correspondence suggests that Hegel was fascinated in particular by the events of the Haitian Revolution, which he read about in German press. In an interesting article that documents Hegel's likely interest in the events of the Haitian Revolution, Susan Buck-Morss (2000) attempts to situate the *Phenomenology* within its specific historical and philosophical context to better understand Hegel's motivations and influences when composing the work. Throughout the article, she illuminates the stark disconnect between Western philosophers' analysis of freedom and slavery and the practices that were taking place in that same historical moment. She explains that by the 18th century, Enlightenment thinkers used slavery, which she describes as the "systematic, highly sophisticated capitalist enslavement of non-Europeans as a labor force in the colonies" as the "root metaphor... connoting everything that was evil about power relations" (Buck-Morss 2000, 821). They contrasted this with freedom, which was often articulated as the "highest and universal

political value" (Buck-Morss 2000, 821). But, as she points out, as these philosophical comparisons of slavery and freedom were gaining intellectual traction, the economic practice of slavery was also rapidly increasing. Buck-Morss (2000) argues that this discrepancy between abstract thought and actual practice was fueled by the acceptance of "the exploitation of millions of colonial slave laborers" as part of the given world "by the very thinkers who proclaimed freedom to be man's natural state and inalienable right" (Buck-Morss 2000, 822). She goes on to give examples of how freedom for enslaved peoples, though represented as a theoretical ideal by these Western thinkers, did not become realized as a result of their "ideals of universal freedom" or "revolutionary ideas", (Buck-Morss 2000, 833) but instead occurred as a result of the very manifestations of violent resistance that Fanon (2008) defends. She illustrates this in her examination of France and French colonies. She states:

> It took years of bloodshed before slavery-really existing slavery, not merely its metaphorical analogy—was abolished in the French colonies... Although abolition of slavery was the only possible logical outcome of the ideal of universal freedom, it did not come about through the revolutionary ideas or even the revolutionary actions of the French; it came about through the actions of the slaves themselves. (Buck-Morss 2000, 833)

She specifically references the struggle of the colony of Saint-Domingue, wherein 1791 over a half-million slaves "took the struggle for liberty into their own hands, not through petitions, but through violent, organized revolt" (Buck-Morss 2000, 833). She explains how in 1794, the armed black slaves of the colony forced the French Republic to abolish slavery on the island and other French colonies. The former slaves, now free, fought British forces from 1794 to 1800, which sought to reestablish slavery on the island. However, under the leadership of Toussaint-Louverture, the slaves were able to defeat the British military, ultimately bringing about suspension of the British slave trade in 1807. In 1801, Toussaint-Louverture wrote a constitution for the colony and in 1804 the new military leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines finalized the declaration of independence of the island from France, thus "combining the end of slavery with the end of colonial status" (Buck-Morss 2000, 835). The newly declared independent state was to be called Haiti. In an unprecedented act of revolt, enslaved persons, through violent resistance, were able to demand their recognition, freedom, and independence from their former masters.

The Haitian revolution as described above was widely covered in the German press, including in the journal *Minerva*, of which Hegel was a regular reader (Buck-Morss 2000, 842). Buck-Morss suggests that the coverage of the Haitian Revolution was the source of inspiration for Hegel's account of the relationship between master and slave as presented in the *Phenomenology of Spirit.* The Haitian Revolution represented a clear instance of the violent, struggle to the death for freedom that Hegel articulates (and Fanon defends). She notes that the *Phenomenology* was written in 1805-1806, and was published in 1807, the year in which Britain passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. Despite the evidence that Buck-Morss suggests clearly indicates that Hegel was

inspired by the current events of his time, she notes that other scholars and intellectuals locate the source of ideas for Hegel's work elsewhere, such as in the writings of Plato and Aristotle (Buck-Morss 2000, 843).[9] Other scholars resist such connections to intellectual predecessors or historical events altogether, instead considering Hegel's formulation of the dialectic to be an entirely abstract example that was theorized independent of, and disconnected from, real world situations and philosophical precursors (Buck-Morss 2000, 843). As Buck-Morss points out, it is hard to believe that Hegel was completely ignorant to the events of the Haitian Revolution and incredibly likely that Hegel was not only aware of the events in Haiti, but was intrigued by them, leading him to articulate the dialectic of slave and master in response to his contemporary context.

Whether or not Buck-Morss is correct in her claim that Hegel was aware of the events of the Haitian slave revolution and wrote the passage of the *Phenomenology* in response to them is up for debate, and will likely never be answered definitively one way or another. However, whatever Hegel's true inspiration for the dialectic, we can certainly examine the events of the Haitian Revolution in light of the dialectic. Doing so, I contend, offers a clear historical representation of Fanon's interpretation of the dialectic. In this actual historical instance of a dialectical encounter between masters and slaves, the white masters (and political leaders and intellectuals), despite claiming to value freedom and independence universally, were quite unlikely to ever grant that freedom and independence to their colonial slaves. This is likely a result of the political and economic advantages (for the masters) of arrangements of colonialism and enslavement, despite the theoretical inconsistency with their bourgeoning commitments to freedom and independence as political and philosophical ideals. In this historical instance, as demonstrated above, slaves had to take the struggle for freedom into their own hands, viz., they had to engage in a violent struggle to the death, in which they were able to stake their own lives for their freedom and for recognition of their independence. It is quite unlikely that the masters would have willingly and voluntarily given up the many advantages bestowed on them by arrangements of colonial enslavement. Thus, it is unlikely that a more reciprocal, egalitarian approach to recognition, such as the one advanced by Ato Sekyi-Otu would have ever brought freedom and independence to the slaves under the given circumstances. To gain their freedom, the slaves had to demand it – to engage in violent revolt – and claim recognition from their masters. Whether or not Hegel was inspired by the events of the Haitian Revolution, and I believe Susan Buck-Morrs (2000) prevents a compelling case that he was, the events of the Haitian Revolution provide support for Fanon's reading of the dialectic, and what is most likely to be effective in bringing about recognition, freedom, and independence for enslaved peoples in real life contexts.

IV. Applying Fanon's Interpretation: An Examination of the Struggle for Recognition in Contemporary Contexts

Employing Fanon's analysis of Hegel's master-slave dialectic to more contemporary situations of dominance and subordination can help strengthen the case for the defense of Fanon's

position. For instance, examining The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s-1960s can provide a more recent example of individuals who are willing to stake their lives for their recognition, as well as the often-necessary violent nature of this struggle. This is true, I contend, of both violent and non-violent approaches to The Civil Rights Movement. In non-violent protests and acts of civil disobedience, the individuals who are participating are still acting out a mode of resistance to the dominant group, and are still exhibiting a willingness to stake their lives for their cause, as made evident by the numerous individuals who were killed, beaten, hosed, and so on for their acts of resistance. John Ansbro (1988) recalls, for instance, the spirit of resistance in Martin Luther King Jr., a figure largely associated with non-violent modes of resistance to injustice. Ansbro details how a young King, faced with countless traumatic experiences of the brutality of segregation, became "fascinated with the notion of noncooperation with an evil system" (Ansbro 1988, para. 5). King, Ansbro writes, "appealed to his followers to be true to their consciences and not to cooperate with an evil system that refused to recognize their personal dignity" (Ansbro 1988, para. 5). In this quote, we can see King's appeal to the importance of *recognition* for the oppressed black people that he was leading in protest. He also calls on his followers to take action, through noncooperation with the unjust system, in pursuit of their recognition. This is consistent with Fanon's account of the dialectic that requires those in the slave position to take matters into their own hands and demand their recognition from their oppressors. Interestingly, Ansbro points out that King was inspired by the work of Hegel, citing King as calling Hegel his "favorite philosopher" during the Montgomery Boycott (Ansbro 1988, para. 11). He writes:

> King readily identified with Hegel's insight that conflict is essential to progress and that each synthesis – that is that each achievement of a degree of freedom – can become a new point of departure for further struggles for total freedom. Hegel had indicated that seriousness, suffering, patience, and labor of the negative constitute the dialectical life of the spirit in search for freedom. King reaffirmed this principle by his contention that the passionate concern of dedicated individuals, as well as their sacrifices, struggles, and tireless exertions, are necessary for every step toward the goal of justice. (Ansbro 1988, para. 12-13)

We can see in this connection between Hegel and the non-violent philosophy of resistance of Martin Luther King Jr. that *activity* in the struggle for resistance can take many forms, and not all of these forms are necessarily violent. However, consistent with Fanon's reading of the dialectic, Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, through various forms of non-violent protests and civil disobedience, reflects the importance of oppressed persons demanding their recognition and independence, through a struggle that is often violent in nature (even if it is not intended to be), and for which participants are willing to risk their lives in pursuit of that recognition.

Of course, Martin Luther King was not the only important leader of the Civil Rights Movement, and non-violent civil disobedience was not the only philosophy of resistance employed

during that time. More actively aggressive, and at times violent, approaches to black liberation during the era of the Civil Rights Movement were also advanced, for instance the methods advocated by Malcolm X. Malcolm X recognized that violence, specifically in the form of self-defense, could be a legitimate response for black individuals to take when they found themselves in unsafe and unjust environments. He stated:

> We assert in those areas where government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within their rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary. A man with a rifle or club can only be stopped by a person with a rifle or club. (Malcom X as cited in Breitman 1967, 106-7)

I take the violence that Malcolm X is promoting in this quote to be justified – not unnecessary or unwarranted. This quote, and the general philosophy advanced by Malcolm X, acknowledges that violence can, at times, be justified in response to violent systems, *especially* when that violence represents a form of self-defense or a step in the direction of liberation. When social and political systems are structured such that black lives are not being valued and/or protected by that system, this very well may necessitate that black persons take matters into their own hands to protect themselves and/or to demand recognition from that system on their own terms. If the systems that black people found themselves in were more just, and offered equal amounts of necessary protections and resources to black persons as it provides to white persons, (viz., if black persons were afforded equal recognition by various social systems as white persons), violent forms of resistance would never be justified (or for that matter, necessary). However, there are many reasons to believe that we are not in such a system at all, but rather we are in a social system that disproportionately advantages white people while systematically disadvantaging people of color. When society is structured such that white people (masters, if you will), are able to get away with perpetrating violence against black individuals without consequence, then black persons (representative of a slave class), are put in a position to have to defend themselves and to fight for their equal recognition. Often, responses by those in the oppressed position (black people in American society) will be violent, because the oppression that keeps them in the subjugated position is violent. On this, Malcolm X stated:

> Tactics based solely on morality can only succeed when you are dealing with basically moral people or a moral system. A man or system which opposes a man because of his color is not moral. It is the duty of every African-American community throughout this country to protect its people against mass murderers, bombers, lynchers, floggers, brutalizers, and exploiters. (Malcom X as cited in Breitman 1967, 106-7)

Malcolm X's ideas of black self-defense in response to corrupt systems and immoral societies that fail to recognize black individuals can help shed light on more recent activist movements, such

as the current Black Lives Matter Movement. The Black Lives Matter Movement is a racial justice organization and movement that arose in 2013 in the wake of the acquittal of George Zimmerman after he shot and killed a black teen, Trayvon Martin.[10] The movement has gained further attention and support in response to various additional murders of young, unarmed black men, whose white shooters, often law enforcement officers were either not indicted or not found guilty upon being indicted. The movement gained attention for its demonstrations and protests responding to several deaths of unarmed black folks following the 2013 murder of Trayvon Martin, including the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Samuel DuBose, Freddie Gray, and several unforgotten others.[11]

Despite the widespread criticisms that have been leveled against the Black Lives Matter Movement, there is a wide array of evidence to support their claims of injustice in the so-called criminal "justice" system, particularly directed against people of color. Furthermore, despite only recently getting substantial attention, the issues being challenged by the Black Lives Matter movement (primarily mass incarceration and police brutality against people of color) are not new problems. In a 1976 article, John Goldkamp compares the rates of minority deaths by capital punishment to the rates of deaths in the process of apprehending suspected minority criminals. He argues that although evidence of racial disproportion in capital punishment has been widely discussed, even suspended in 1972 by the Supreme Court, that equal consideration has not been given to the decades' worth of studies that have shown that racial minorities are disproportionately killed by deadly force, by individual officers in high-pressure situations (Goldkamp 1976, 169-183). The racial disparity in minorities being killed by deadly force evidenced in the work of John Goldkamp continues to be relevant, even in the year 2015. An article in *The Washington Post* chronicles various cases of the murders of unarmed black men in 2015; when the article was published in August, there had been 24 such cases. The article reports that black men accounted for 40% of the victims of shootings of unarmed individuals, although they only constitute 6% of the U.S population (Somashekhar et al. 2015, para. 8). This means that unarmed black men are seven times more likely than their white counterparts to die by police gunfire while unarmed (Somashekhar et al. 2015, para. 8). Clearly, Black Lives Matter supporters have a point when they claim that unarmed black men are being killed at disproportionate rates, as reflected by the statistics. This disproportionate and unjust treatment of black people by the criminal justice system represents a failure of recognition of their independent self-consciousnesses, and the reality that the struggle for that recognition is as Fanon understands, often a violent struggle.

Not only are black individuals being killed at disproportionate rates through capital punishment and police shootings, but they are also incarcerated at disproportionate rates, making up an alarming portion of the imprisoned population in the United States.[12] An October 2015 story in *The Atlantic* reports the following statistics:

> In absolute terms, America's prison and jail population from 1970 until today has increased sevenfold, from some 300,000 people to 2.2 million. The United States now accounts for less than 5

> percent of the world's inhabitants – and about 25 percent of its incarcerated inhabitants. In 2000, one in 10 black males between the ages of 20 and 40 were incarcerated –10 times the rate of their white peers. In 2010, a third of all black male high-school dropouts between the ages of 20 and 39 were imprisoned, compared with only 13 percent of their white peers (Coates 2015, para. 16).

This boils down to the following alarming statistic: "One in four black men born since the late 1970s has spent time in prison" (Coates 2015, para. 23). Interestingly, as the rate of imprisonment is escalating, the rate of imprisonment for violent crimes is decreasing, and we are seeing more people, especially black people, being jailed for non-violent crimes.[13] There is much more to be said about the unequal and unjust treatment of black persons by the criminal justice system in America. However, rather than criticizing activist groups who are displaying resistance towards these oppressive institutions, such as the Black Lives Matters Movement, we ought to consider the legitimate reasons for these resistance efforts. Further, given Fanon's interpretation of Hegel's master-slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology,* we can consider how these active forms of resistance are playing an important role in the continued struggle for black recognition.

A criticism that plagues Fanon's analysis, as highlighted by Sekyi-Otu, one which might also be leveled against these applications to current forms of active resistance, is the lingering question of why these active struggles and modes of resistance would be favored over a more reciprocal, mutual process of recognition. Following Fanon, I argue against these criticisms, and I do so on two grounds. First, a non-violent bestowing of recognition onto an oppressed group, without the active struggle of that group, leaves the fate of the oppressed group in the hands of those in the dominant position. This means that the oppressors are still free to determine, when, if ever, those in the oppressed position are worthy of their recognition, whether or not they ought to be recognized and treated as free, and so on. The lives of the oppressed group remain entirely dependent on the determinations made by those in the controlling group, which reinforces the unjust and problematic power differential that allowed for that oppression in the first place. Second, even if we were able to justify (following Sekyi-Otu) that having recognition bestowed on the oppressed still represents genuine recognition, there are reasons to believe that the dominant group would never freely do so. Those in power might have a range of social, political, and economic reasons to maintain the status quo where their position allows them to benefit from it. If so, those in power might willfully choose to remain ignorant to the needs of the oppressed group. Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan (2006) have articulated this motivated, active ignorance and the process of maintaining that ignorance within what they call the epistemologies of ignorance (p. 1). They describe these acts of *not knowing*, as more than a simple lack of knowledge or understanding, but rather as a complex, intentional process that is directly tied to oppression and exclusion. Dermot Feenan (2007) suggests that this type of ignorance is actively constituted and reproduced as an aspect of power (p. 510). Considering these theories of motivated, actively constituted ignorance of oppression by those in power, it is doubtful that recognition is likely to arise naturally and in the mutual, reciprocal sense that Sekyi-Otu suggests. Forcing those in power to acknowledge realities that they have chosen to remain ignorant to is likely

going to take the methods of resistance and actively struggling for recognition that Fanon advocates for in his interpretation of the dialectic. Without some pressure from the oppressed group, the dominant group is likely to remain comfortably and blissfully ignorant, while continuing to enjoy the benefits of occupying the dominant position. For these reasons, I defend an approach to recognition that appreciates the necessity of resistance, violent struggle, and the risking of life.

Despite my support of Fanon's analysis of the dialectic, as well as current resistance efforts that are seeking independence and recognition in contemporary contexts, it is important to briefly acknowledge the risks associated with even the most necessary forms of active resistance. In light of the explication of epistemologies of ignorance, there is reason to believe that powerful institutions have a stake in maintaining the power hierarchy, and as such, often respond negatively to the resistance efforts of marginalized groups. One potential risk for those who are engaging in resistance and struggle for recognition is the response of the criminal justice system. For instance, interactions between the Black Lives Matter Movement and law enforcement officers have not been particularly favorable, and this puts those activists at an increased risk of punitive measures from the criminal justice system. Additionally, when protests and resistance efforts do become violent, even when this violence can be reasonably justified, the risk of imprisonment or death at the hands of the criminal justice system increases.

Immediate entry into the criminal justice system is not the only source of risk for those who resist their oppression, however. For example, when students from oppressed groups are resistant to unfair educational policies or unequal treatment in schools, they often face punishment for resistant or defiant behavior. This punishment often takes the form of removing students from the classroom, which decreases their opportunities for in class instruction, often causes them to fall behind academically, and may even have the consequence of starting their push down the school to prison pipeline (Tyler 2011, 291-295)[14].

Another potential risk faced by those who display resistant or defiant behavior has been outlined by Nancy Potter (2012) in her proposal of a virtue theoretical account of defiance. Potter argues that the "readiness to be defiant" is a virtue that may be a necessary character trait for oppressed persons to cultivate in order to live with self-respect under the rule of authority and to potentially challenge that authority and enact social change (Potter 2012, 24). However, despite her call for defiance among subjugated persons, she also warns us of potential repercussions of defiant behavior among oppressed persons, which can go as far as diagnosing healthy individuals who are exhibiting justified (given their circumstances) defiant behavior with a mental disorder (Potter 2012, 24). While she does not want to deny the existence of genuinely pathological behavior that necessitates psychiatric intervention, Potter's concern is that from the dominant position of the oppressors, normal, healthy, and even virtuous responses to one's oppression might appear deviant or pathological. Potter writes: "As with other virtues, defiance has extremes and a mean. But identifying the extremes is difficult because actions that are appropriate from the perspective of the subjugated frequently are cast as an extreme (an excess) by those in authority" (Potter 2012, 32). She

develops her argument by way of an extended example of young black boys in the American school system, for whom *bad* behavior is often conflated with *mad* (or pathological) behavior. This can even lead some "defiant" children to be given a mental disorder label, namely that of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). Potter writes:

> Some children who are deemed "defiant" are eventually diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), with behavior characterized as "persistent stubbornness, resistance to directions, and unwillingness to compromise, give in, or negotiate with adults or peers" (American Psychiatric Association 2000, 100). In other words, defiance sometimes is managed socially by medicalizing it (Potter 2012, 33).

As Potter's (2012) account shows, the institution of psychiatry, reflecting the interests of the dominant, oppressor class, might utilize the tools of psychiatry in attempt to subdue resistance efforts through the attachment of stigmatizing diagnoses to those who challenge the mainstream or the dominant social order. While Potter's analysis suggests that this is currently taking place through the diagnosis of "defiant" young black boys in school settings, there is also reason to believe that psychiatric diagnoses have been used in similar ways in past efforts to restrict resistance efforts of oppressed persons. In his incredibly insightful book, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* (2009), Jonathan Metzl critically analyzes how Schizophrenia became a diagnosis primarily given to black men during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Metzl's historical account and Potter's analysis of current practices provide a compelling case of how psychiatry as an institution can be used to suppress the struggles for recognition of oppressed persons. Risk of hospitalization, being medicated, or social stigma can result from psychiatry's pathologizing of resistance efforts among oppressed persons. When these risks are paired with the previously mentioned risks of incarceration, violence, or even death at the hands of the criminal justice system, it becomes evident that the violent struggle for recognition, even where necessary and justified, is not without risks. This is a *dialectic*, after all, and *both* sides are in struggle. The oppressor class has its own ways of resisting the struggles of the oppressed (criminalizing and pathologizing resistance efforts), and they employ those tools in an effort to maintain their position as dominant "masters".

V. By Way of Conclusion

When reading Hegel's classic master-slave dialectic, it is important to reflect on *why* Hegel chose to include the ideas of "violence" and the "struggle to the death". While Sekyi-Otu claims that some other Hegelian notions are absent or underscored in Fanon's interpretation of the dialectic, I argue that Fanon's account is entirely justifiable reading of Hegel, and also provides a more accurate picture of historical and contemporary resistance efforts. As evidenced by the historical and contemporary contexts examined, without active struggle there will never be genuine recognition of the oppressed group. Without a willingness to risk life in the struggle, the oppressed and/or the

enslaved can never truly understand the cost of freedom or show that they value independence and truth of self even more than they value life itself. Further, when the master(s) begin to see that freedom is *so* valuable to the slaves, that they are willing to stake their own lives for it, the master can start to cultivate an appreciation of the slaves' desire for independence and begin to move towards genuine recognition.

When slaves are simply set free by their masters without being able to risk their own lives demanding their freedom, the slaves are prevented from the attainment of individual, independent self-consciousnesses. If this is the case, then actual historical slaves do not gain the independence that Hegel's theoretical slave can obtain by seeing themselves in the objects of their creation. The historical slaves never gain the status of master, because when "there are no longer slaves, there are no longer masters" (Sekyi-Otu 1996, 219). Even if the slaves are freed from slavery, if they themselves did not play the essential role in obtaining this freedom, and it was instead granted out of the values and dominance of the master, then the master is still in control of the possibilities available to the slaves. Thus, their futures are still dictated by the freedom proclamation of their white master. And, given the aforementioned work in the area of epistemologies of ignorance (Tuana and Sullivan 2006), there is reason to believe that the masters would never willingly give up their power and bestow freedom on those individuals who they benefit from keeping under their control.

For these reasons, I maintain that Fanon's account is able to withstand Sekyi-Otu's criticisms and represents the strongest reading of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, as well as the most accurate representation of the dialectic as it manifests itself in real world applications. Fanon's emphasis on the role of the violent struggle to the death for recognition can shed light on contemporary resistance efforts by various subjugated groups in their struggles for recognition by society. This resistance, which at times necessitates violence and the risking of lives, is arguably necessary for oppressed persons to obtain their recognition on their own terms. Having a societal recognition imposed upon them by the dominant members of society merely reinforces and reproduces unjust hierarchies of power and systems of domination and oppression. Only resistance efforts that involve the demanding of recognition on behalf of oppressed persons can upset these systems and begin to move us towards a society in which mutual recognition could possibly be achieved.

Endnotes:

1. Hegel (1977) states in paragraph 175 that "*Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness"* (Hegel 1977, 110). He introduces the Lordship and Bondage metaphor, which has come to be known in the literature as the "master-slave dialectic" beginning at paragraph 178. I will be referring to the content of these passages as the master-slave dialectic throughout.
2. Hegel develops the two self-consciousnesses as lord (master) and bondsman (slave). He describes the self-consciousness that is master as the consciousness that "exists *for itself"* (Hegel 1977, 115). The slave, however, is in bondage and is necessarily tied to the master (Hegel 1977, 115). Each seeks recognition as an independent self-consciousness from the other.
3. Frantz Fanon (2008) elaborates upon the importance of recognition by another for achieving certainty of one's self-consciousness. Fanon states: "Each consciousness of self is in quest of

absoluteness. It wants to be recognized as a primal value without reference to life, as a transformation of subjective certainty (Gewissheit) into objective truth (Wahrheit)" (Fanon 2008, 192).

4. By "recognition" here, I am referring to the recognition of the independence of the other self-consciousness, here being the slave. The claim is that when masters choose to recognize their slaves, of their own will and not as a result of slaves demanding their recognition, the power of the masters (and not the slaves) is reinforced. The masters remain in a position of being able to choose whether or not to recognize the independent self-consciousness of the other – they are not being forced to do so. This leads to a merely illusory independence for the slave, but not an independence that is actual.
5. Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* was originally published in 1952, but was translated and published in English in 1967. The translation used here is translated by Richard Philcox in 2008, Grove Press New York, NY. Fanon examines Hegel's dialectic in a subsection of the chapter "The Black Man and Recognition" found in this edition on pages 191-197.
6. The quote Fanon is using from *The Phenomenology* can be found at paragraph 184 (Hegel 1977, 112).
7. It is important to note the relation between the terms recognition, freedom, and independence as used in Fanon's analysis of the dialectic. When he is referring to the theoretical struggle for recognition, he is primarily focusing on how recognition is necessary for independence of self. When he transitions into his discussion of French slaves being "freed" by their masters, he begins talking about the notion of freedom (for example, "As master, the white man now told the black man: 'You are now free'") (Fanon 2008, 195). Fanon seems to be suggesting that recognition of another, as a truly independent self, is essential for that person's being truly free. In these ways, genuine recognition and mutuality are preconditions for genuine freedom, on Fanon's account.
8. It is also important for Fanon that masters recognize slaves *as they are*, in their genuine difference. Fanon notes that masters often deny difference, in a shallow attempt at mutuality that again is illusory and falls short of genuine recognition. Fanon states: "The white man says to him: 'Brother, there is no difference between us.' But the black man *knows* there is a difference. He *wants* it" (Fanon 2008, 196). I think this is important to note in light of the application I am making to the contemporary racial context in America. Given the push towards so-called "colorblind" ideologies that claim racial neutrality and reject racial difference, Fanon's quote can remind us that genuine recognition requires coming to see people as independent selves *in their many differences.* When the masters deny that there are any differences between them and the slaves, they are masking differences that are important to the slaves and who they are. Genuine recognition requires seeing and appreciating differences, not masking them in pursuit of superficial neutrality.
9. For an example of another scholar who locates Hegel's inspiration for the passage in his intellectual predecessors, as opposed to his witnessing social and political events around him, see Remo Bodei (2007). Bodei argues that Hegel followed Aristotle in his articulation of the master-slave dialectic.
10. Interestingly, Ciccariello-Maher (2012) has analyzed the conflict between Martin and Zimmerman, and ultimately Martin's murder by Zimmerman, through the lens of Fanon's interpretation of Hegel's dialectic. This application of Fanon's reformulated dialectic to gain insight into the murder of Trayvon Martin lends support to my claim that Fanon offers the most informative understanding of the dialectic, particularly for its use in contemporary applications.
11. For more information on the activist group and racial justice movement, Black Lives Matter, or to find out how to get involved, see their website at http://blacklivesmatter.com.
12. For a more comprehensive analysis of the racialized system of mass incarceration in the United States, see Michelle Alexander's 2010 book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.* Alexander provides compelling and jarring statistics on the racial dimensions of mass incarceration in the United States, and particularly on its racial dimensions. She argues that mass

incarceration of black bodies in the United States is a new racial caste system, following the tradition of slavery and Jim Crow.

13. Alexander (2010, see footnote 12) attributes this to the War on Drugs, calling the War on Drugs the engine of mass incarceration of black individuals for non-violent crimes.
14. See also Fowler (2011). Fowler describes how "zero tolerance policies" and the expansion of school-based policing have transformed school misbehavior into criminal offenses (Fowler 2011, 15). Fowler also notes that "schools' discretionary decisions to suspend, expel, and/or criminalize student misbehavior contribute to student push out, dropout, and ultimately to what researchers call the "school-to-prison pipeline" (Fowler 2011, 16). These disciplinary actions that function to push students out of school and toward jails or prisons have drastic consequences, and disproportionately so for students of color (Fowler 2011, 17). For further discussion of how school disciplinary policies disproportionately impact impoverished children and children of color, leading to further adverse educational, health, and career outcomes, see chapter 9, "Education" in Tyler (2011).

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Second Order Bribery and Extortion

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Abstract:

In this paper I explore a constellation of activities that can be referred to as second order cases of bribery and extortion, and my suggestion is that an acquaintance with these activities can yield a richer appreciation of the moral issues surrounding bribery and extortion.

Keywords: Bribery, Extortion, Threats, Temptation, Moral Dilemmas, Integrity

1.

Various definitions of bribery can be found in the moral literature, and I do not propose to enter into debates about which one is the correct account (except perhaps to offer the generic claim that a bribe is an inducement to get another to act in a way the other would not otherwise behave). All that is required for the first stage of my project is that a necessary condition of someone offering a bribe is that he or she is sincerely indicating a willingness to act in a certain way.

I likewise do not propose to endorse a particular account of extortion (except perhaps to offer the generic claim that extortion is a demand for an inducement not to act that the other would not otherwise offer). All that is required for the first stage of the project is that when extortion takes place someone in some manner is threatening to act in a certain way. Of course, the matter is not quite this simple, because I will be offering examples of extortion, as well as bribery, in the ensuing discussion. Surely someone can raise objections as to whether my examples actually qualify as cases of extortion or bribery, and in this way questions about the actual definitions might arise. But I shall endeavor to choose examples that are non-controversial and to rely on how these terms function in ordinary usage, at least in the first section of this paper.

Eight categories of actions comprise the second-order cases of bribery and extortion (I employ the term "second-order" in a manner less rigorous than that of a formal logician).

(1) Indicating a willingness to offer a bribe;
(2) Indicating a willingness to accept a bribe;
(3) Indicating a willingness to extort;
(4) Indicating a willingness to be extorted;
(5) Threatening to offer a bribe;

(6) Threatening to accept a bribe;
(7) Threatening to extort;
(8) Threatening to be extorted.

Examples of actions falling under these categories will now be presented. The landlord of an apartment complex is contractually obliged to provide repairs on a first-come first-served basis. Unfortunately, the landlord works slowly, and hence there is invariably a lengthy wait for repairs to be made. Tenants are free to hire plumbers and electricians of their own choosing to make the repairs. But if they do not wish to incur the costs of hiring these professionals, they wait their turn. One day Alice approaches the landlord and indicates a willingness to bribe him in order to make a repair that very afternoon. Alice feels that she has done nothing wrong because she has not in fact offered a bribe; she has only articulated a willingness to do so, and this constitutes an example of category (1).

Suppose things had gone a bit differently. The landlord learns that Alice's apartment has no running water, and a relatively simple repair would restore the water. He approaches Alice and indicates a willingness to accept a bribe to make the needed repairs immediately. He feels that he has done nothing wrong, for he has not accepted a bribe. Moreover, he cannot rightly be charged with extortion, for he has not in any manner threatened Alice (he has not, for example, threatened not to do it at all). His indicating a willingness to accept a bribe, then, is an example of category (2).

John's sister confesses to him that she is having an affair with his married friend, Tom. John knows that Tom's wife would become violently angry if she learned about this. Tom is exceedingly wealthy, and John asks him for a loan of $300. When Tom refuses, John asks him to re-consider on the grounds that John is in a position to blackmail him and is willing to do so. John reasons that he has not actually threatened Tom; he has only said that this is a course of action he is willing to undertake. Moreover, Tom does not know what the threat would be if one were made. It might be the threat not to return a magazine he loaned John. John's actions qualify as an instance of category (3).

The next day, John's sister tells Tom that John knows of the affair. Fear overcomes Tom as he realizes that John is in a position to inform Tom's wife, and he now realizes that the blackmail John referred to was precisely this. Secure in the knowledge that he is in possession of vast sums of money and that John is very modest in his tastes, Tom informs John that he is perfectly willing to be extorted. His wife, quite simply, cannot learn of the affair. Tom reasons that he is not offering John a bribe because he is not requesting that John do anything wrong (such as violating a role duty). In this way Tom's actions exemplify category (4).

Two brothers are partners in a small business founded by their father. The older brother, who acts as the chief financial officer, realizes that the business is strapped for cash, and he proposes that they borrow from their employees' pension fund. The younger brother is strongly opposed to this idea. The older brother knows that their financial problems would vanish immediately if a certain foreign company placed an order with their business, but this could only happen if they

bribed officials of that company illegally. The older brother therefore delivers an ultimatum to the younger brother: Either agree to the loan, or he will offer bribes to these officials. This ultimatum instantiates category (5).

After happily accepting bribes from tenants of the apartment complex, the landlord faces a problem. His wife is angered and humiliated by his actions, and in an effort to save his marriage he stops accepting bribes. He in turn is angered by his wife's incessant gambling at a nearby casino. After she declares that she is unwilling to stop her visits to the casino, he threatens her with accepting bribes from the tenants. This threat falls under category (6).

When John's sister informs him of her affair, John deduces that Tom is the source of her newly found wealth. John requests a loan of $300 from his sister, and she refuses. He then threatens her that he will extort money from her lover, Tom, if she continues to refuse. This threat can be identified as an instance of category (7).

A clerk in a convenience store is instructed by the owner not to give in to extortionists unless violence is threatened. Periodically a group of locals appear, collecting money for a charity. They make it clear that a list of non-contributors will be printed in their next newsletter. The owner of the store is perfectly happy to have his store's name listed in the newsletter. One day the clerk asks for a raise and threatens that if he does not receive it, he will cave in to the extortionists whenever they pay a visit. This threat is an instance of category (8).

2.

In this section I will address the significance of these second-order categories for normative ethics. I claim that when people allege that they haven't actually engaged in bribery or extortion, they may be correct. But this taxonomy can be of assistance in identifying a different kind of wrongdoing they have committed. In the final section I claim that the identification of these other types of wrongdoing can help shed light on what exactly is morally objectionable with bribery and extortion as such.

The first scenario of the previous section involves Alice expressing a willingness to offer a bribe. She justifies her actions on the grounds that she has not actually offered a bribe; she has only expressed a willingness to do so. Someone might accuse Alice of splitting hairs and judge that she might as well have offered a bribe, given the message she is conveying to the landlord. However, Alice is correct in judging that she is innocent of offering a bribe. If she had offered a bribe to the landlord, he would know what the bribe is, at least approximately, and he would be in a position to decide whether to accept the bribe. Obviously he is in no such position.

The second scenario involves the landlord expressing a willingness to accept a bribe, an action which he feels is not the acceptance of a bribe. Someone might attempt to argue that he is splitting hairs and that he is as guilty as if he had accepted a bribe. This in fact is essentially the way bribery is dealt with in American criminal law. According to John Danley, "Federal statutes do not directly speak of accepting a bribe. The laws are written in couplets, proscribing the offering of a

bribe and the asking or soliciting of a bribe (Danley, 1983, p. 23)."[1] But despite the approach taken in the law, it is hard to deny that the landlord is correct in claiming that he has not in fact accepted a bribe.

My claim is that Alice is guilty of wrongdoing in the first scenario and that the landlord is guilty of wrongdoing in the second scenario. What wrongdoings might these be? Both are guilty of indicating a willingness to do something wrong, where the wrongdoing involves another person's also doing wrong. Alice indicates a willingness to offer a bribe which, if it is accepted, involves the landlord accepting a bribe. The landlord indicates a willingness to accept a bribe which, if carried to fruition, involves Alice's offering a bribe.

This type of wrongdoing can be captured in a single word: temptation. In the first scenario Alice is tempting the landlord to engage in wrongdoing, and in the second scenario the landlord is tempting Alice to engage in wrongdoing. No doubt they are less blameworthy, morally speaking, than if they actually engaged in bribery. But tempting another to wrongdoing is morally blameworthy to at least a modest or minimal degree.

Strictly speaking, in the first scenario Alice is not tempting the landlord to accept a bribe as such. She is tempting him to indicate a willingness to do so, after which presumably she will offer a bribe and tempt him further. But this initial temptation is still moral wrongdoing. Upon hearing her indicate a willingness to offer a bribe, he is immediately tempted to take the first step toward collecting a bribe.

Temptation also seems to play a role in scenario four, where Tom indicates a willingness to be extorted by John. Initially one might be hard pressed to identify any wrongdoing on Tom's part. But our inquiry of the last several paragraphs, which grew out of a familiarity with the categories of the taxonomy, suggests that Tom is not as innocent as one might have supposed. He is tempting John to engage in extortion, and surely that renders him morally blameworthy to at least a modest or minimal degree.

It is not my contention that temptation is the only wrongdoing involved in actions falling under categories (1), (2), or (4). Drug lords might indicate a willingness to accept a bribe out of the most depraved motives imaginable. Moreover, indicating a willingness to engage in wrongdoing can itself constitute wrongdoing, depending upon the precise circumstances (imagine a middle school teacher confiding in his students that he is willing to use illegal drugs when the opportunity arises). But temptation is at least a common theme that runs through acts of these types.

In scenario (5) the older brother threatens the younger brother that he will offer bribes if the younger brother does not agree to borrowing from the employees' pension fund. The younger brother firmly believes that borrowing from the fund would be unethical without a plan for repayment, and yet offering bribes is unethical as well. From this one can infer that the older brother is forcing the younger brother into an ethical dilemma. The older brother is not guilty of borrowing from the employees' pension fund, and he is not guilty of offering bribes, but he is guilty of

knowingly placing his brother in a position where he must endorse wrongdoing. As such, I believe he can rightly be judged to be morally blameworthy.

Moral dilemmas, when construed as situations in which agents are forced to violate moral obligations no matter what, have proven to be quite controversial in the literature. Elsewhere I have called attention to a weaker type of moral dilemma that avoids the problems that beset standard moral dilemmas: situations in which agents are forced to incur moral blame no matter what happens (Mellema, 2005, 293-297). This is the type of situation into which the younger brother has been forced by the older brother, to endorse a wrongful course of action. Of course, the younger brother can steadfastly refuse to endorse either course of action, but that refusal is itself blameworthy if we suppose that it constitutes an abdication of his responsibility to influence the older brother to act in such a way that harm is minimized.

3.

I turn now to bribery and extortion considered in and of themselves, and I will suggest that the results of the previous section can lead us to insights that are moderately interesting from a moral perspective. Turning first to bribery, we have seen that indicating a willingness to bribe, as well as a willingness to be bribed, is wrong, at least in part, because one is tempting another to engage in wrongdoing. In particular, we saw that Alice's indicating a willingness to bribe involves temptation, and her subsequent offering of a bribe involves additional temptation. When Alice subsequently offers a bribe to the landlord, she is aware that she is asking the landlord to do something wrong. And if she is willing that he accepts the bribe, which is invariably what happens when one offers a bribe, then she is willing that he does something wrong. And if she is aware that such wrongdoing involves compromising one's moral integrity, she is willing that the landlord compromise his moral integrity.

When one offers a bribe, therefore, part of what is wrong with what one is doing is that one is willing that another person compromise his or her moral integrity in order to satisfy one's own ends. I believe that this is at the heart of what is morally wrong with bribery. This phrase has a Kantian ring to it, but notice that one is doing more than treating another as a means to an end. One is doing so in a way that involves another's compromising his or her moral integrity. Some might see this as no more than mildly interesting, but it is an insight that seems to have escaped notice by those who have contributed to the philosophical literature on bribery.

What can we learn about extortion from the remarks of the previous section? We have seen that when Tom indicates a willingness to be extorted by John, he is himself committing wrongdoing by tempting John. From this we can infer that Tom would be partly responsible for being extorted by John if extortion were to take place. We have also seen that a person can be forced into a moral dilemma as the result of a threat. From this we can infer that if a person plays a role in being extorted by another, a person can come to be subject to a moral dilemma partly as the result of his or her own actions that led to the extortion.

In real life people seldom encourage others to extort them. But focusing upon the extreme case of scenario (4) can help us realize that people do make poor choices in real life, and sometimes these poor choices lead people to become extorted in ways that are partly of their own making. By placing trust in people who we know do not deserve it, for example, we can make ourselves vulnerable to extortionists.

Discussions of extortion typically focus upon the wrongdoing of extortionists, and rightly so. But the so-called victims of extortion are not always as innocent as these discussions would have us believe, and this is a point that might not have come to light were it not for an examination of category (4). If I play a role in becoming extorted by another and end up facing a moral dilemma as a result, I can likewise be partly responsible for creating the moral dilemma.

It might be objected that extortion can take place only if the person being extorted is an unwilling victim, and hence Tom is not actually a victim of extortion. But this characterization of extortion seems wrong-headed. In typical cases where a person caves in to an extortionist the person is willing to act as he or she does. If I am asked to empty the contents of my wallet at gunpoint, my handing over the money is something that I am doing willingly to avoid being shot. Of course, there is an important sense in which I am acting against my will in handing over the money. Hence when a person caves in to an extortionist, what the person does is a curious mix of what is willful and unwillful. I do not propose here to analyze or unravel this curious mix ("mixed actions" for Aristotle). But it does seem wrong to paint the victim of extortion as an unwilling victim with no qualification.

Just as the victims of extortion can be partly responsible for their predicament, they can in many instances avoid caving in to an extortionist in the first place. Robert Larmer describes a case in which a clerk is asked to hand over the contents of the cash register, where the failure to do so would result in his windows being soaped. Larmer believes that the clerk would not be justified in handing over the money in this example, and surely he is correct. Perhaps the idea is that a person is not justified in caving into a threat when the harm that is being threatened to him or her is known to be much less severe than the harm that would otherwise affect others.

To summarize, when a person engages in second order cases of bribery or extortion the person can be guilty of moral wrongdoing, even though the person is not guilty of bribery or extortion as such. Identifying the nature of this wrongdoing can in turn generate insights into bribery and extortion. On this basis, I have argued that at the heart of what is morally wrong with bribery is that one is willing that another person compromise his or her moral integrity as a stepping stone to realize one's ends. Regarding extortion, I have argued that the victims of extortion are not always as innocent or helpless as they are portrayed in standard accounts.

Endnotes:

1. U.S. Code Annotated, 210 subsection b (18 U.S.C.A.), 201-224.

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Beauty Torn by a Prick of Thorn: Rumi's Philosophy of Human Love

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Abstract:

Human self-conception is often reflected in arts, sciences, human institutions etc. concerning the human existence, its nature, potencies, its place in the universe occupied the philosophical debates more frequently than the questions related to "human sentiments". Love as the most innate human sentiment was expressed frequently in traditional folklore, poetry, and other art forms. Rumi's literary expressions of human love deserve analysis in terms of "philosophy of love". More often than not, human love is explained in terms of self-love, egoism; sometimes reduced to self-preservation or sexual drives or simply praised as civic virtue contributing to a social unity. Love for Rumi seems to imply more than that consisting primarily of an ontological feature of human beings and as well as an aesthetic and ethical virtue. Against philosophical theories of his time, Rumi offers "love" as a way of knowing that brings epistemological and ethical integrity of human being to another dimension. In this paper, we will analyze how this unity of knowing and doing come together in human love. For Rumi, only the infinity of human love can overcome the difficult task of bridging the infinite distance between human beings, nature, and the divine.

Keywords: Rumi, Masnavi, Plato, human love, philosophy of love, egoism, self-preservation, ethical integrity, virtues, epistemological certainty.

Introduction

Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (1207-1273) is no doubt one the most famous poets in Muslim Sufi tradition. Although love as a concept familiar to people of different cultures and interest, it is one of the central themes of his *Masnavi*.[1] Yet, it still remains to be a challenging task to study Rumi's understanding of love in its various implications. He remarks that had all the forests been pencils and the oceans ink, words of couplets or Masnawi would never have come to an end, alluding to the fact that human life is finite and words are insufficient to explain love itself. However, we will try to follow the traces of his 'words of wisdom' about love in its philosophical and moral implications.

Philosophies of love

Although the word 'philosophy' literally means 'love of wisdom', philosophers have occupied themselves more with questions about the nature of knowledge or wisdom than the concept of love. It is also true that Plato's *Symposium* is the first philosophical treatise discussing various aspects and forms of love. He presents love as the human desire for what he already does not possess which is beauty itself. Plato's first assumption is that at the beginning mankind was in a state

of union with himself and a double-faced creature in desire to unite with the other half that was supposed to be split at a later time. Despite Plato's fame as the first philosopher discussing "love", Rumi recognizes him as the physician of self-conceit and pride:

> Hail to thee, then, O Love, sweet madness!
> Thou who healest all our infirmities!
> Who art the physician of our pride and self-conceit!
> Who art our Plato and our Galen!
> Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven,
> And makes the very hills to dance with joy. (*Masnavi*, I/20-25)

Just as Plato's philosophy teaches us that the path to true wisdom is laid open to those who leave world of senses and opinion behind by following the path to rational wisdom; Rumi advises us to go beyond reason through love. While Plato wanted to have us believe that love of wisdom is the sure ladder for human mind to raise itself up to the world of eternal forms or ideas; whereas Rumi, on the contrary, invites us to taste the sweet madness called love and to burn our reason in the blinding power of love in order to exalt our self to the world of the sublime over and beyond the world of desire, lust and pettiness and self-conceit. Therefore, it is possible to argue that one might find in Rumi not only a strong criticism of philosophical treatments of love but also of philosophers' claim to a privileged position to know the real nature of love. The real question has nothing to do with the fact that we all human beings have some form of experience about phenomena called of love, it rather has to do with the so-called prerogative of philosophers to explain love and with the philosophical methods followed in their approach to love.

Socrates – if he represents Plato's views – describes love as want, i.e. as the desire for something that human beings already do not have. Greeks, just like the most of other people admitted several forms of love such as sexual, parental, filial, conjugal affections, friendship, and love for country and love of wisdom. Some forms of love can be expressed by desire or attraction, *eros*; others by liking or fondness, *filia*. In all forms, be it filial or erotic love has a definite effect on morality and knowledge. Lover, not the beloved acquires or fails virtue through his or her love. Two kinds of love are distinguished by Plato, that of heavenly and earthly; love of soul or body. Attraction of a man to a virtuous soul is the former. Honorable love is also the source of harmony and good. Love is the love of beauty and beauty has nothing material; it is ideal. There is also a scale of beauty, from bodies to forms, thought to minds and institution to laws and sciences (Boas 1967, s. 90).

Therefore, love, as described by Plato, is primarily determined by the object of desire. In other words, love is a desire for something human beings lack. To sum up Plato's concept of love in his own words: "Love is always the love of something," and that which love desires is not that which love is or has; for no man desires that which he is or has. And "love is of the beautiful," and therefore has not the beautiful. (Plato, *Symposium*, 200e-204d) Therefore, the existence of a feeling or desire for something we call love for Plato is a clear proof for the lack of perfection in a human subject. Commenting on Plato's *Symposium*, Pico Della Mirandola said: "Hence it follows that the nature of the desired is in some manner in the desirer; otherwise, there would be no similitude between them: yet imperfectly; else it were vain for it to seek what it entirely possesses." (della Mirandola 1914, Book II, Sec. III, s. 24) Perfect love, says Pico, is for those who are "remembering a more perfect

Beauty that their souls saw of old, before they were fettered to the body, are kindled with an incredible desire of rebeholding that Beauty"[2].

This philosophical concept of love continued to be strongly affecting the later explanations of love in arts and literature. The case in point is Goethe. He always seeks love as an unrealizable ideal. In his works, he gives a quasi-religious tone to the sexual experience by idealizing love as perfection that seeks a goal that one can never reach (Boas 1967, 93). Idealist philosophy of love raises it to the level of a mysterious cosmic power that can cause the spiritual evolution of man. According to Teilhard "love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces." (Teilhard de Chardin 1966, 3) Again he defines love as "a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution." (Teilhard de Chardin 1966, 6) However, the more love is idealized more it becomes meaningless. For this reason, Le Rochefoucauld compares love to a ghost everyone speaks of, but few people have ever seen.[3] Precisely for this reason that most people take their fancies to be love. Human failure in finding the true love cannot be taken as an antagonistic statement about existence of real love, as Schopenhauer claims (Schopenhauer 1990, 69).

On the other extreme case of philosophical accounts of love is the empirical approach. Believing only in concrete and observable facts, empiricist finds no essence of love except in our fancies. Thus, from an empirical point of view, love has only an "essence beyond our sight, or hearing, or touch, which uplifts us." As such, for instance, Glyn defines love as conscious or "unconscious desire to create love's likeness." In other words, it is simply a natural animal instinct for the preservation. In art and cultural life this natural instinct is adorned with the "beauties of imagination." (Glyn 1923, 13) Thus, like many of his contemporaries Singleton too adopts this empiricist approach by selecting following instances of love found in art and literature: "Love at first sight, ferocious and tenacious pursuit of the unloving, quarrels, reconciliations, misunderstandings, pardons, concealed love that fears to speak, timid appeals, stratagems to trick hated guardians, woman's wiles and man's contrivances, ...old love that re-awakens, love that lingers even behind cloister bars, love that faces death unflinchingly, and the despair of love forsaken." (Singleton 1901, v-vi)

There is also ordinary common usage of love in all cultures and societies. The simple question, 'what is love' might seem nonsensical for an ordinary man. Common sense meaning of love seems so obvious that it defies any answer. Some even went further to define it as self-love in disguise. It can manifest itself as a desire for something beautiful, appealing, satisfactory, fulfilling etc. but self-gratification lies at the bottom of all of these. However, in ordinary usage, the word "love" means liking or physical or sensual attraction to something or somebody. One can describe his feelings of fondness or liking of a food, a piece of music, a friend a landscape etc. "I love this pie or that person."

This common usage of the term complicates the issue rather than giving a clue to comprehend the nature of this feeling we call love. So instead of taking our lead from the feeling, one might better consider the object of love in order to explicate the matter. We may come close to a better understanding of love if the term at use in such contexts such as a fondness for a person or a family member. Feeling a desire for something with the expectation of pleasure of the body is called lust. We know that Hegel, in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, describes family life as the first form of communal life where an individual acquires moral virtues. He believes that feelings between spouses and same-sex siblings are either directed towards mutual benefit or they feel mutual denial of it to the other self in rivalry or jealousy. However, recognition of other self in itself is possible in mutual

love between brothers and sisters, since there is no expectation of benefit or conflict of interest. Therefore, love as moral virtue can be described as recognition of the other person in his or her own self-unmixed with any desire for benefit. Thus, Hegel exclaims that "the brother, however, is for sister a passive, similar being in general; recognition of herself in him is pure and unmixed with any natural desire." (Hegel 1977, 275)

This division of love into categories of natural and supernatural; human and celestial, sensual and intellectual, spiritual and carnal etc. could be found in the contemporary literature on love. However, instead of giving priority to intellectual or celestial love, modern approach to love is determined by naturalistic and positive scientific tendencies. A holistic approach is another perspective on love. For instance, Elinor Glyn claims that all three forms of love may be united in the same person. "The spiritual and the mental alone would be friendship; the physical and the mental would be merely of earth, and the spiritual and the physical would be without balance; there must be the trinity in perfect love." (Glyn 1923, 14) Again in his *Essay on Love*, Hull divides love according to the faculties of the human soul: senses, reason, and spirit. Hull claims that "sense of love is agitated, passionate, unreasoned, a pure instinct." While rational love is always "calm, passionless, reasoned and a pure volition", spiritual love goes "with sympathetic vibration of sense, resulting in emotion, feeling or affection." (Hull 1912, 55)

All this analysis presents nothing that is already not familiar to us, but it enables one to draw certain philosophical conclusions. Love is defined here in term of imperfection, to be fulfilled either through epistemological faculties or as ontological human desires for a higher order or perfection. Therefore, love as a desire for perfection is, in essence, a form of human yearning for something that the subject already does not possess. Again, it is also defined as a desire for something of unequal nature, i.e., something that the subject is attracted to because it is from another order of being. However, these definitions are all based on the Platonic assumption that love is feeling that issues from a being that lucks something that the object of desire possesses more perfectly. In other words, love is considered to be feeling for something to be received or acquired. Thus, love is thought to be a passive or receptive feeling or virtue. Furthermore, love is regarded to be an inclination towards an object that may be totally unaware of the fact that it is the object of a certain desire. That means that the loved object or person may be totally unconscious and indifferent to the plight of the lover.

Love as a human capacity for intuitive knowledge of reality

As we implied at the outset, Rumi is critical of the rational account of love. He takes into consideration all of the aspects of love as a natural desire. However, since Rumi does not present his own understanding of love in a systematic philosophical style, we can only make a summary of his critique of philosophical accounts of love we have so far mentioned. He is not the first among the Sufi sages to question the ordinary and philosophical definitions of love. Many other poets, artists and man of literature in the East or West seem to have inquired, speculated and reflected about this particular state of mind we call love. But Rumi seems to believe that love cannot be subjected to rational or cognitive analysis. For any attempt to understand or explain something in terms of 'what it is', we must face the real difficulty of finding the right way to approach it. Love is no exception to this if one tries to conceive what the true nature of human love is. Rumi warns us, for this we need a non-speculative science: "real science is seeing fire directly; not mere talk, inferring the fire from the smoke." (*Masnav*i, VI/2505-6)

One can find that the concept of love described here is completely opposite of what we have already outlined above. For Rumi, love is, first of all, a feeling of giving, not taking; it is relinquishing something that a human subject already possesses, not acquiring something that he or she already lucks. Love, for Rumi, is an essential virtue or power we already and always have from the very beginning. It is not a longing for the 'paradise lost', or remembrance of a lost perfection. Rather love is the perfection granted to the human beings at the creation. For this reason, only Rumi could say: "I deny humanity to those who are incapable of love, to those who do not have experienced love." (*Divan-ı Kebir*, 420)

As Rumi points out, the feelings we call love is no secret to anyone. But life distractions may cause us to forget all about it. Two kinds of love are described here: the first kind of love is a human state of pure need; the other is of pure annihilation. Those who feel love as means of satisfying a desire or providing certain needs may find the real love burdensome and can't stand the annihilating fire of love. True and real love is recognized by everyone except those who are occupied only with the errands of life. Those who are not fishes cannot sustain themselves in water longer and they would soon be bored, hence unaware of the reality of love cannot bear its ups and downs. The best example is the case of an ordinary run of men who only seek to earn their daily bread feel the day longer. The life spent in search of basic necessities would be felt quite long. All beings, including humans, are actually mirrors to reflect the divine light.

Certainty is acquired in three stages: The knowledge of certainty, the vision of certainty and the intuitive actuality of certainty. "In the ear's hearing there is the transformation of equalities; in the eye's seeing, there is the transformation of essences. If your knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words (alone), seek to be cooked (by the fire itself) and do not abide in the certainty of (knowledge derived from) others. There is no intuitive (actual) certainty until you burn; (if) you desire this certainly sit down in the fire." (*Masnavi*, II. 859-61)

This is not the certainty of reason, but of the heart. One seeks no proof in the presence of something that stands proved in front of one's eyes. Every proof that is not spiritual results in vain, for he is considering the final end of men. (*Masnavi*, V. 568-72) Intelligence is also of two kinds: acquisitive and intuitive. Acquisitive is acquired from "books, teachers, reflection, memory and from concepts, from the study of sciences." The other intelligence is a "fountain in the midst of the soul." (*Masnavi*, IV. 1960-67) "That which is the object of love is not the form." (*Masnavi*, II. 703)

Thus for Rumi, love signifies **(a)** the divine trust or the perfection reflected on human beings who are supposed to manifest this gift in all their relations with existence, including the Divine Beings themselves, whose attraction draws all creatures back to reunion with their Creator.

b) Love is not a desire for taking in, receiving or acquiring something; rather it is giving away the gift already received, reaching out to others as a mirror to the divine perfection, a conscious self-annihilation that leads to eternal life in God, the universal Noumenon, by whom all phenomena subsist.

Does this self-annihilation mean that one must live the life of an ascetic? On the contrary, it is not required of human beings to withdrawn from society, but from a life of self-deceit. Rumi declares that "we have no asceticism, all is by providence and mercy, this is exactly our way; complete love, journey through love, the experience of pleasantness, joy, and gaiety of peace. Love is the only provision for us. (*Divan-ı Kebir*, 420)

All phenomenal existences, except human being, are only "veils" obscuring the manifestations of the real existence, the Divine Noumenon. However, had the sustaining presence

of the Divine withdrawn from the phenomenal world even a moment, they would at once relapse into their original nothingness. In other words, "nature conceals God, but the supernatural in man reveals Him." (*Masnavi*, IV/1309) The human being is the only existence with the capacity to realize and to respond by transforming his ego as a mirror reflecting the infinite manifestations of Divine Love that originates and sustains the creation. Since knowledge and reason are not suitable for grasping the realities of the unseen world, these faculties may lead man to the knowledge of the phenomenal and the sensible world, but cannot go beyond. Love is a virtue or capacity of the human being to penetrate into the moral, spiritual, inner life world of man. If we compare the three capacities for knowing opinion, knowledge and certainty, rational knowledge is above opinion but inferior to certainty. "Knowledge is a seeker of certainty, and certainty is a seeker of vision. Knowledge leads to vision which is immediately born of certainty, just as fancy is born of opinion." (*Masnavi*, III. 3061-81)

Rumi compares the certainty as an intellectual virtue born out of love with four other incapacities of human self: animal self, desires, ego, and reason. The life is sustained by the vital spirit in all living beings. In this level vitality is the spiritual essence in plant life that continues in apparent conflict and harmony. Desire is the other power of spirit that sustains life in the animal world. Ego is the spiritual essence in the human form of life that partly shares all characteristics of lower levels of life. Reason is the faculty of soul distinguishing human being in his own form of existence. However, reason is still suitable only for knowledge, necessary to administer the needs of body. By virtue of being in charge of the body, reason can fall prey to egoistic instincts and may yield to degraded situation where it has no share in love, but only strife, conflict, rivalry, struggle for dominance.

In modern political philosophy, these levels of life forms correspond to Hobbes's state of nature and even to the state of state, where right is regarded as might. Rousseau's image of an individual that is happy and in harmony with nature prior to the social contract corresponds to this level of ego as human essence. Rumi believes that the highest form of human essence is a divinely inspired spirit that is called universal Reason. Man is able to become the mirror of this universal reason that will be attained through love as a moral and aesthetic virtue. In other words, if human being acquires the wings of love, he will reach the heights where ego and reason cannot be imagined to attain.

The essence of all beings is the love and the divine love has the greatest value which is the finality of all yearning. For his reason, Rumi always recites the Divine love, guiding man to his journey in life. He compares the reason and love, the futility of the love for finite things and the misery of those who are unaware of the reality of love. According to Rumi, reason and senses are unable to grasp the realities of the invisible world. These faculties can lead man to a certain point beyond which they are not capable to pass. However, if man donned the wings of love he can ascend beyond the points where reason and sense cannot go. Just as in the night of ascension when the angel Gabriel has told the Prophet Muhammad that if he goes a fingertip further, he would be burned', but the prophet has reached beyond the threshold of infinitude (*sidratu'l-muntaha*). This is the point where both angels and human beings cannot go beyond. In other words, it is the end point of all existence and the threshold of the Divine realm. For his reason, the angel Gabriel is the symbol of human perception, reason, and knowledge; the Prophet is the symbol of soul and love.

The Sufi is the "son of the time present" because he is in love with all existence as mirror or instrument moved by the divine impulse of the moment. "The time present is a sharp sword"

because the divine impulse of the moment dominates lover and executes its decrees sharply. The essence of love cannot be expressed with words, but those who experience know it. Someone has asked Rumi, 'what is being a lover?' He said to him "if you become like me you will learn." (*Mecâlis-i Sab'a*, 82)

Seeking to know, discovering and becoming are the three stages of spiritual development towards the recognition of the divine light of love that guides us. Reason or cognitive knowledge is only the beginning of this discernment:

> "Love; however I will explain or describe;
> we humans will be speechless in defining love;
> Although pen writes everything, it turns paralyzed when it comes to love.
> Reason in explaining love is like a donkey meddled into mud.
> Love and being lover could only be explained only by love.
> The evidence for sun is sun itself; if you search for evidence do not turn away from sun. (*Masnavi*, I/ 117-121)

There are two forms of discernment: moral and esthetic. Through moral judgments, human beings are able to discern the significance or the universal value of entities. Through esthetics judgments, we discover their place in the total harmony we call universal beauty. Love as moral virtue is a cure for arrogance and vanity; the earthly body becomes sublime through love; those who tear their clothes in the search of love will be relieved of the burden of passion and sin. (*Masnavi*, I/22-25). He emphasizes that the passion, greed, arrogance, envy, and vengeance can only be purged by divine love. If people who recognize the spiritual worth of every existence are in majority in a society, tranquility and peace will prevail. Just like all men need to learn a profession in order to earn a living, everybody needs to learn the art of religion which is rewarded by love. (*Masnavi*, II/2618-27). For this reason, Rumi tells us that "my mother is love, father is love, my prophet is love, and my God is Love. I am a love child and I have come to tell about love to world."

Love as a moral virtue

For Rumi, love is first and, foremost, an essential human virtue. The absence of love as moral virtue is responsible for the degradation of human situation. One reason for this degradation is the confusion between desire and love. There are two kinds of desires: One is directed to opposite nature, to plants for the purpose of satisfying the need for food; the other is directed towards beings of same nature with opposite accidentals, to human beings of opposite sex for preserving the species or procreation and satisfaction of desires. Desire for objects of opposite nature can be called, in the ordinary parlance, 'love' for the finite things. But desire for beings of the same nature should not be directed solely to the satisfaction of lust or desire. Rumi once warns that "if love is attached to color, odor, it is not love, it is shame on the person" (*Mesnevi*, I/224)

Therefore true love between human beings and between man and God cannot be sustained on the level of satisfaction of needs. Love is and should be considered as a moral virtue in our dealings with fellow man. Rumi speaks of three basic moral virtues of humility, openness, and care. The care is a virtue of man who makes his bodily desires submitted to will or heart's desire, i.e. desire to actualize man's true selfhood. If man cares about his "being-in-world" – borrowing one of

Heidegger's terms – or basic necessities of his existence, it means he is turning a blind eye to 'being-towards-beyond'.

> When the body bows in worship, the heart is a temple,
> And where there is a temple, there bad friends are weeds
> When a liking for bad friends grows up in you,
> Flee from them, and avoid converse with them.
> Root up those weeds, for, if they attain full growth,
> They will subvert you and your temple together.
> O beloved, this weed is deviation from the "right way",
> You crawl crookedly, like infants unable to walk.
> Fear not to acknowledge your ignorance and guilt,
> That the Heavenly Master may not withhold instruction.
> When you say, "I am ignorant; O teach me",
> Such open confession is better than false pride. (*Masnavi*, IV, 1380-90)

As Rumi points out, moral virtues of humility, openness, and care for the character development let the human actions reflect the primordial perfection of human soul in the mirror of fellow human beings. We, human beings, all are mirrors for each other. Human life is part of a dynamic process in which not only moral virtues are realized, but also possibilities of infinite happiness are achieved. Moral life which requires man make free choices is the mark of humanity. Choosing to love others is also a decision that can be made by free agents who achieved his freedom from petty desires. For Rumi, man's burden is to become free and freely share the perfection bestowed on human at the moment of his primordial creation by God.

God created the angels with reason and the brutes with lust, but man he created with both reason and lust; the man who follows reason is higher than the angels, and the man who follows lust is lower than the brutes" (*Masnavi*, IV. 1500-15); Rumi, like many other Sufis, considered that human soul has a divine origin, that is to say, it is 'breathed into him by the Creator'. This may either mean that human soul had a pre-natal existence, or human soul as a substance is received from the Divine. Moreover, the perception of the beauty of objective world is not always a form of remembrance of that supreme beauty in the spiritual world. It comes as a result of recognition of love as the reason and wisdom behind the Divine creation that is reflected by all beings in the world. The body is the veil; but in ecstasy born out of the experience of love, human soul could behold the Divine Majesty manifested in all creatures.

Although Rumi has no favorable view of neo-Platonist philosophers, we can quote one of Avicenna's poem on the soul where he expresses a similar view[4]:

> Lo, it was hurled Midst the sign-posts and ruined abodes of this desolate world.
> It weeps when it thinks of its home and the peace it possessed,
> With tears welling forth from its eyes without pausing or rest,
> And with plaintive mourning it broods like one bereft
> Over such trace of its home as the fourfold wind have left.
> Creation was regarded as the output of the All-Beautiful.
> The visible world and all therein was a reflection of the Divine,
> An ever-changing scene full of the *Spirit of God*.

On this higher form of love that results in the experience of unity of all beings, Iqbal comments that "in the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience" is not something in which ego effaces "its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite." (Iqbal 1986, 110)

The intellect is helpless in expounding love; it is love alone that can offer the explanation of love. Although love is the motive behind all creation, it defies all definition, all description. The love is an end to itself, and the price of love is life itself. For the lover values the love above everything else, since he has not come by it easily and cheap, he cannot give his consent to throw it away. Through the power of love, he frees himself from the bondage of life and attains a treasure, the value of which cannot be set in terms of gold, power or possessions. (*Masnavi*, I. 1468) Since in each heart there is a window to other hearts, They are not, separated and shut off like two bodies (*Masnavi*, III. 4395-96).

Unlike the bodies which are closed to each other, or each enclosed within itself, hearts can join together without losing the individuality of the self. Rumi makes a parallel between heart-body and the chandelier glass and light. "Thus, even though two lamp-dishes remain to be not joined, yet their light is united in a single ray." (*Masnavi*, III/4397-98)

Rumi's word of love is a moral call for humanity to find unity in diversity, inviting all to a peaceful life on earth (*Divan-ı Kebir*, 423).

> Come; come over, more over, how long this brigandage?
> As you are me and I am you. How long this discrimination of you and I?
> We are light of God! Why this separation among us?
> Why light escapes from light?
> We are all from the same yeast, our brains and heads too.
> But under this bowed sky we see double...
>
> From these five senses, six directions
> Carry all what you possess to the country of Unity.
> Till when you will continue only to speak of Unity.
> Come on, deny your Ego. Get united with everybody.
> So long as you remain in yourself, you are a particle.
> But if you get united with everybody, you are a mine, an ocean.
> Believe that all spirits are one! And all bodies are one!
> Just like almonds in quantity hundreds of thousands;
> But there is the same oil in all of them.
> There are many languages in the world, in meaning all are the same.
> If you break the cups, water will be unified and will flow together...

In conclusion, what Rumi believes in, then, is the religion of love. In his inimitable way, he tells us that love is a Divine gift entrusted into him over and over again. The highest end that the human love must lead is not only an individual morality of self-realization but also social moral order that reflects the peace within and without. For him, life is so short it should not be wasted away by meaningless hatreds or blood feuds. We should all live a good life here because nobody will live on indefinitely. Thus Rumi echoes the call of his contemporary, the13th-century Sufi poet, Yunus Emre: "I am not here on earth for strife. Love is the mission of my life."[5]

Endnotes:

1. *The Mathnawí of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*. Edited and translated with commentary by Reynold A. Nicholson. VIII Vols. London: Luzac & Co., 1925-1940. First complete English translation of the *Mathnawī* or *Masnavī*. An abridged translation was made by E. H. Whinfield, *Masnavī-i Ma'navī, the Spiritual Couplets of Maulānā Jalālu'd-din Muhammad Rūmî*. London: 1887; Also a new translation published recently: *The Masnavi: Book One*, translated by Jawid Mojaddedi. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; Book Two, 2007. Henceforth references to *Masnavi* are to book and line numbers, (such as I/18 or V/1250).
2. Mirandola, *A Platonick Discourse upon Love* Book. II, quoted in the "Introduction" by E.G. Gardner, p. 23.
3. François La Rochefoucauld, *Moral Maxims and Reflections*. (Ed.) George H. Well. London: Methuen, 1912, p. 45, Maxim 76: "There is real love just as there are real ghosts; every person speaks of it, few persons have seen it."
4. Quoted by Hadland Davis*, Wisdom Of The East The Persian Mystics: Jalalu'd-din Rumi*. London: John Murray, 1912, p. 21.
5. *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry*. Edited by Talat Halman, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981, "Editor's Forword."

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Veiled Assumptions and the Failure of Ethical Conversations

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Abstract:

What we learn from history is that thought and knowledge and their often unarticulated assumptions are not hermeneutically sealed off from the hopes and dreams or ordinary people, or from a nation and its leaders seeking to bring forth a democratic vision. Innocuous as it may seem today, the utilitarian doctrine of the 19th century brought forward as American pragmatism bears out attention. This *so-called* ethical theory finding its roots in the Enlightenment as reason was being flushed from its medieval and religious influences, but had a disguised and, philosophically, unarticulated meaning. Perhaps put forth as a defense of reason over faith, but now, in the throes of the Industrial Revolution, and threatened by the Great Awakening and Christian fundamentalism, intellectuals were searching for a practical way of promoting science and its technological developments. Now redefined, pragmatism was put forward as an ethical principle, but the popular mantle, "the greatest good for the greatest number" revealed an unspoken belief that minorities didn't count, especially "blacks", who were thought of as mentally and culturally unable to carry forward the economic and democratic successes flourishing in Europe and America. In broad strokes, this article identifies the veiled assumptions of utilitarianism and pragmatism that today underlies the American moral crisis, emanating from pulpit, pew, and the hallowed halls of Congress. This may have been an unattended consequence, but it is real nonetheless.

Keywords: assumptions, culture, epistemic, ethnocentric, essences, human rights, hope, intrinsic, mind, normative, pragmatism, pre-rational beliefs, sentiments, theism, utilitarians.

Introduction

Ideologically (from a political, cultural, or religious point of view), the nation we so fondly call "America" was in part a creation of the influence of myth and fact, reason and hope, fear and anxiety. As these cultural forces were overlapping and bumping into one another, the ideal of American democracy was taking shape. Seemingly, today, without rudder or anchor we have succumbed to an unprincipled and unthinking trajectory making drilling down to the foundations of our values, our democratic culture, both complicated and treacherous. As this history becomes more remote, it leaves an ever-widening gap to be filled in by old stories and beliefs. These, says A. C. Grayling, "are so much easier to understand, and provide the neat narrative structure – beginning, middle, end, and purpose – that human psychology loves." (Grayling, 2016, 323)

As we most assuredly know, our myths, including the veiled assumptions about our genealogical past, cannot be dispelled by facts alone. They lie quietly within and operate in the background of our logic and beliefs hidden deep inside with an emotional force helping us to get our bearings in a world of confusing ethical messages. Many remain in denial about their veiled cultural assumptions, living in the popular ideologies of the present ignoring history past. The psychological and social (cultural) factors that reinforce prejudice, a politics of bigotry, or a culture of freedom and dignity for all are difficult to admit and even more challenging to identify. Like it or not, we are our beliefs, our values, and they live quietly within us often as a collective opinion providing reassurance, considered natural and difficult to vanquish.

In broad strokes, this article attempts to lay bare several clues to this dilemma. This will not only be found in the uneasy balance of faith and reason, emanating from the European Enlightenment, but in the seemingly innocuous mantle of a pragmatic philosophy touted generally as "The American Philosophy" with its call to arms, "the greatest good for the greatest number."[1] Looking through the veil of "white" eyes, this statement seems innocent enough, but a closer look reveals its masking the assumption of "white supremacy" driving life and politics in the 19th century and remains a serendipitous energy weaving our political and religious convictions in the 21st century in uneasy affiliations.

As America became the center of scientific and industrial achievement, the *utility of reason* was promoted as common sense and pragmatic, as it was, but uniquely moral is was not. Utility or pragmatism provides no ethical content and has a tendency to float in the contaminated air of political expediency and an ill-defined hope that whatever is deemed by the majority as politically or socially important will eventually morph into what Dewey called "human flourishing", the best kind of life a person can live and what it entails. (Dewey 2008, 87-95) Looking through the eyes of minorities, "human flourishing" takes on a different and unexpected meaning. Referring to President Trump's treating the entire nation as black, Michael Dyson says, "After a great deal of resistance, combat, and protest, some white folk have come around to seeing race, especially this brand of whiteness, as a fiction, something Baldwin said more than 50 years ago. Many whites now see the truth because they believe that what Trump is doing is deeply and profoundly flawed, even lunatic. His obsessions and perverse preoccupations are the stuff of a whiteness that never had to be held accountable. Trump's total lack of knowledge, and the enshrinement of ignorance in the basis of power and authority is the personification of white supremacy and white arrogance." (Dyson 2018, 63-64)

With the rise of Christian fundamentalism in the 19th and 20th centuries, a clash inevitably occurred. The more secular promoted the utility of reason leaving their faith in the rear of their ethical musings as only a patina directing their discourse. For the more religiously inclined, belief in God and the Scriptures became the criteria of truth and morals. But as we know, belief in God is no guarantee against prejudice and unprincipled behaviors. In the 19th century, faith and reason – a combustible duo – were firmly fixed into a so-called "American Philosophy" pushed forward by a

spirit of conquest and industry, supporting slavery and, in our time, discrimination against minorities. In time, hotbed issues such as the feminist movement, integration, same-sex marriage, homosexual inclusion, and now the immigration crisis would bring American ethical beliefs into contact and reveal their tensions and differences.

The causal links supporting this interpretation are difficult to procure, but just ask, "What if I'm in the minority?" How then does the "greatest good for the greatest number fit into my life and does it support universal human rights and benevolence?" Philosophically and historically are views and actions of decent people supporting a universal view of humanity and the dignity it compels.[2] (Taylor 2001, 23; see also, Meacham 2018) In broad strokes, we are challenged to assess the neglected and often hidden assumptions of the "the greatest good..." mantle which has caused and is causing a dialogical failure blurring the edges of ethical discussion and moral genuineness. Looking back, our history is replete with presidents and politicians, ministers and ordinary folks struggling with their own personal and national identity. Strong is the hold of the past as its myths and atrocities are often reinterpreted and justified camouflaging their amoral assumptions. Recommended is searching for a common ethic that does justice to these shared opinions and, guided by hope, using the power of reassessment as an instrument of dialogical healing.

Pre-Rational Assumptions and the Inadequacies of Utilitarianism and Theism

Conspicuously, our cultural, often pre-rational beliefs and assumptions are revealed in the language we use and in the language we choose, and, importantly, in the normative force our words imply. Culture and its often unarticulated grammar constitute the normative reality in which we live. It is a defining aspect of what it means to be human. But, pinpointing the impact of culture and its assumed but often unarticulated moral intentions is not as straightforward as it seems. Terry Eagleton comments, "Culture, like civilizations, involves material institutions; but it can also be seen as a primarily spiritual phenomenon, and as such, can pass judgment on social, political and economic activity. It is less under the sway of utility than civilization, less hamstrung by pragmatic considerations." (Eagleton 2016, 18) Given our cultural disparities, any ethic – secular or religious – to be effective must harbor a wide stance (Daniels, 1979, 256-282) and gather into its wicker many dissimilar views to unveil our common humanity and to lay bare the ethical vision that sustains us. For this reason, a reductionist ethic – either materialistic or theistic – misses the depth of the humanity that we are. It ignores the definitive value-suppositions of our cultural dissimilarities, and, within the practicalities of politics and everyday life, resulting in name-calling, labels, and caricatures. Building walls around our beliefs not only shuts others out, they also encapsulate us within a narrow view of the rights and dignity of others.

Both science and religion are replete with unspoken, often hidden, and seldom discussed beliefs. From a moral point of view, these assumptions are antecedal to the conclusions drawn about the sources and foundation of ethics. Thus, ethics, both secular and religious, emit an *iffy* quality with reference to that which has yet-to-be-discovered and/or confirmed, the motives and unspoken

values they entail, and, especially, the decision or indecision to follow a recognized ethical rule or intuitive ethical belief. These involve interpretations of the real and recognized—the physical and social nature of human living and the cultural expectations by which we direct our lives. And although *empiricism* is the hallmark of science and scientific utilitarianism, important to ethics is what is unspoken and assumed as much as what is said and placed in theoretical discourse. And what engrained suppositions do the faithful bring to this discussion? Belief-in partakes of absolutism, looks back to ancient authorities for truth and guidance, and projects what many consider to be an untenable (mythological) future. Faith can be uplifting, but it can also be demeaning and deceitful. Of course, just as we cannot build a bridge from faith to certainty, we cannot build from logic a bridge from fact to value, from *isness to oughtness*. Ethics is and remains a precarious undertaking.

We are quick to judge a theory, or an idea, by a theoretical misstep by an over-zealous theoretician. Nothing written goes forward with unblemished simplicity. But in our judgments, we often forget the *kernel of insight* they have brought forth. Despite his misjudgment about our hidden moral grammar, Marc Hauser's[3] assumptions require our attention. This will entail a search for the "hidden grammar" of moral discourse, the unspoken assumptions that drive our conclusions. This we should consider in both ethics and science. Whether this grammar is biological or cultural, intuitive, or determined by a belief structure remains to be determined and its complications are obvious. Rational discourse is prized by both the faithful and those espousing a scientific view of the world. Revealed in both is "hope" as a guiding metaphor for their discussions of ethics. Given our differences, understanding depends on our being able to communicate our values openly and consistently.[4]

The Utility of Reason

Digging deeper into both utilitarian and religious literature – not shutting down our inquiry – remains a challenge. An examination of the "utility" of reason, especially moral reasoning advocated by utilitarians, provides a hint to the presuppositions guiding much contemporary inquiry into ethics and the open dialogue recommended. Understanding the epistemic complications of ethics and guided by an excessive belief in the power of scientific knowledge and techniques when applied to ethics, utilitarian Richard Rorty (1999, 23 ff.) recommends we replace talk about "knowledge" – trying to know reality as it "really" is – with "hope". This was his final word on ethics, but what lies behind this suggestion? Rorty's epistemological skepticism is obvious as he seeks to avoid discussing anything that smacks of the intrinsic. Acknowledging doubts about *absolute knowledge* and *knowledge of the innate and intuitive*, he appears to abandon his utility hypothesis and floats aimlessly in the ethereal notion of "hope."

"Hope" is a metaphor expressing what could be, but is not, a pressing vision of the future, driving our thinking with unarticulated suppositions and, in Rorty's case, premises. Understanding the metaphorical and perhaps intrinsic nature of hope we are able to uncover the hidden conjectures of Rorty's theory of knowledge (itself a metaphor) as he dispenses with much of Platonic and

Cartesian metaphysics replacing the "supposed reality" behind "reality" with plain talk about the *utility of knowledge* as a means toward greater human well-being and happiness. From what unspoken ontological reservoir does he pull his idea of hope? Of course, there can't be one for he denies the existence of "supposed reality." And from where does the desire for pleasure and happiness originate? This "supposed reality", the hopes and dreams of ordinary people, Rorty calls "essences" and defines as "nonsensical speech", including belief, faith, God, mind, the reality of hidden assumptions, and anything that smacks of the human spirit. Although drawing on *hope*, he fails to mention that *hope* is also a "supposed reality", as he says.

Examining the language of ethics through a scientific filter and pronouncing much in cultural discourse as "nonsense" is the veneer of utilitarian discourse. Thus, Rorty and those of the same ilk are satisfied with examining speech acts only, revealing the veiled supposition that only the physical is real, and that insight, belief, and perhaps even reason, which he prizes, are an unreality. From where do these spring? And if "mind" is metaphor only, as we suspect, does it have a referential stopping place? What correlation does it express, one of similarity or one of identity? And *similar* to what and *identical* to what? *Confusingly*, Rorty says, "If it makes any sense to speak of the existence of universals, it *would seem* that they must exist immaterially, and that is why they can never be identified with spatio-temporal particulars. I conclude that we cannot make non-spatiality the criterion of mental states, if only because the notion of 'state' is sufficiently obscure that neither the term 'spatial state' nor the term 'nonspatial state' seems useful." Obscured in this statement are the epistemic assumptions lying at the foundation of his utilitarianism. Using the criteria of "utility", Rorty dispels with the intrinsic revealing a bare epistemic physicalism. (Rorty 1979, 20-24) Upon deeper inspection, utilitarianism is a moral theory its own methods cannot confirm or disconfirm leaving us in a bottleneck of contradictions.

Charles Taylor, a critic of utilitarian theory, says, "The notion is never that whatever we do is acceptable. This would be unintelligible as the basis of a notion of dignity. Rather, the key point is that the higher is to be found not outside of but as a manner of living ordinary life. For the Reformers this manner was defined theologically; for classical utilitarians, in terms of (instrumental) rationality. For Marxists, the expressivist element of free self-creation is added to Enlightenment rationality. But in all cases, some distinction is maintained between the higher, the admirable life and the lower life of sloth, irrationality, slavery, or alienation." (Taylor 2001, 23) What Taylor seeks in any moral theory is an affirmation of the ordinary life. He says, "The notion that the life of production and reproduction, of work and the family, is the main locus of the good life flies in the face of that were originally the dominant distinctions of our civilization. For both the warrior ethic and the Platonic, ordinary life in this sense is part of the lower range, part of what contrasts with the incomparably higher. The affirmation of the ordinary life, therefore, involves a polemical stance towards these traditional views and their implied elitism." This he says is carried over and transposed in secular guise "which powers the reductive views like utilitarianism which wants to denounce all qualitative distinctions." Then, are we left, as Karl Jaspers reminds us, "[with]... no firm ground

under us, no principle to hold on to, but a suspension of thought in infinite space – without shelter in conceptual systems, without refuge in firm knowledge or faith. And even this suspended, floating structure of thought is only one metaphor of being among others."[5] (Jaspers 1997, 187-188)

Hovering behind much utilitarian and pragmatic talk is the assumption of "the greatest good for the greatest number", but only in terms of its utility value for the greatest number. Clothed underneath these words was not hope only, but hope for the majority and fear of the minority. In the closing years of the 19th century in America, as John Meacham writes, "Whites reigned supreme." During that time, Justice John Marshall Harlan in the aftermath of *Plessy v. Ferguson* wrote, "The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country... But in the view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant ruling class of citizens." (Meacham 2018, 68-69) Thus, historically and in the minds of many, as the 19th century was drawing to a close, the utilitarian thinking, which had now morphed into pragmatism and the idea of "manifest destiny", and based on a belief in white supremacy, was confounding the waters of equality, freedom, and justice *for all* supporting first, slavery, and then discrimination against people of color and many other ethnically different and foreign people flowing into America.

Theoretically, for utilitarians, happiness as "the good" is ill-defined except by reference to "the greatest number" leaving their ethic and that of pragmatism as only an expedient way of thinking and behaving. Expediency alone – what is good for the majority – became a justification, in the minds of many, for racism, anti-Semitism, and the like, but omits the veiled assumption that "happiness for the majority (rich, white, and powerful) ought to be pursued." Looking more carefully at utilitarian theory, "happiness" and its "implied ought" are pre-rational suppositions, normative and not descriptive only, and antecedental to their idea of social hope. In retrospect, this was not the happiness talked about by Aristotle, that life finds meaning and purpose within human relationships that the good of the whole is crucial to the genuine well-being of the individual. Happiness, says Aristotle, is something we choose for its own sake because it is a universal impulse in all humans. Happiness is not a "means" to something else.

Ironically, pragmatism was decreed as "the American philosophy" but carried with it the unspoken assumption of fear that minorities would gain a public voice. Thus, it veiled the deeper negative values of the American heart and spirit. Still, today, pragmatism has a certain "common sense" hold on the American psyche bringing forth unexpected and, perhaps, unintended consequences. But what those who still hold onto this doctrine are discovering is that words that flash on a screen or actions that have no moral foundation in human decency can't adequately display the unspoken tremors of the heart or dispel the energy alive in those seeking, what Jefferson described as happiness, freedom, and equality for all. Some utilitarians have tried, expressing a social hope couched in the words of the Golden Rule, but this remains a vain and inadequate attempt. (Rorty 1999, 23 ff.)

I think it honest to ask, "Have some in America lost their hold on what is truth and what is morally right and decent?" Reading the words, "Let's make America great again", we see that the

problem of our moral identity is still with us today. We wonder to what era in our past is being referred to in these words. It is a truism that most history is what people choose to believe, hiding their knowledge under the veil of their assumptions. This may just be the key to unraveling our current political situation. There is no mystery in this for we live in the genetic and social fabric of our past the flux of which often hides our motives and intentional activities. This amoral *trajectory* didn't start yesterday or in 2015; it began long ago and now we are suffering its unintended consequences.

Unarguably, G. E. Moore is in agreement with utilitarian theory. He says, "All moral laws, I wish to show, are merely statements that certain kinds of actions will have good effects. (...) What I wish first to point out is that 'right' does and can mean nothing but 'cause of a good result', and is thus identical with 'useful': whence it follows that the end always will justify the means and that no action which is not justified by its results can be right." (More 1960, 196) What Moore leaves us to explain is "what is a good result?" How is "good" to be defined? How would we know anyway? Strangely, Moore's view is echoed by William James who commented out of practical necessity, "The true, to put it briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving." ("Pragmatic Theory of Truth" 1969, 427-428)

Philosophers often leave us in a values-confusion. Moore's "statements of a certain kind," and James' "expedient" are concepts weighted with pre-rational postulations – unspoken suppositions about the nature of good, right, and true. When applied to the majority only, their meanings become clear as the mantle of "white supremacy" was a weighted scale favoring the rich and the powerful. To be sure, "truth" often finds its articulation in logic and science and is closely aligned with "fact," but "good" and "right" find their meaning in the unspoken genealogy of our cultural histories. Upon examination, we are caught in a language quagmire of *metaphor swapping* leading to a slippery slope of meaningless dialogue.

Lying behind the utilitarian hypothesis (like any theory) is a concept of "culture", a concept that appears plainly descriptive but is not, as utilitarians slip in prescriptivism under the covers of their "greatest good" hypothesis. Yes, we can study and describe culture(s), but the culture that "we" are is often obscured by our moral grammar and swings unperceptively with prescriptive force and many times articulated as "social hope". Revealing our expectations culture includes, among other things, the elusive normative values driving our lives. Language is often deceptive, as referring to our inherent physical nature only may state a fact or it can formulate a value judgment, one that limits our discussions to what is perceived and ignores that which is intrinsic, intuitive, or based on belief. What we have in utilitarianism is a narrowing of culture using one version of culture as his source. This is a classic circular argument, perhaps engorged by a genetic fallacy, but in the end, most of our arguments are circular involving the presuppositions that are antecedal to our conclusions.

We often ignore this, including the social results of an insulated philosophical theory. Mostly, philosophers are content with picking through the entrails of an argument and revealing its consistencies or inconsistencies. We attend to its logic and not its social implications. Those

espousing utility and expediency as a measure of truth and morals have begged the question of slavery, of reconstruction, the wave of immigrants coming into America at the end of the 19th century, and the nature of humanity itself. Although rooted in moral theory, utility, as the sole judge of what is "right" and "good" became "what works". While the idea of "good" was never adequately defined, this bland moral conundrum supported our capitalistic impulse while limping into our consciousness as "the great American philosophy" often defined as "the greatest good for the greatest number."

Morality as utility has a reductive effect making ethics just another commodity that we may or may not pursue. We are reminded of this by the phrase "Let the buyer beware" uncovering an amoral foundation to capitalism, an economic driver of Democracy. There has always been an uneasy and trepid balance between capitalism and democracy. Keep in mind that logic and reason cannot and do not create our values; their purpose is to add clarity and consistency. Our values have a different place of origin than simple utility. And, again, we must remember that the origin of our values in no way constitutes their justification. Calling upon the origins of our beliefs, either epistemological or religious, begs the question of their meaning, content, and moral significance. It is similar to an ad hominem fallacy leveraging existing negative perceptions to make someone's argument look bad, without actually presenting a case for why the argument itself lacks merit. This is something the religious should understand when calling on the authority of God or Scripture as a means of justification or labeling those who disagree with their religious beliefs as atheists or agnostics and their political beliefs as traitors. Utilitarians are correct on this point and it's a point of simple logical reasoning, but they too have this problem when denying the inward nature, true substance, or constitution of anything, as opposed to what is accidental, phenomenal, illusory, or material.

Religious Absolutism and the Lack of Dialogical Conversation

Reasons are required in the throes of dialogical conversation to support our choice of values from the cultural mixture that is us. This never occurs automatically and absolutism, as found in many religious values, is not sufficient to convince. Absolutism, in religion and in politics is the ethos of the ego, not the community; it has no universal appeal as it favors a one-sided interpretation of belief, political policy, or the Constitution. (Meacham 2018, 68) Absolutism is revealed as a top-down directive, singularly interpreted, and has a slippery slope effect as it herds the many into its wicker. But ethics and civility are often unarticulated cultural norms requiring our constant diligence, dialectical interaction, and moral leadership. Meacham writes that President Lincoln gave us a leadership of hope and progress, but Andrew Johnson failed in this regard playing the white supremacy card and catering to his white southern constituency. (Meacham 2018, 62) An ethic of hope opens both heart and mind to a future of human dignity for all. A reductionist ethic, faith-based or utilitarian, is hope-denying. Also, care must be taken for as Oswald Spengler[6] reminds, all cultures eventually petrify and externalize themselves into civilizations which suggest a decline from

the organic to the mechanical. This we find in both utilitarian theory and religious practices, as both the secular and religious ethic are transposed into a sterile mechanical impulse, a utility value only. Given the liturgical practices of the faithful, a mechanical, perfunctory ethic appears to stain their ideals of right, fair, justice, and decency as well.

Civilizations evolve, not mechanically, but through the ideals, creativity, and decisions of people, as John Stuart Mill says, through...

> ...the multiplication of physical comforts; the advance and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners; the decline of war and personal conflict; the progressive limitation of the tyranny of the strong over the weak; the great works accomplished throughout the world by the co-operation of multitudes.(Eggleston 2010, 266)

Given Mill's definition, the slogan "Let's make America great again" strains both our consciousness and our knowledge. The history being referred to by the word "again" is seen by many in only their peripheral vision, not quite myth, and not quite fact. It submits to varied interpretations. When confronting this slogan, we are faced with the conundrum: what does it mean to be an American within the diversity that America is and always has been given the hodgepodge of its genetic history, social activities, and traditions? Probing even deeper we discover that the 19th-century phrase "manifest destiny" referred only to whites and excluded all others. This too can be linked to utilitarian doctrine as people of color (minorities) – Native Americans, Africans, Asians, and Hispanics – have been and are being pushed out of the way, by policy and violence, by white Americans hell-bent and destined – by God, some say – to secure their dominance as if white supremacy is Constitutionally demanded. This remains a veiled assumption in pulpit, pew, and the halls of Congress, state and federal. It seems that the pre-Enlightenment mind of religious myth and fundamentalism is today an activity in control of many lives in and outside of America. Again, it is the self-consciousness and unselfconsciousness of experience in our time that can explain this.

Especially important to the concept of culture is Ernst Bloch's introduction of the ontological priority of the "not-yet", of becoming, of what might happen sometime in the future suggesting that we are a people in the making; we are not a finished product. "It is therefore not", says Dennis J. Schmidt his translator, "the static or finished self-identity of concepts but their dynamic relativity to other concepts that lets them be meaningful or intelligible" (Bloch 1986, xii-xiii). This dynamic relativity suggests a more expansive notion of ethics preferable to one that is narrow, legalistic, self-centered, logic-based, scientific, or religiously one-sided. Ethics, which pursues human equality, happiness, and responsibility for all – which views the self as it views others and which asks *not what it is right to do but what it is good to do* – cannot be allowed to decay on the horns on an unsustainable view of American exceptionalism or be diminished by unreasonable self-interest, the narrow absolutism of religious doctrine, or a survival-of-the-fittest hypothesis implied in neo-Darwinian ethics ignoring the least among us. Morality is an affirmation of everyday life, the commonplace, and the normal; and, as Kant reminds us, owes nothing to the order of nature less we

forget the dignity of life as it is lived. (Taylor 2001, 83-84) Thus, ethics and the moral impulse which lies at its heart are organic – natural, alive and growing within each person seeking a non-dehumanizing expression in equality, freedom, and happiness for all.

Rorty correctly says that the ideas and arguments of philosophers, theologians, educators, and scientists are embedded in a morass of unstated beliefs and assumptions. The clarity of their statements, the logic of their arguments, and the axiomatic assumptions guiding their theories provide only an illusion of objectivity. With this I am in agreement for we more often than not project our values onto the events of our day and into our descriptions of such events including their causes. When "utility" and "belief-in" become an uncompromising foundation for ethical values, we are required to dig a bit deeper. They both represent an objectivity-illusion, the hidden assumptions of which have yet to be overcome. More often than not, both utilitarians and theists slip in *prescriptivism* under the covers of their ontological hypotheses, revealing a theory of what ought to be rather than what is. (Jacoby 2018, 76-77)

E.A. Burtt[7] (1965, 28) notes that presuppositions are the given – the intuitively given – we present to reality that in turn modify reality and become reality itself. We tend to shape our moral views, perhaps unaware of their cultural origins, by our own cultural genealogy. "The greatest good for the greatest number" as the assumed culture of the majority was the "there" that was "there" but not-yet fully realized or openly stated except by a few; yet, plainly articulated in various views of white supremacy. (See: Meacham 2018. See chapters 1 & 2, 23-79, especially quoting Thomas W. Dixon who said, "The white man must reign supreme.") We sometimes get a peek at these presuppositions through the language of discourse and argument as they garnish our emotions with a quiet motivational quality, but ever so often they remain unarticulated so as not to reveal their intended consequences. Sometimes they are just unconscious utterances (habits of the mind and heart) ingrained in our cultural heritage to which we give little thought.

Ideologically (from a political, cultural, or religious point of view), the nation we so fondly call "America" was in part a creation of the influence of myth and fact, reason and hope, and fear and anxiety. As these forces were overlapping and bumping into one another, the ideal of American democracy was taking shape. The unspoken and often assumed tentacles of our history have enslaved us in seemly irresolvable ideologies. As we most assuredly know, our myths, including the veiled assumptions of our genealogical past, operate in the background of our logic and beliefs, hidden deep inside with an emotional force, helping us to get our bearings in a world of confusing ethical messages. The psychological and social (cultural) factors that reinforce prejudice and a politics of bigotry are difficult to admit and even more challenging to identify. Ironically and practically, the key finding common moral ground is held by us whom the past has enslaved. Unwittingly, perhaps knowingly, we have developed the skill to mask our moral beliefs and embed them in political loyalties, rhetoric, and ecclesiastical doctrine. We are now at the crossroads of choice: what would we have 21st century America to be? Admittedly, drilling down to the foundation of our values is

both complicated and treacherous, but this we must do to uncover the heart and moral power that is us.

Thus, presuppositions (our assumptions, beliefs, and conjectures) are a driving force – habits of expectation – pushing us to discover the causal links that complete the ethical and ontological principles they entail. But we often move along unconsciously and perform many everyday actions with only a vague conception of what we are up to, and with hindsight support our actions by the self-attribution of reasons. Reasons are thus procured and forced onto the stage of life as self-vouching but are internally prejudiced, prejudiced by unarticulated and unjustified beliefs we bring to the table of dialogue. This dynamic relativity calls for discussion – the dialectic of conversation – for agreement and consistency to be sustained. It is through active communication, neither condemnation nor authoritarian pronouncements, where ethical meaning is to be discovered.

In Conclusion

Harkening back to the beginnings of American democracy – a moral ideal – we understand that the American Revolution was influenced by the moderate wing of the Enlightenment, which embraced order, harmony, and a balance of faith and reason. Although Jefferson made Deism an essential part of the nation's fabric when he appealed to "the laws of nature and nature's God", by the second half of the 20th century it was evident that Evangelicals had begun to battle this notion and reclaim America for "the God of the New Testament". This narrowing once begun has been difficult to harness. Americans (and evangelicals in particular) remain confused and divided over the relationship of reason and faith, whether there can be a relationship or whether the one supplants the other. Americans remain a separated people, generally along secularists and theistic lines, but this is often veiled by their view of immigrants, especially Hispanics, and African-Americans. In a strange way, utility has united both the secularists and the religious in a conundrum of ethical assertions. Confounding America's religious history is the fact that theism – belief in one supreme God – is represented by a strange mixture of beliefs and ideas, usually ignoring the hidden assumptions implied in our own Constitution, notably, "Nature's God"(See: Stewart 2015). For Jefferson, "Nature's God" was not the "God of the Bible", but evangelicals continue to push their beliefs into its interpretation. This is an undercurrent seldom mentioned any more, but the 2016 presidential debates have demonstrated its continuing influence.[8] (See: New 2012; Raeder 2017)

Noting these differences, *the capacity for reassessment* is perhaps our only hope of reaching a consensus, discovering truth or meaning, or bringing our discussion to a point of some agreement. In ethics it is not conclusions we seek; important also are the ethical meanings and the applications deeply embedded within our cultural histories. Ethical meaning is not only found in the concrete moment of decision-making where we bring our assumptions about what is right and what is wrong to bear on a tangible situation but in our vision of the morally possible. Looking back as we often do, it's difficult to see where we have been. Our history can be perplexing. Our rearview mirrors provide only a narrow and restricted view of the past. To make America great, again and again,

requires our moral presence, not only in the moment but in our moral vision of the future and its applications in our lives.

Thus, ethics, if it is anything at all, is a precarious vision waiting for universal articulation. Within this muddle, our assumptions about right and wrong are moral visions and lifestyles to be lived, perhaps not absolute rules to obey. Rules change and commandments are archaic, but there is a staying quality about a universal ethical vision when articulated broadly and wisely, and with reason, avoiding ethnocentric domination. (See: Hester & Killian 1975) Accordingly, this will necessitate some honesty in revealing our assumptions about ethics and morals, trying to slide them aside as we give others the opportunity for individual expression and dialectical discourse. This will be more occasional and rare as you believe it to be for getting agreement on ethical issues is perhaps an impossible task.

So, is there any hope for some kind of ethical objectivity or for agreeing on a common and unified idea of "the good" and the behaviors it entails? Of course, this hope is only an ideal but it is an ideal to which we should aim. Charles Taylor explains is view of this hope,

> But our identity is deeper and more many-sided than any of our possible articulations of it. (...) this person [the utilitarian] doesn't lack a framework. On the contrary, he has a strong commitment to a certain ideal of rationality and benevolence. He admires people who live up to this ideal, condemns those who fail or who are too confused even to accept it, feels wrong when he himself falls below it. The utilitarian lives within a moral horizon which cannot be explicated by his own moral theory. (Taylor 2001, 28-29)

In the same manner, Alasdair MacIntyre warns of the pretensions of "reason" as he comments in a long passage from his book, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry,*

> Descartes symbolized for the nineteenth-century encyclopaedist a declaration of independence by reason from the particular bonds of any particular moral and religious community. It is on this view of the essence of rationality that its objectivity is inseparable from its freedom from the partialities of all such communities. It is to allegiance to reason as such, impersonal, impartial, disinterested, uniting and universal, that the encyclopaedist summons his or her readers and hearers. And it is, of course, this very same conception of reason as universal and disinterested that the genealogist rejects, so that genealogist and encyclopaedist agree in framing what they take to be both exclusive and exhaustive alternatives. Either reason is thus impersonal, universal, and disinterested or it is the unwitting of particular interests, making their drive to power its false pretensions to neutrality and disinterestedness. (McIntyre 1990, 59)

McIntyre goes on to say, "To share in the rationality of a craft requires sharing in the contingencies of its history, understanding its story as one's own, and finding a place for oneself as a character in the enacted dramatic narrative which is that story so far." To this advice the theist should

attend and perhaps the utilitarian and New Atheist should peer over their own shoulders to get a glimpse of their own genealogical assumptions.

Maybe we should not despair but make an effort to keep our ethical conversations moving in a positive direction. As Raymond Williams says,

> A culture, while it is being lived, is always in part unknown, in part unrealized. The making of a community is always an exploration, for consciousness cannot precede creation, and there is no formula for unknown experience. A good community, a living culture, will, because of this, not only make room for but actively encourage all and any who can contribute to the advance in consciousness which is the common need... We need to consider every attachment, every value, with our whole attention; for we do not know the future, we may never be certain of what may enrich us. (Williams, 1958, 334)

Endnotes:

1. "Extracts from Bentham's Commonplace Book", in *Collected Works*, x, p. 142; He credits Joseph Priestley in his *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (1768) or Cesare Bonesana-Beccaria with inspiring his use of the phrase, often paraphrased as "The greatest good for the greatest number", but the statement "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" actually originates with Francis Hutcheson, in his *Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil* (1725), sect. 3. In an unpublished manuscript on utilitarianism, written for James Mill, he later criticized this formulation: "Greatest happiness *of the greatest number*. Some years have now elapsed since, upon a closer scrutiny, reason, altogether incontestable, was found for discarding this appendage. On the surface, additional clearness and correctness given to the idea: at bottom, the opposite qualities. Be the community in question what it may, divide it into two equal parts, call one of them the majority, the other minority, layout of the account of the feelings of the minority, include in the account no feelings but those in the majority, the result you will find is that of this operation, that to the aggregate stock of happiness of the community, loss not profit is the result of the operation. Of this proposition the truth will be the more palpable, the greater the ration of the number of the minority to that of the majority: in other words, the less difference between the two unequal parts: and suppose the condivident part equal, the quantity of the error will then be at its maximum." – As quoted in *The Classical Utilitarians: Bentham and Mill* (2003), p. 92.
2. Taylor, Charles, *Sources of the Self*, page 23 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). Taylor also reminds us that like Kant, utilitarianism promotes a procedural conception of ethics (page 85); he says, "Thence arise some of the perplexities and fudging of utilitarianism, such as the difficult in understanding what the moral motivation is that it appeals to, the relation between hedonism as a motivational theory and the benevolence that utilitarian practice seems to suppose... utilitarians feel, there must be answers, and meantime they plunge forward into their homogeneous universe of rational calculation." (page 83)
3. See: Marc Hauser, *Moral Minds: How Nature Designed Our Universe* (New York: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition, September 4, 2007). Hauser argues that both Utilitarians and Pragmatists protest that they are eminently reasonable and empirical and scientific, involving no assumptions of mystical or magical thinking (i.e. "intuitions")—yet Hauser believes they almost certainly and clearly do. See also: http://forums. Philosophy forums.com/threads/pragmatism-vs.-utilitarianism -28246.html; and David Dobbs, "A Rush to Moral Judgment, What Went Wrong With Marc Hauser's Search for Moral Foundations," *Science and Science*, *http:// www.slate.com/articles/health _and_science/ science/2010/09/ a_rush_to_moral_ judgment.html*, September 3, 2010.

4. See the following: Arnett, R.C. and P. Arneson, *Dialogic civility in a cynical age: Community, hope and interpersonal* relationships (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1999). Arnett, R.C., J.M.H. Fritz, and L. M. Bell, *Communication ethics literacy: dialogue and difference* (Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage Publications, Inc., 2009).
5. See also discussion by Sarah Bakewell, *At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails with Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Others* (New York: Other Press, 2017).
6. See: Spengler, Oswald, *The Decline of the West, the Complete Edition,* pages 104-106. Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/Decline-Of-The-West-Oswald-Spengler/Decline_Of_The_West#page/n573/ mode/ 2up/search/ depopulation (1926).
7. Burtt, E.A., *In Search of Philosophical Understanding*, Chapter 2: "From Common Sense to Basic Presuppositions," pages 28-43 (New York: A Mentor Book, 1965). See also, Hume, David, *A Treatise on Human Nature,* (London: John Noon, 1739) as discussed by Daniel C. Dennett who says, "But Hume notes, the impression of causation we experience comes from the inside, not outside, it is itself an effect of a habit of expectation that has been ingrained in us over many waking hours." Dennett, Daniel C., *From Bacteria to Bach and Back, the Evolution of Minds,* page 355 (New York: Norton, 2017).
8. For a more complete discussion see: David New, *Fundamentalism in America: A Cultural History* (Jefferson, NC: Mcfarland, 2012). Also see: https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx and Linda C. Raeder, *Political Religion and the Death of God* (N. Palm Beach: Sanctuary Cove Publishing, 2017). In a review, Michael Henry, points to the confusing mixtures we today find in Christian and non-Christian circles, "For the past few centuries ideologies have been laboring to eliminate God in order to deify man, a process that in the absence of Christianity probably never would have taken place because it is really, in Voegelin's and Raeder's analysis, a revolt against the demands that Christian faith makes on the psyche. The ersatz religions, such as Marxism and Auguste Comte's Religion of Humanity, have been created to fill the spiritual void, but to the extent to which they have been politically successful they have brought about considerable instability and some of the worst evils in history. By their nature ideologies are relentlessly aggressive, expansionist, and intolerant rival "truths" that cannot coexist with belief in a transcendent God. The divinized state is their avatar in a dedivinized cosmos, something that is daily apparent in the increasingly emboldened efforts by the radical Left in the United States to silence and suppress, or at least marginalize, Christians and Christianity." https://voegelinview.com/political-religion-and-the-death-of-god/.

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Assessing Elizabeth Anscombe's Theory of Causality

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Abstract:

The concept of causality has been investigated for millennia. Different approaches in assessing causality, such as determining purpose or determining sensible proof, make it difficult to compare the major theories and to rank them as best or most credible. This paper addresses the theories of Aristotle, Hume, and Mill before offering Anscombe's theory of causation as the most effective one for those who believe a theory of causation should show some purpose. Anscombe's theory tracks well with Aristotle's teleological structure of causes, and her views on intention play a role in emphasizing motivation and purpose.

Keywords: causation, intention, Anscombe, Aristotle, Hume, Mill, teleology

The concept of causality has been pondered and disputed for millennia; thus, it is difficult to settle on any one view as the best. However, to adapt an idea from Aristotle, we can examine the final need for a theory of causality to evaluate more easily those different theories. This paper will address the issue of finding the best theory of causality by first briefly explaining the theories of Aristotle, David Hume, and John Stuart Mill before offering a more extensive description and evaluation of G.E.M. (Elizabeth) Anscombe's work on causality and intentionality. Finally, this paper will argue that Anscombe's theory can be considered the best for those who search for a more human element and interaction in cause and effect than other theories permit.

The first source to consider in established theories of causes is Aristotle, who argues that to know truth, the vocation of the philosopher, one must understand causes (Aristotle 1946, 11). He goes on to describe the four causes (12), and although Aristotle's causes are likely familiar to anyone who has completed an introductory philosophy course, I will describe them here in order to more clearly emphasize the differences between Aristotle's theory and those of Hume and Mill. The first cause is material, described as the most basic matter that makes up something, and one example is the bronze that makes up a statue. The second cause is formal, explained as the form or pattern, and he offers the example of the ratio 2:1 and number as formal causes of the musical octave. The third cause is efficient, denoting the agent by which change begins or ends, and the examples here are fairly general, e.g., the maker is the cause of that which is made. The fourth cause is the final cause, and

final here means the end purpose. For what reason does a thing exist or have been initiated? Aristotle says by way of illustration that health is the reason and purpose for walking. The third and fourth forms, and the first two to a lesser degree, highlight the importance of human agency in causation as a human must make a decision and then initiate action or change, and this point will be revisited below when Anscombe's theory is addressed.

In his *Physics*, where he also explains the four causes with the same examples, Aristotle pursues the line of thought further. He claims that the natural philosopher should know all four causes and be prepared to answer "how" and "why" about each one, thus gaining a deeper understanding (Aristotle 1970, 165). He notes that the material and the final causes often coincide because the purpose of a thing is so rarely separated from its make up. Such a relationship can be illustrated by borrowing an example from the *Physics* (165). In going to war, the material cause would include the mustered troops, and the final cause might be to gain an empire. The troops make up the force whose purpose is to conquer others (or to defend a state, but that reason does not appear in this section). It is the human agency, powered by the human motivation, that defines the cohesion of the clauses.

By contrast, many later thinkers do not address human agency in the same way that Aristotle does. For example, David Hume addresses causation in the eighteenth century, and his explanations rarely, if ever, touch on motivation. Those explanations concern themselves primarily with proving causation when correlation might have been a more accurate description. Hume states that there is no internal quality in any object that can convincingly explain why that object and another object appear in some relationship or never appear together (Hume 1964, 376) as if one elicited or prohibited the appearance of the other. Hume questions the assumption that everything in existence must have a cause and asserts, "Accordingly we shall find upon examination, that every demonstration, which has been produc'd for the necessity of a cause, is fallacious and sophistical." (Hume 1964, 381) He then addresses three arguments for cause and finds them all wanting (Hume 1964, 381-83). The first argument relies on the equality of time and place and contends that unless there is a cause fixed in one time and place, the effect in a subsequent one is left unmoored, unable to exist. The second argument suggests that if a thing in existence has no cause, then it must be its own cause. Hume dismisses this argument as relying on the premise that all things in existence must have a cause, so its reasoning is circular. The third argument is similar to the first: anything that is not produced by a cause is produced by nothing; therefore, *nothing* is its cause. The argument continues that because this is impossible, it actually demonstrates that *something* must have been the cause. Hume refutes this argument, beginning with this dismissive introduction, "I believe it will not be necessary to employ many words in showing the weakness of this argument, after what I have said of the foregoing." (Hume 1964, 383) Hume, essentially, uses the same refutation that he did with the second argument. He claims that the third argument also presupposes a cause-effect relationship, but such a relationship cannot be intuitively or demonstrably proven.

Hume next addresses the impressions of memory or senses and the idea of the resulting existence of that "which produces the object of impression or is produc'd by it" (Hume 1964, 385). As he works through the role of impressions through either memory or the senses, he resists labeling any consistent conjunction between actions or objects as cause and effect because there is still no way to prove that one caused the other (Hume 1964, 389). By way of a modern illustration, when runners train for an event, they take into consideration the efficacy of previous preparations. They research what other runners eat before the event and how those runners train in the months leading up to the event in order to have a successful result. They look at their own experiences to see how they felt after eating particular foods at particular times and even wearing particular gear for particular weather. Perhaps resting the day before an event makes most runners feel stronger during the event, or perhaps taking nutrition every five miles helps alleviate cramping. Runners would take the rest and the nutrition as causes of the stronger, cramp-free results. Even though this example focuses on preparations that most people agree matter – unlike, say, wearing the same pair of socks for every race that one wore years ago in winning a race – Hume would be skeptical and insist on finding a *necessary* connection. Hume's approach certainly differs from that of Aristotle, who valorizes the final cause and, likely, would label those preparations as causes to serve the final one of having a successful race.

John Stuart Mill takes a similar tack in questioning the certainty of causation in his *A System of Logic*, taking issue with the generally accepted assumption that events have causes, even though such relationships cannot be identified beyond doubt. Mill's protest is worth quoting here: "To say that belief suffices for its own justification is making opinion the test of opinion; it is denying the existence of any outward standard, the conformity of an opinion to which constitutes its truth." (Mill 2009, 399) In pursuing this line of thought, Mill remarks that the Ancient Greeks, including Aristotle, understood the related concepts of "Chance and Spontaneity" (Mill 2009, 400), so that the physical laws cannot always assure that certain events will consistently bring about other certain events or be consistently produced by still other, earlier events. Mill speaks of the unconditional relationships between apparent causes and effects to include necessary stimuli that are not observed. In the example of the runners above, Mill's theory would account for other factors not readily seen as connections: amount of sleep or airborne allergens and so on. Interestingly, for the purposes of this paper, in critiquing cause and effect, and, in the process, inductive reasoning, Mill practices causation as defined by Aristotle when he says, "[I]f, therefore, we can substitute for the more fallible forms of the process, an operation grounded on the same process in a less fallible form, we shall have effected a very material improvement" (Mill 2009, 401). By investigating the problems with causation based on, and limited by, sensory observation and experience, Mill invokes Aristotle's final cause when he explains *how* and *why* he will perform act A: to bring about result B. It is just this turn which best illustrates the difference between, on the one hand, Hume's and Mill's theories of causation and, on the other, those of Aristotle and, as described below, Anscombe.

Anscombe's landmark essay "Modern Moral Philosophy" serves as a critique of modern moral philosophy because that philosophy lacks an adequate approach to psychology, because the moral sense of "ought" regarding moral obligation no longer fits, and because there are no discernible differences among English moral philosophers since Henry Sidgwick (Anscombe 1958, 1). Although her argument is a wide-ranging one, the second point above is germane to this paper. The moral sense of "ought" illustrates a theory of causation that hearkens back to Aristotle's, even as Anscombe claims that Aristotle is little help in clarifying the current modern English moralists because they all neglect to factor in the quality of immorality as defined by Hebrew-Christian ethic (Anscombe 1958, 10), thereby losing an integral anchor, one that Aristotle cannot explicitly provide. Anscombe evaluates the arguments of consequentialists who define morality as that which would lead to positive consequences, and the criteria for what is positive is that which their contemporary society has deemed so. Thus, the consequentialists learn the standard of morality through observation and experience, and they view causation as the move from one action that can produce positive consequences, even if those positive consequences are positive only to the individual or in some underground society. In my own work, I research studies on academic plagiarism, including studies concerned with why students plagiarize. Students often admit to feeling desperation in completing a difficult writing assignment, or they invoke the standard complaint of a crushing workload at particular points in the academic term. The students who plagiarize under those conditions see the consequence of having completed an assignment and earning course credit toward a degree as sufficient motivation to dismiss their moral sense of doing honest work. Pressure becomes the cause of the dishonest act of cheating.

Anscombe continues her investigation of causation by offering an example of exchanging money for goods (Anscombe 1958, 3-4). In critiquing Hume's philosophy, she begins by suggesting that truth is made up of either relations of ideas or of matters of fact. Relations of ideas can be illustrated with currency exchange rates, and her example is that 20s=£1. Her example of matters of fact describes a service rendered: *A* orders potatoes, and *B* supplies them and sends a bill. But Anscombe then points out that truth, as those two descriptions limit it, does not include the *owing* of money for the potatoes. She says that the owing is "brute relative to" the above descriptions, which also spawn other brute relations, such as the potatoes were delivered in a certain manner and the buyer has the money to pay for them. For the delivery of potatoes to be considered a cause of paying the money depends on the concept of owing and, further, on the idea of *ought*. While Hume's and Mill's theories of causation neglect this moral aspect in favor of a more physical, natural approach, Anscombe sees the need to factor in this human agency. We can surmise, then, that if *A* wants groceries delivered and wants to avoid the censure of the local merchants, *A* will pay *B* the socially agreed upon price for the produce. Such would be morality rooted in social norms but connected on a deeper level with an absolute sense of morality, which is what Anscombe wants to feature. Her view is similar to Aristotle's because it does focus on the importance of the final cause, although

Aristotle did not base his causation on moral reasons. Such a base is made possible, according to Anscombe, through the influence of Christianity (Anscombe 1958, 5).

Anscombe's theory of causation can be seen, to some extent, in her book *Intention*. In differentiating between acts that are intentional and those that are not, Anscombe says that we can ask why such an action was initiated, and the response should, by design, reveal the reason for acting (Anscombe 1963, 9). Such a question, once again, leads back to Aristotle's final cause as the motivation for actions, once more highlighting the human agency and reasoning. In fact, in her careful examination of the various shades of meaning of the word *intention*, Anscombe offers examples of cause and effect that do not reflect completely human interaction – such as predicting an eclipse based on evidence – but she dismisses that kind of intention for more interesting work: "[A]n answer to the question 'Why?' which does not give reason for thinking the thing true does not, *therefore*, give a reason for acting. It may mention a cause, and this is far from what we want [emphasis in the original]" (Anscombe 1963, 15). She continues with deeper analysis of causation that requires human agency, even when there is some misunderstanding. In this regard, Anscombe describes mental causes, and these can trigger actions, but also feelings and thoughts (Anscombe 1963, 16). Her example of the former is that certain music can excite a person and cause that person to walk about. Her example of the latter is more detailed. A child sees something red just barely in sight and is afraid because he is told it is a bit of Satan. He quite likely misheard the word *satin*, but his mishearing and his knowledge of Satan combine into a mental cause, the source of the consequent fear. Immediately after the example, Anscombe recognizes that her theory of causation differs from Hume's, so much so that it might not be considered as an example of causality. However, Anscombe has a different end in mind, so her theory of causality will branch down a different path than did Hume's.

Moreover, Anscombe distinguishes between motives and intentions, and this distinction is important to her theory of causality (Anscombe 1963, 18-19). She says, "A man's intention is *what* he aims at or chooses; his motive is what determines the aim or choice; and I suppose that 'determines' is another work for 'causes.' [emphasis in the original]." (Anscombe 1963, 19) In looking again at the idea of plagiarism as described above, it is the combined pressures of time and responsibility that cause, or motivate, some students to plagiarize in order to meet their deadline obligations and academic obligations. Students in this scenario would engage in what most or all universities consider an unethical act in order to avoid negative consequences to their academic record. What determines the aim or choice, of course, answers the question *why*. This idea of causality reflects Aristotle's in reaching the final cause because of highest import in determining cause is finding the reason for a stimulus.

Deciding which theory of causation is the best is a difficult task because the purpose of determining the best theory defines the criteria. One might dismiss such a claim as begging the question: This paper whose purpose is to show which theory of causation is best has determined that a theory which shows purpose is best. However, such a reason resonates with Aristotle's teleological

theory of causation because it requires one to ask why, pointing to the final cause. Aristotle's theory also involves human choice and activity, and Anscombe's theory extends his by working through the intricacies of motive and intention before pointing to the final purpose – the why – as the primary aspect of a theory of causation. There being no objective standard for assessing which theory is best, we can only return, then, to the claim made in the opening paragraph: Anscombe's theory can be considered the best for those who search for a more human element and interaction in cause and effect than other theories permit.

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The figure of the Continuum – Illuminating Gender, Migration, Space, Border, Culture, and Time[1]

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Abstract:

This article shows how the figure of the Continuum can describe pluralities not only in the realm of sex/gender, but also in that of migration, space, border, culture, and time using the four dimensions of the Continuum: physical/body/matter – psychological/feeling/experience – social/behaviour/doing – sexual/sexual orientation/desire. In the first part of the article the figure of the Continuum will be described in its origination and summarised in its application to the concepts of gender and migration. The second part of the article will shine a first light on the application of the figure of the Continuum to the concepts of space, border, culture, and time. The article considers the question of the dissolution of binarities by the figure of the Continuum, as well as the question of the meanings and consequences of categorial systems of order. The musings of the article result in the notion that a more wide-spread application of the figure of the Continuum could inspire a new, broader humanism, and thus be understood as a basis for further reflections working towards an overstepping of post- and transhumanistic approaches.

Keywords: Continuum, Gender, Migration, Space, Border, Culture, Time

Conception of a new figure of thinking: the figure of the Continuum

An initial answer to the question of how trans- and inter-gender, transity and interity,[2] still frequently referred to as intersex and transgender[3], can be conceived of as equitable genders together with and *no longer between* the two genders "female" and "male", is offered by the figure of the Continuum, first developed in 2014 (see Baltes-Löhr 2018b; 2018c; 2018d). If the figure of the Continuum *no longer* views transity and interity as an "in-between", *no longer* views them as a derivative or a mixture, a third or fourth or fifth figuration of "female" and "male", then the two genders "female" and "male" are thus being deprived of their ordering power. In this way, as well, their alleged unambiguity is being questioned. Notions of continua (Röder 2014, 14-40), which are viewed as merely being situated *between* two powerful poles, will inevitably lead to a strengthening of the poles "female" and "male", especially concerning their function as border and framework of a gender order, which ultimately results in a solidification of binary, bipolar, antagonistic and frequently dichotomous patterns. Phrased differently: the two poles "female" and "male", which are

still virulent in the current gender order, can be dissolved using the figure of the Continuum. "Female" and "male" will no longer be regarded as a binary framework for all kinds of in-between, third or even fourth, and all hitherto unnamed and unknown genders. The dissolution of the binary gender order using the figure of the Continuum thus also includes the dissolution of the notion of antagonistically situated genders which seem to irredeemably oppose each other, just as it radically questions the still virulent dichotomies, power balances between the genders "female" and "male", but also the dichotomy – and this point is often neglected in observations of gender diversity – which is still and again pervasive between "female-male" on the one side, which is deciding norms and frameworks, and all other genders on the other side, which is so far mostly being put up with, tolerated. The figure of the Continuum is working to make all relationships of power between gender groups recognisable as constructed, and thus as changeable.

If binary logics create, as antagonistic and dichotomous logics do, a solidification of strongly virulent bipolarities, then an "I" conceived within a binary logic cannot become a "You"; similarly, the "We" stays amongst itself and oftentimes feels superior to the "You", a fact which has been demonstrated with alarming, and for many people life-threatening, clarity by the refugee and migration debate that has been increasing in unwelcoming severity since 2015. "Inside" can, in a binary, antagonistic, dichotomous logic, not be "outside", the "centre" cannot be "periphery", the "here" cannot be "there", "strange" cannot be "familiar"; "today" precludes "tomorrow", just as "high culture" precludes supposedly "popular" cultural artefacts.

The inevitable question arises of what could replace this binary thinking in order to, for example, capture possible connections or similarities between the seemingly opposed, but also to adequately depict the actual diversities of human existences. The question of the dissolution of binary thinking is accompanied by the understanding of the necessity of opening sharp categorial separations. Permeability and porosity of dividing lines, perimeters, borders are emphasised. Fluidities of any subjects no longer have to be deviant exceptions of a norm which oftentimes seems natural, but can be regarded as one of many possible normalities. And this is exactly where the figure of the Continuum can be applied.

Before this figure is explained and applied to gender, migration, space, border, culture, and time later in this article, the author would like to record some interesting results obtained in the current semester at the University of Luxembourg. In a seminar with the title "Just what is transity, femininity, interity, masculinity? Gender plurality from a historical perspective", the question "What do you think of when you hear: loud, delicate, beautiful, central, pleasant, funny, dark, inside, right and black" was posed to 44 students. The answers included binary poles only in the categories beautiful, pleasant, dark, inside, right and black. It is especially notable that students answered "ugly" for "beautiful" only once, "unpleasant" to "pleasant" twice, "light" to "dark" five times, "outside" to "inside" six times, "white" to "black" seven times, and that "wrong" was connoted to "right" 19 times. This allows a first conclusion that students act within binary thinking especially when normativity, for example of right and wrong, is implied in the question. One could further surmise,

then, that normativity reinforces itself. Without wanting to push the results of this small survey, the students' answers to a second round of questions will be briefly explained. The second question to the students read: "What do you think of when you hear gender, interity, female, male, transity and genderless". If the dualism of "female-male" was mentioned 16 times in relation to gender, and the term transgender once, then "female" was associated with nature, tender, figure, attractive, and pink; "male" was connoted with strength, rough, beard, unattractive, and the colour blue. Another binarity was mentioned with the opposition of "transity" and "interity". It is striking that the students, when answering the question "What do you think of when you hear transity" answered only four times that they had never heard of the concept; for the question of interity, 20 students replied they were unfamiliar with the term – exactly as many as those who had never encountered the term "genderless"[4]. Finally, it should be noted that binarity is mainly an association when questions of normativity, such as the question of right or wrong, are concerned, and that female and male are still stuck in a strictly binary corset.

The figure of the Continuum

The figure of the Continuum comprises the four dimensions physical/body/matter, psychological/feelings/experiences, social/behaviour/doing and sexual/sexual orientation/desire. In all four dimensions, constant shifts, overlappings, similarities, differences, changes and stabilisations can be located on a horizontal level. Additionally, the four dimensions relate to one another in infinite, constantly changing combinations on a vertical axis.

On the horizontal level of any of these four dimensions variabilities can be described, if, for example, the categorial borders between so-called external gender markers such as penis, clitoris and vagina become permeable in the physical dimension; this means that, for instance, a so-called micropenis exhibited by a newborn child does not result in a so-called sex reassignment surgery to create a neo-vagina in order to disambiguate the gender of the newborn as "female". In the same vein, single aspects of the respective dimension can hold more or less significance in different moments of a biographical life. The same can be said on a diachronic time axis, which means that, in different historical moments and/or epochs, the respective aspects of the respective dimensions can be allocated very different meanings, as for example concerning sexual desire, when heterosexual structures of desire, in a certain epoch, are considered normal, and homoerotic desires are regarded as deviant.

On a vertical level, these four dimensions can occur in a myriad of different combinations, which means that at a certain point in time X a person can exhibit a specific behaviour in the social dimension, which is attributed by society to the gender "male", but the person possesses so-called morphologically female gender markers, like a projecting bosom and a vagina; they may, however, feel indifferent about their gender and live within pansexual structures of desire, all of which may be configurated differently at a different point in their life.

In summary it can be said that variabilities, which are accompanied by a constant shift of categorial borders, are exhibited in all four dimensions.

In addition, concerning the bipolarities which can be dissolved using the figure of the Continuum, different polarities are identifiable on a biographical and diachronic level at different moments in time, which is described by the term "polypolarities". For gender, migration, space, border, culture, and time, the figure of the Continuum can describe, for example, which genders, at which points in time, were poles specifying norms; which forms of migration were attributed which individual or social meanings; which spaces, for example social, virtual or political are of which significance for individuals or social groups; and how, for example, certain forms of cultural expression come into the foreground and influence the behaviour of individuals, social groups or societies.

The figure of the Continuum is also suited to depict that and how everything is connected to everything (see Baltes-Löhr 2018e), so that actually existing pluralities can be described not only concerning gender, but also migration, space, border, culture, and time.

Gender and migration as a Continuum[5]

As gender and migration as a Continuum have been described in detail in the two articles "What Are We Speaking About When We Speak About Gender? Gender as a Continuum"[6] and "The Figure of the Continuum: Discussed in Relation to the Quantum Logic and Exemplified for the Categories "Sex/Gender" and "Migration" (Baltes-Löhr 2018e), in this article the following overviews will give a short summary of their contents.

First Overview: Gender as a Continuum

Figure of the Continuum			
Sex/Gender			
Transity	Interity	Masculinity	Femininity

Dimensions	**Examples**
Physical/corporeality/matter	Biological gender; sex Examples: Ambiguous attribution of physical traits to ONE gender
Psychological/feeling/experience	Experienced gender; gender identity Examples: Self-assignment ≠ assignment by others; Situationally variant: assignment of a gender at birth ≠ self-assignment
Social/behaviour	Social gender; gender; gender-appropriate behaviour Examples: Girls/women and boys/men do not behave according to the

	stereotypes ascribed to these to genders; Trans and inter persons likewise do not behave according to binary stereotypes
Sexual/desire	Sexuality; sexual desire; sexual orientation Examples: Sexual orientations and sexual practices, as well as social relationships based on them, cannot be described within the patterns of a heterosexual structure of desire
Boundaries and unambiguities shift within the respective dimensions (*horizontal, intradimensional variability*) between the respective dimensions (*vertical, interdimensional variability*)	
Polypolarities Positionings of genders can exist beyond the two poles of "femininity" and "masculinity" Within one gender category, one or another dimension, at a specific point in time, in a specific situation and/or in a specific cultural context, may become more or less relevant	
Diachronic, biographical and cultural variabilities and polypolarities The complexity of gender as a continuum may vary depending on personal age and contemporary history, as well as on cultural settings	
Gender as a continuum is always embedded in an *intersectional perspective* of importance are age, cultural/ethnic origin, socio-economic status, social environment, religious and political convictions	
Gender as a continuum *conduces the depiction and analysis of lived and experienced pluralities of gender*	

Fig. 1: Tabular overview of "Gender as a Continuum" (Baltes-Löhr 2018a, 9; Baltes-Löhr 2018e, 147)

Second Overview: Migration as a Continuum

Figure of the continuum	
Migration	
Dimensions	**Examples**
Physical/matter	Forms of movements Examples: Movement between places with longer or shorter periods of settlement and longer or shorter distances between the places, Emigration, Immigration, Re-migration, circulary star-migration with or without a center, temporary, seasonal migration, voluntary migration, forced migration, exile, displacement, flight, The differentiation between human beings on the move and

	settled human beings is ambiguous
Psychological/feeling/experience	Experienced migration; migratory identity Examples: Self-assignment ≠ assignment by others; feeling of being integrated does not necessarily depend on being a migrant or a native in a given national state/society; feeling of being considered as migrant by others can depending on situations and biographical periods
Social/behaviour	Migration-related and/or appropriate behaviour Examples: Migrants do not behave according to the stereotypes ascribed to these related to their status as migrants; Migrants do not behave according to binary stereotypes
Desire	Reasons for migration Examples: Variation of reasons for migration: AUFZÄHLEN
Boundaries and unambiguities shift within the respective dimensions (*horizontal, intradimensional variability*) between the respective dimensions (*vertical, interdimensional variability*)	
Polypolarities Positionings of human beings on the move can exist beyond the two poles of "migration" and "sedentarism" Within different forms of movement, one or another dimension, at a specific point in time, in a specific situation and/or in a specific cultural context, may become more or less relevant	
Diachronic, biographical and cultural variabilities and polypolarities The complexity of migration as a continuum may vary depending on personal age and contemporary history, as well as on cultural settings	
Migration as a continuum is always embedded in an *intersectional perspective* Of importance are age, cultural/ethnic origin, socio-economic status, social environment, religious and political convictions	
Migration as a continuum *conduces the depiction and analysis of lived and experienced pluralities of forms, feelings, behavior and desire to migrate*	

Fig. 2: Tabular overview of "Migration as a Continuum" (Baltes-Löhr 2018e, 153)

Space as a Continuum

In the western European and anglo-saxon area, the general understanding of space until the 1970s was characterized by the fact that spaces, just as gender, were regarded as nature-given. Spaces were thought as geographical or material items or entities. They were considered measurable, completely neutral, one could also say: apolitical, meaning that every individual and/or group of individuals were neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by spaces. Such notions of space determined, among others, a seemingly clear "inside and outside" as well as the "belonging and strangeness". Borders possessed an eminently important function within such an understanding of space.

In 1974, Henri Lefebvre established the notion of the social production of space, and the production of social space, with his work "Production de l'espace" (Lefebvre 1974; see Shields 1997, 186-202; Baltes-Löhr 2000, 513-524). With this innovative conception, spaces are no longer viewed as nature-given, but as produced, manufactured, named and encoded. Codes, the "keys" to different spaces, are neither known to all persons or groups of persons, nor accessible and thus not manageable. Together with those encodings and the availability of the codes, certain spaces are only accessible and utilizable by and for certain persons or groups of persons. Thus, government buildings, seat of democratically elected parliaments, are to this day made into spaces which are not easily accessible by citizens; this is demonstrated very clearly by the term "no-protest zone" (German: Bannmeile).[7]

Encodings, the denominations of spaces, show customary practices of space, respective forms of representation as well as spatially imagined geographies. However, not all practices existing within a space are described by the codes, the denominations. Structures of power and sovereignty influence the encoding of spaces, so that the notions of space which are close to power and sovereignty, which are compatible with and useful to them, are depicted – and others are not.

In regards to the four dimensions of space as a continuum, the physical/material dimension can be thought of as spatial matter. This includes geographical spaces, interior and exterior spaces as well as near and far spaces, cultural and natural spaces, private and public spaces, social and individual spaces, as well as safe and dangerous spaces, but also virtual and imagined spaces. The psychological, felt/experienced dimension of space encompasses the feelings of belonging of persons and groups of persons to certain spaces; however, as with gender and migration as a Continuum, one must distinguish between self-attribution of belonging and its attribution by others, and the connected feelings about certain spaces. The social dimension of space comprises the manifestations and forms of the respective social behaviour connoted to and expected from certain spaces. These connotations and expectations, in turn, have an influence and effects on the constitution of the space(s), whether they be virtual or matter-bound. The social dimension of space as a Continuum refers to notions of space, as exhibited for example with the term "diaspora", when groups which could be called under-represented create "their own world" within certain spaces, with its own set of rules, codes of conduct and intentional spatial and social boundaries to the respective environment. This could also be proved in detail for the so-called Amish people and different forms

of subcultures (see Schwendter 1993). The fourth dimension of desire of space as a continuum pertains to spaces which are striven for or desired, whether they are spaces in virtual worlds, as can increasingly be observed in video games, or material spaces which are desired and striven for, or left, to different extents in, for example, migratory movements.

For space as a Continuum, as well, variabilities within each of the four dimensions of space are identifiable: a myriad of different figurations of material, social and virtual spaces have to be considered, as well as variable feelings of belonging to and behaviour in spaces. A variety of different desires regarding spaces, to which persons or groups of persons desire access or wish for a stay. These variabilities are configurated differently at different times on a diachronic axis, just as all possible variations in the four dimensions of space as a Continuum can be allotted very different meanings and emphases over the course of an individual life.

Such intracategorial variabilities show that that which, for example, is considered physical space, is diverse. Thus, a geographically measured and measurable material item can be labelled very differently: the country of origin for some, for example Portugal, is the country of arrival for others, for example migrants from Mozambique or Russia. Geographical areas can be viewed as zones of passage or transit, or as spaces of national states. In addition, the usage of material spaces is very variable in the dimension of social behaviour.

On a diachronic axis of time, one can also observe a pronounced variability, for example when examining the biographical span of a life. A place of birth may, over the course of a person's life, possibly hold a more or less changed meaning for the person who was born there, but also for those persons who live there for a certain period of time. Viewed from a historical axis it becomes clear that spaces are given different names during different eras, as for example the "India" travelled by Columbus, which only became America after the journeys and measurements of Amerigo Vespucci (Ugolini 1974). However, the meaning of consistently denominated spaces can change over the course of human history, as is exhibited by the examples of rock cliffs and peaks as well as caves. Not least, the cultural context regarding the variability of space as conceived of on a continuum plays a remarkable role, as can be illustrated with the meaning of the word "home" (German: Heimat).

In addition, a varying connection of the four dimensions to each other can be discerned when material as well as virtual, physical spaces, social spaces, corresponding feelings of belonging, codes of conduct and desire – which can vary in itself – to choose a certain space or spaces or to, for example, belong to social spaces, determines the everyday lives of people. Physical, social, virtual, imagined, desired spaces cannot be clearly and unambiguously delimited within themselves and from each other. Thus, the material space of a church, for example, holds completely different meanings for different people: as a place of contemplation, as a last refuge, as an architectural marvel, or as a source of annoyance because of wasteful spending, connected to the costs of construction and maintenance, especially in times of extreme crises for large parts of the population. Similar

examples could be examined for toilets, beaches, school buildings, universities, parliament buildings, and skyscrapers.

Polypolarities of space as a Continuum are exhibited when centre and periphery shift towards each other, just as an East-West antagonism held until the late 1980s. So-called third countries, developing or emerging countries have, in the last three decades, increasingly become powerful centres, as can be shown by the example of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the co-called BRICS states. Interior and exterior spaces are delimited less clearly, as can be proven by the current debate within the EU about the significance of the external borders of the EU. Virtual, imagined spaces are increasingly, and not least due to technological developments, gaining importance within borders of physical spaces, which themselves are not or cannot always be clearly defined, and which will be more closely examined in the following section.

Border as a Continuum

Borders, demarcations come up in every concept – gender, migration and space – and will be briefly investigated in this passage (see Baltes-Löhr 2003, 83-99).

In regards to the physical/material dimension of border as a Continuum a variety of forms and manifestations can be addressed: borders of space, time, corporal borders, interpersonal, social, political borders. Borders are connected to categories and normalisations and are thus used as instruments of in- and exclusion. Borders localise spaces, places, differentiate between here and there. The psychological/felt/experienced dimension of gender is mostly concerned with the felt meaning and acceptance of borders and the related *in*clusion of self and *ex*clusion of others. Thus, the "I" can find itself amongst many "others" on one side of the border. In the social dimension of border as a Continuum behaviours or feelings which are seemingly delimited within themselves and from each other, and which are associated with, for example, a certain geographical space or a group of migrants or the members of a gender group, are recorded and distinguished from each other. The dimension of desire of border as a Continuum pertains to "striven for" borders, which means, which borders, delimitations and demarcations are desired, needed by persons, groups of persons or societies to outline themselves and/or to exclude themselves from others or include themselves with others. However, the desire to expand, to shift, to overcome borders, of any kind and manifestation, or to replace them with new borders is also described by this dimension. The notion of border as a Continuum is defined, as well, by the horizontal variabilities within the respective dimensions, as well as the vertical variability, the shifts of the dimensions in relation to each other. Borders can appear polypolar, when, for example, in one situation the separating aspect of borders is highlighted, and in another situation the connecting aspect. Thus, on the one hand, borders separate; however, borders, and especially border zones, also facilitate encounters. "In the border areas emerges the interesting and excitingly new that is needed in our time." (Hofer 1980, 13) Borders are also at home in the figure of the Third, in the notion of the "Third Space" and the "in-between" (Bhabha 1994).

The in-between, however, stays delimited on all sides, and the third only comes after the first and second. The third is trailing behind the first and the second, rarely is it thought of as leading. The person on the third step of the winner's podium does not receive a medal made from gold or silver, but one made from bronze. And without the second and third place, the first could not be imagined. Thus, the figure of the Third strengthens binarity, for example considering *gender*, more than it expands it. The same can be said of the notions of Third Space; this concept does not question the hierarchisations of traditional orders of space, but rather cements them, for example when we still speak of so-called "third" or "third-world countries" and the border area, on the one hand, opens a place of possible encounters, but on the other hand inherently stabilises the borders on both sides of the border area.

The notion of border as a Continuum is meant to reveal the constructedness of borders as well as their diversity and changeability, but especially their ambiguities and lack of clarity. Thus, borders between nation states, for example, are denoted with a clear line on maps, which has none of this clarity whatsoever in the geographical space. The marking of shores of rivers, lakes or oceans, as well, seems to be unambiguous as a drawn border. If one however looks at a river bank, the shore of a lake or the seashore, it becomes more than clear how these seemingly unambiguous delimitations are in constant movement. The ambiguity of border markings and border lines, which frequently take the shape of categorial systems, also becomes clear in regards to gender, migration and space, when the borders between all genders are viewed as fluid rather than as stabilised manifestations and thus as irreversible, when interior and exterior spaces, centre and periphery cannot be clearly delimited and contained, when migration and sedentarism can flow into one another. This can also be the case for culture and time, which will be briefly explained in the following.

Culture as a Continuum

If culture to this day is still conceived of as the "opponent" of nature, then this perceived opposition can be dissolved or at least mitigated using the figure of the Continuum, just as the perceived oppositions between high and mass culture, or seemingly homogenous cultures connected to national states.

Within the four dimensions of culture as a Continuum, the physical/material dimension of culture means all artefacts but also the influence that these artefacts have on the so-called nature, which constitutes a first step towards the dissolution of a binary border between culture and nature. The psychological dimension of culture is concerned with the belonging of persons, groups of persons, societies, nations and state groups to respective cultures – in connection with this the concept of cultural identity is often mentioned – which, however, are still frequently assigned a homogenisation not present in the actually existing plurality of ways of existence. The figure of the Continuum can show that *the* culture of, for example, a certain age group does not exist, just as *the* German, *the* European, *the* American, *the* female or *the* culture of elders does not exist. As discussed earlier (see Baltes-Löhr 2018e), it is also relevant for culture that categorial delimitations of, for

example, a so-called national culture from another will always mean that individual cultural forms of expression will fall by the wayside, and that connected behaviours, feelings, but also those persons who, in a certain way, express themselves culturally or feel connected to cultural forms of expression, will *not* be considered. The social dimension of culture as a Continuum pertains to the interactions of cultures and thus also to the behaviour of those persons or groups of persons who procure cultural expression, whether in words, images, theatre, art, or in everyday life.

The figure of the Continuum can also show in what ways external attributions and self-attributions of cultural belonging can correspond or diverge, but also in what way possibly still virulent stereotyping notions of cultural features are accurate – or not; not all Italians like to eat spaghetti, just as not every British person is a fan of tea. The dimension of desire describes which cultures, areas or certain aspects of cultural settings are considered desirable – or not; which desire is aimed at which cultures, cultural forms or manifestations. Just as with gender, migration, space and border it is relevant for culture as a Continuum that the four dimensions within themselves and in their relation to one another cannot be comprised unambiguously. Horizontal and vertical variabilities become apparent, and examples will be given at this juncture. The definitions of what constitutes culture, for instance, are more than diverse (Bachmann-Medick 2014; 2016). In the same vein, that which in one society might be considered extremely culturally valuable might be completely secondary, revolting or even taboo in another: pet dogs, pork roast, singing, fasting, diets, losing weight, education, fitness can be connoted entirely differently motivated and connoted. With regards to the biographical span of a life, as well, cultural customs and expressions have different meanings depending on a person's age, as is evident from the example of attending a funeral. Changes and shifts occur in different eras on a historical axis in regards to what is considered the predominant and accepted culture. But also the meaning of, for instance, artefacts can change over the course of human history, as can be demonstrated by the examples of prehistorical flint axe blades, written characters or also the notions of home (German: Heimat). Thus one can not only find a by now nearly incalculable diversity of definitions of culture, but also a variety of reasons for wanting to belong to a culture, however it might be defined, or to not want to belong to it; the togetherness of cultures is gaining an increasing connotation of diversity, as well.

If multiculturalism means the more or less contact-free coexistence of supposedly homogenous cultures, and interculturalism of the togetherness of cultures in which supposedly homogenous cultures meet and enrich one another, and if transculturalism means the reciprocal permeation of cultures, which can result in the construction of innovative cultural forms, then there exists here as well, for example in the assumption of transcultural encounters, room for homogenous cultural forms and manifestations, which cannot be the case in multicultural notions/approaches, and only partially in intercultural notions/approaches (Baltes-Löhr 2018f, 39-66). Byung-Chul Han has coined the term „hyperculturalism" (Han 2005); it describes the dissolution of borders and delimitations of different forms of culture which have emerged through cultural oppositions. He

speaks of the convergence and interconnectedness of the individual cultures, and thus comes closest to the notions of culture as a Continuum.

Time as a Continuum

Time, at first glance, is a very similar concept to the notion of an infinitely conceived continuum. If a physical/material dimension of time as a Continuum comprises the increments and units of time in seconds, minutes, hours, days, nights, months, years, decades, centuries, millennia as well as the separation into epochs, then the figure of the Continuum makes clear that these units are constructed, which means that these increments often do not correspond to the felt dimensions of time: concerning this, the debate within the European Union regarding the elimination or retention of the change between so-called winter and summer time introduced in 1980 is interesting to note. Terms like "blue hour" and "dusk" are also meaningful concerning the deprivation of the increments of their seeming clarity. In the felt dimension of time as a Continuum, two terms from Greek philosophy play an important role: "Chronos" describes these artificial increments of time created by humans, and "Kairos" the outstanding, deciding moments in this lifetime (Weinelt 2005). Does life seem to become more fast-paced because "Kairos", the moments of decision, are becoming increasingly varied and complex, and because "Chronos", the flow of time, seems more and more fragmented to us? What meaning does the felt time hold, when seconds seem to turn into minutes. When chronologically measured, short and shortest memories in time become bigger and are remembered as lasting longer and longer; this is relevant for moments of joy as well as for moments and feelings of deepest mourning, suffering or sadness. In the social dimension of time as a Continuum, the connotations of behaviour "fitting" for a certain time can be illustrated. Here, as well, the figure of the Continuum can dissolve the rigid borders of what belongs to certain moments, times (or not), and give space to the actually existing diversity of behaviours. The dimension of desire of time as a Continuum describes those aspects which are considered desirable – or not. Much potential as suggestions for the further development of the figure of the Continuum lies in expressions like: "the good old days", or "tomorrow is a new day", or "if only this moment would never end", or "every second of the birth of my child became seemingly unbearably long hours, which dissolved back into nothing immediately after the birth". For the notion of time as a Continuum, as well, one can demonstrate horizontal variabilities in all dimensions, as well as vertical variabilities in regards to shifts of the respective dimensions in relation to one another.

Outlook

This contribution was meant to illustrate that the figure of the Continuum could constitute an instrument to more accurately portray the complexity of, for example, gender, migration, space, border, culture and time. It opens the door for pluralities, without putting arbitrariness in place of excluding categorial delimitations. This does not only allow the perspective that categorial orders are constructed by humans, but also permits conceiving of the togetherness of perceived oppositions,

and may lead to the question if it is, or should be, not sufficient and especially fundamental to perceive a human as a human, before pigeonholing them into binary categories which can become life-threatening closed spaces? Are trans and intersex persons, women, men, migrants, stateless persons, artists not, first and foremost, to be viewed, recognised and treated as humans? Have denominations and the powers of space, borders and time not transitioned towards independence, which ascribes to them a seemingly natural status, and which frequently entails a binary corset? Are binary orders of gender, migration, space, borders and time to be considered for as fundamental a change as is achieved by quantum logic in physics, which dissolves binarities such as 0-1, describes superpositions and overlappings and the concept that a measurement evokes a subject in the first place?

In the author's opinion the necessity of such changes is evident and could be started by the figure of the Continuum, which allows to read various other concepts, such as age, health, work in a way that lets pluralities appear, that does not deprive complexities of their complexity, and that awards humans the inviolable right to human dignity regardless of the arbitrary location of their birth, regardless of the gender attributed to them by themselves or others, regardless of the space and the time in which they live. Thus, being born a human should be enough to be able to live and also die in humane conditions —— all of this in a diverse togetherness in orders that are democratic and constituted in solidarity, on the basis of the actual implementation of the sentence "Human dignity is inviolable" (German: "Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar"). Seemingly, natural homogenous orders in regards to gender, migration, space, border and time can be understood as an expression of political decisions and the transfer of frequently unreflected traditions using the figure of the Continuum. Thus, the application of the figure of the Continuum may harbour the chance to no longer speak of post- or transhumanism, but of a new, broader humanism. In this way, plurality could be understood not as a threat but as a potential enrichment and expansion of one's own individual, social and societal horizon. The seemingly infinite creative and innovative possibilities inherent in plurality, in gender, migration, space, border, culture, and time, could be exhausted and no longer be subject a binary, restricting order.

Endnotes:

1. Acknowledgements: My thanks go to Svantje Volkens for her support by translating this text and the accompanying discussions.
2. Terms developed in Baltes-Löhr 2018a, 1-32.
3. The terms "transity" and "interity" will be used in place of the former terms "transgender" and "intersex" throughout this article.
4. I would like to give my sincere thanks to the students of the seminar "Just what is transity, femininity, interity, masculinity? Genderplurality from a historical perspective" for their cooperative participation and the completion of the surveys.
5. For a detailed argumentation and illustration see: Baltes-Löhr 2018a and Baltes-Löhr 2018e.
6. See: Baltes-Löhr 2018a.
7. „As early as 1848, the Frankfurt Parliament banned protests in front of the parliament. In 1920, the Reichstag building was protected by law. In 1955, the Bundestag passed its own no-protest zone law.

After the move to the capital it turned into the mitigated "Law for pacified areas", and a criminal offence turned into an administrative offence." (see Deggerich 2009).

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"On Truth and Lying" in a Literary Sense: Thinking or Tinkering?

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Abstract:

Starting from Nietzsche's notion of "truth and lying in a non moral sense" the essay develops a historical inquiry into the definitions of literature in relation to the possibility of literary errors and mistakes. The historical shift in hermeneutics from text to reading highlights the epistemological valorization of literature as a source of knowledge potentially susceptible to error and mistakes. Through the contributions of many writers and philosophers concerned with the truth of literary knowledge, a recurrent cognitive apprehension about literature is outlined, taking into consideration a long variety of different formulations, from Plato to Aristotle, from Bacon to Sidney, from the Romantics to the Formalists, and from Barthes to Derrida, and beyond. Their contributions highlight the ever-changing *loci* of error from text to reception, from hermeneutics to readability. They also help in defining the disciplinary boundaries that would differentiate literary texts from scientific ones.

Keywords: errors and mistakes, fictional worlds, disciplinary knowledge, co(n)texts, textual implications, readability, semiosis, history of literary cognition.

1. Errors and Mistakes: Cognitive Fables and Reliable Knowledge

The obvious allusion in my title refers to a well-known, and crucially transformative work: Nietzsche's *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* (Nietzsche 1999, 139-153), plausibly a work of philosophy, but actually a work of literature, if 'literature' is taken as it has been interpreted by several theorists in the Twentieth Century, who maintained that there is no "essence of Literature" (with a capital "L")[1].

In this essay, I will highlight a genealogy of disciplinary valorizations that, in time, have indicated the occurrence of errors and mistakes. I intend to delineate a critical history of epistemological concerns and priorities, with inevitable omissions, but with the intent of producing a global mosaic of error location.

Nietzsche implies the notions of "truth" and "lying" as far-reaching conceptions, inasmuch as he describes the human advent and development of cognition as the production of "a fable", normally understood as a literary fiction. Nietzsche's "genesis story" of cognition qualifies the development of knowledge as a "fable", i.e., a work of "literature" (a "fiction"), distinct from philosophy and positive science, understood at his time as purveyors of objective "truth":

> In some remote corner of the universe, flickering in the light of the countless solar systems into which it had been poured, there was once a planet on which clever animals invented cognition. It was the most arrogant and most mendacious minute in the 'history of the world' (...) Someone could invent a fable like this and yet they would still not have given a satisfactory illustration of just how pitiful, how insubstantial and transitory, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature; (...) For this intellect has no further mission that might extend beyond the bounds of human life. (Nietzsche 1999, 141)

Given that human intellect does not "extend beyond the bounds of human life", it is important for the present concern of my argument to highlight the fact that in Nietzsche knowledge and error are born together, since "cognition" is defined as "most arrogant and most mendacious", and "insubstantial and transitory". As I said, it is also interesting to notice that Nietzsche calls his own anthropological and cognitive chronicling a "fable". Why a "fable"? Is it because humans can only produce supposedly fallible accounts such as fables (to be understood as fabrications, fibs, and "untruths")?

We cannot forget that the "fables" grown in an ancient Aesop tradition were some sort of archetypal models of narratives, providing valuable knowledge, mostly of the moral and psychological kind. This would imply that Nietzsche's allusion becomes a sort of tongue-in-cheek suggestion: i.e., I am teaching you some truth (philosophical, moral and cognitive), by way of an untruth (a fable). I suggest that this can actually be, epistemologically, the very role of Literature in the construction of knowledge, with obvious consequences on defining its "erring" potential.

Nietzsche, certainly not in fear of the academic disputations he met throughout his life, confirms through his valorization of the literary genre "fable" his substantially metaphorical conception of human cognition. He purports that, ultimately, illustration of "reality" is a human fabrication, if not a plain forgery, in which "the human intellect" marks its "mission", but only within "the bounds of human life", so in no way attaining an absolute truth. In the development of human knowledge, there is no complete "satisfactory illustration": there is no totalizing text of truth. What is at stake for Nietzsche is no less than the human knowledge-potential itself, an issue formulated soon afterward, as an explicit question: "What do human beings really know about themselves?" (Nietzsche 1999, 142) In answering this question, Nietzsche highlights the ineliminable work of "metaphors we live by" (see: Lakoff 2003; De Man 1979; De Man 1984). According to him, naming is the first metaphor, which means that any knowledge is rooted in its metaphorical state: "we possess only metaphors of things which in no way correspond to the original entities" (Nietzsche 1999, 144).

In recent times, Jacques Derrida has discussed this Nietzschean presupposition (Derrida 1974, 5-74), and, in a much less radical statement, also Theodor Brown has emphasized the fact that different disciplines produce "different views of a particular problem" on the basis of "the prevailing metaphors held by each discipline." (Brown 2003, x)

So, the idea that metaphors determine both an economy of knowing and a statute of knowledge is progressively accepted in the evolution of some forms of contemporary epistemology. The inevitability of metaphors ultimately provides space for errors and mistakes, but it is also an important condition for knowledge production and knowledge\transformation: "Every concept comes into being by making equivalent that which is non-equivalent. Just as it is certain that no leaf is exactly the same as any other leaf, it is equally certain that the concept 'leaf' is formed by dropping these individual differences arbitrarily" (Nietzsche 1999, 145). As a matter of fact, in Nietzsche's essay we find far-reaching preoccupations which were later to become those of a contemporary epistemology after the so-called "linguistic turn", a "turn" affecting all fields of knowledge, and redefining the relationship of philosophy and literature, as well as their relation to "science". Language remains a basic component at the root of any conception of "literature" (be it literary, philosophical or techno-scientific), but at the level of narration, things change: narrations have different purposes and different determinations. The history of techno-science produces literary sequels in a non-ending sequence, in the pursuit of the truth value of their statements. The history of Literature, on the contrary, produces "non sequitur" sequels; literary narrations finish with themselves, even when they survive as imitation, parody or even quotation.

Thus, only a comparative discursivity, i.e., a comparison attentive to the variations of naming and purpose in different texts and disciplines (all grown on different naming-metaphors), can eventually differentiate knowledge domains, and perhaps reduce error through a sort of reciprocal interdisciplinary checking.

On the other hand, is the birth of "disciplines" merely the result of a drive to distinguish and order which represses its own metaphorical statute in the interest of establishing control?

The very definition of "discipline" (as control of a field of knowledge), implies today a regulatory self-defining statute, with boundaries that were unknown to the "natural philosopher" (i.e., the literary and philosophical scientists), up to the Modern Age, when philosophy, science and poetry co-existed in the same pre-modern texts. Think, for example, of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato's *Republic*, Lucretius' *The Nature of Things*, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It is only with the 17th Century advent of "the scientific method" that the introduction of a theorization of the "two cultures", which dichotomizes the humanities and the technical sciences, that a repression of the shared metaphorical statute characterizing both of them achieves its controlling disciplinary power (Snow 1993; Fukuyama 1992; Fukuyama 2002). The opposition of "plain style" and "fanciful use of language" goes back to the Sophists and Plato, but is radicalized in the scientific revolution of Seventeenth-Century Europe.

The subsequent question in relation to "errors" can be formulated as follows: "could the cognitive practice of 'discipline and punish' create specific territories of irrefutable error definition?" Michel Foucault has highlighted how disciplinary knowledge is closely related to power and produces outcomes that arbitrarily define human reality. What follows is that a single discipline is

insufficient to define unquestionable truths and that a discipline might even prosper on the blindness of its own limits and errors.

Is there a way out of disciplinary blindness? Perhaps only interdisciplinary outcomes, taken as evidence, can produce the contingent truth on a problematic matter (Foucault 1972; Foucault 2002; Agazzi, Giannetto and Giudice 2010).

Can interdisciplinarity provide an undisputable resistance to strictly disciplinary errors? Would a "system" of human knowledge that determines errors beyond the difference of disciplines (i.e., of particular systems of knowledge) be able to reduce epistemological errors to mere disciplinary mistakes? If so, the disciplinary error would be "just" a miscalculation or an oversight, not deeply affecting the potential of human knowledge. On the other hand, could the above questions be just a utopian articulation of a hermeneutics of suspicion?

Would interdisciplinarity make errors eventually correctible within the disciplines from which they originated, or would it multiply error by way of trans-disciplinary contagion? The history of human knowledge has witnessed the realization of both possibilities (Locatelli 2017, 31-44). Given that disciplinary fields influence each other because of citationality and translation from one discipline to another, would it be possible that trans-ductions in the pursuit of knowledge multiply disciplinary mistakes? For example, I am thinking, of the translation of Darwin's theory of "the survival of the fittest" into the socio-political system of "Darwinism", because of a rendition of one field of knowledge into another: from comparative anatomy to sociology, which eventually came to legitimize "the survival of the fittest" in political science as a "rationale" for discrimination. Also, the viral production of "fake news" is relevant in this respect.

Is there a regulative remedy in/for translations? Could the global economy of the information system, intrinsically foster error-elimination, or/and error-reduction? And, at what conditions could a "global system" of human knowledge exist, in order to perform error-avoidance?

A "global knowledge system" can only be posited as the result of a conceptual hypothesis, but then, how accountable could the logic of such a system be?

In addressing these questions, we should remember that metaphorical structure and potential referential slippage would be a constituent part of the system itself (starting with the "first metaphor of naming"), and, more importantly, that the transformative possibility of the system must be foreseen and calculated in order to be accountable, in the incessant transformation of knowledge. In short: the "global system" must avoid closure and the errors it entails.

Furthermore, even admitting that such a global system "works", how could it perform its regulatory function (both epistemological and ethical) with effective agency? And on behalf of what power?

Demagogy indicates that political information guarantees an effective but often misleading and unfair sharing of knowledge since it does not take into account cultural and intersectional differences on matters of naming and (variable) agency. This political issue about the power of information (in the double sense of the genitive, i.e. the semantic power that information has in

itself, and the performative power it exerts), brings up a concluding ethical question: at what condition of agency should a "global knowledge system" be desirable?

2. Errors and Mistakes: Where is the Difference? What are the Consequences?

The distinction between "errors" and "mistakes" is challenging, not only because of disciplinary and trans-disciplinary determinations but because of a general semantic overlapping of the two terms, mapped out and recurring in dictionaries and glossaries of different languages. For example, the definitions of "error" and "mistake" are semantically overlying in the canonic definitions of the O.E.D and in the Treccani Encyclopedia[2], two authoritative and accredited reference sources of the Eurocentric world. Repeatedly, various Dictionaries and Glossaries conflate semantic meanings in their diachronically changeable mappings, and it is only in a heuristic attempt at clarification that I quote here the synthetic and valuable distinction between "errors" and "mistakes" made by Mariacarla Gadebush Bondio and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, who take into consideration differences expressed in three current European languages: German, French and Italian: "Errors (Ger. *Irrtum*, Fr. *erreur*, It. *Errore*) are false lines of thought in the process of getting knowledge, whereas mistakes, or malpractice (Ger. *Fehler/Kunstfehler*, Fr. *faute*, It. *Fallo/svista*), are failed actions arising due to inattention, chance or clumsiness" (Bondio and Bagliani 2012, VII).

While appreciating this familiarizing cognitive map, because of a multilingual semantic distinction unknown to many others, I still wonder: are "false lines of thought" very different from "inattention, chance or clumsiness?" Or is the difference between errors and mistakes to be put in terms of "thought *vs.* action"? But, after all, how do "lines of thought develop" if not through "actions" (such as re-thinking, reading and talking)? If so, the development of "lines of thought" would not be guaranteed as free from "inattention, chance or clumsiness" which are here attributed to "failed actions".

"Lines of thought" develop through cognitive actions; but who establishes what "*failed* actions" are? Some so-called "failings", succeed later, and ultimately, they do not count as "failed actions" anymore. So, the very distinction of "error" and "mistakes" implies the complexities of performativity and agency (diachronic, and cultural) that their semantic definitions do not possibly acknowledge.

Furthermore: are "lines of thought" always unrelated to "chance"? At times "inattention" or "distraction" have been a source of deviant ways of thinking, originating new findings. In this case, the "mistaken" thinking process can be considered as a "happy chance," a *felix culpa*.

In time, one could exemplify how "errors and mistakes" have been defined according to different cultural epistemologies, and diverse "world pictures", but basically, in the Eurocentric world, all of them recurrently focus on the relation between "words and things" ("*res et verba*"). Within the field of these epistemological and cognitive issues, we should question if the economy of error-making is different in characterizing moral behavior, a concern that deserves the attention this short essay cannot address in depth.

By way of an early example of the "words/things" focus in the Eurocentric tradition, I will mention Strato of Lampsacus (328 BCE- 268 BCE), defined as a "physicus" by authors from Diogenes Laertius to Cicero, and in times closer to us, usually known because of Leopardi's mention of him. Strato of Lampsacus was among the first to indicate that the occurrence of "error" depends on a linguistic issue. According to him, thought depends on the senses, and their determination of things (right or wrong) depends on language (Desclos and Fortenbaugh 2012).

Certainly, Plato's *Phaedrus* (370 B.C.E) and Aristotle's *Poetics* (ca.330 B.C.E), with their emphasis on human cognitive needs, highlight the fact that "Representation is natural to human beings from childhood. They differ from the other animals in this: man tends most towards representation and learns his first lessons through representation" (Aristotle 1987, 4), and *Phaedrus* underscores the fact that "words bear a seed from which other words grow in other environments. This makes them capable of giving everlasting life to the original seed" (Plato 2002, 72). Thus linguistic questions are opened: (how) can one distinguish good from bad representations? And, when "words grow in other environments", on what basis can we define good and bad statements and depictions? Is there a way to preserve "the original seed"? And, is there a method, or at least a device to distinguish good and bad accounts, so as to prevent the mis-use of words which would produce the dissemination of error and mistakes in the spreading of communication in every direction and through multiple media?

Furthermore, on a different level, are the performance and the logic of error-making different, in characterizing cognitive *vs.* moral behavior? These are intertwined issues (epistemological and ethical), which become very relevant with historic hindsight, looking at how both cognitive and moral behavior have been celebrated or sanctioned. Think, for example of Galileo Galilei's dispute with the Inquisition, and of the controversial and contradictory understanding of "homosexuality" from Greek times to this day.

3. The Old Story of 'Fake News' Dissemination

The spreading of 'fake news' is not a recent phenomenon but is as old as Plato, at least. For him it was an issue of sharing information with "inappropriate people" who then produced "fake news" because of their misreadings; what follows is an issue that, still valid today, challenges the very possibility of evaluating and filtering information, so as to distinguish the good news from the bad ones.

Can the addressees be the discriminating agent in establishing error? Are cultural probability and consensus the only determining "factors of truth" in the information world? Plato's *Phaedrus* has addressed the issue, and suggested that even wrong readers construct the "truths" of what they are reading in a text:

Once any account has been written down, you find it all over the place, hobnobbing with completely inappropriate people no less than with those who understand it, and completely failing to know who it should and shouldn't talk to (Plato 2002, 70).

This statement provides a turning point in the definition of errors because:
1) "The account" itself is no longer an inert object but takes on agency: it is personified; the account itself is "hobnobbing" and "fails to know".

In today's world we are aware of the account's agency because of the fact that news create reality, and do not simply report or describe it.
2) Within a contemporary communication model, the "account" is found "all over the place." It is hardly necessary to indicate that the "place" today includes the World Wide Web, or should we say "*wild* world web"?
3) The message, in spite of its agency, cannot totally choose its addressees; it is "completely failing to know who it should and shouldn't talk to".

Thus, the written "account" is a failed agent, which produces error because it has no full control of the addressees. Plato does not question its truth-content but its vulnerability: it is subject to error inasmuch as it fails to know and chose whom it should selectively address; the addressee is an uncontrollable factor.

Writing as opposed to orality seemed to be the source of error for Plato, even if such an opposition has been deconstructed and profoundly challenged today. Plato says: "once the account has been written down", the addressee becomes the primary source of error, and the message loses its empowered agency.[3] The inevitable dislocation of any written "account" (i.e., the ubiquity of its being found "all over the place"), is the major source of interpretative error. Plato maintains that the iterability of written signs and of cited messages is the culprit of potential error, in different *co(n)texts*.[4]

And yet, at the same time, if signs were not repeatable, there would be no human communication at all, neither written nor oral, and that is a price much too high to pay, *vis à vis* the risk of spreading errors and mistakes due to the spreading of the (written) "account" to unworthy addressees.

Any kind of literature can indisputably be interpreted by different addresses, and some are "inappropriate people" (including, for example, those who cannot interpret instructions for installing a washing machine). The possibility of errors is multiplied by the structural feature of the linguistic iterability of an "account" likely to fall in the hands of many.[5] "Inappropriate people" ignore a disciplinary content (the co-texts), that would correctly place the "account" (the text) in an adequate line of reading; the co(n)textual semantic, discursive and pragmatic determination can always be (dis)regarded by the "unsuitable reader". For example, this may happen moving poetic texts to scientific accounts, or moving Sacred Texts from liturgical use to literary fruition.

At any rate, what seems particularly relevant today is the development of an epistemological concern in defining error, no longer linked to the successful unveiling of some truth, but as a pernicious production of truths. These are crucial issues at stake also when inquiring whether or not "Literature" can err or just make mistakes.

4. The Literary Domain: A Suggested Map of Errors and Mistakes

As I have mentioned earlier in this essay, the Twentieth Century has devoted a lot of thinking to the definition of "literature" (with or without a capital "L"); for example, Roland Barthes has underscored the fact that "Literature" (with a capital "L") is a bourgeois "mythology", comparable to the "Fashion System", and Jacques Derrida has underlined the fact that all texts are "literature" (with a small "l") because they depend on language (Barthes 2012, Derrida 1986). As I said earlier, all texts, including those of the "hard sciences", share an inevitable linguistic denominator, as Nietzsche had pointed out by saying that they share the linguistic condition of "naming".

However, neither Barthes' socio-semiotic considerations nor Derrida's epistemological reflections thematize the specificity of "Literature's lies", i.e., the source of errors and mistakes, which was a major concern in both the Greek and Latin cultural backgrounds and was majorly addressed by scholars and artists throughout the Eurocentric Humanist tradition.

Among these humanists, Bacon is an obvious authority since in his *De Dignitate*, an expansion of *De Agumentis Scientiarum* (i.e., *The Advancement of Learning*), he indicates History, Poetry, and Philosophy as three fundamental disciplinary types of knowledge, susceptible of being interrogated because of their potential for errors of demonstration, or creation of false information (Bacon 1974; Bacon 2010). He has been extensively concerned with error(s), and it may be worth recalling at length some of his observations, in spite of the fact that they are quite known, because I will interpret them in relation to the present. As a matter of fact, his meditations are still central to a contemporary discussion of errors and mistakes, inasmuch as they establish a cognitive shift from a search of knowledge for a purely speculative sake, to a search for a beneficial knowledge for humans.

Bacon's pervasive concern about false notions is not simply aimed ad debunking Aristotle's *Organon* by conceiving his *Novum Organum* (*The New Organon or True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature*,1620), but he purports to focus on the obstacles in the process of pursuing a *useful* knowledge (Bacon 1994, 53-56) . Thus, Bacon exposes different forms of fallacious reasoning, i.e., a variety of mistaken and erroneous ways of clinging to, or developing, false notions. He calls these types of humanly ingrained and cultural errors "*idola*" (i.e., notions lacking demonstration), and he enumerates some major ones: 1) *idola tribus*; 2) *idola specus*; 3) *idola fori*; 4) idola *theatri*." Each of them deserves a much broader elucidation than the one allowed in this essay, but we could say synthetically that they concern respectively:

1) *"The idols of the tribe"* which "lie deep in human nature itself (...) For it is wrongly asserted that the human sense is the measure of things". In modern terms we would probably highlight intrinsic cognitive blindness as a source of error, given that the notion of "human nature" is no longer sound today;

2) *"The idols of the cave"* which "are those specific to individual men", being linked to their peculiar taste or personal training, including unverified reverence for authority. A loss of sight beyond the immediately personal knowledge and belief system makes humans content with their ignorance, so that they will not get out of their Platonic cave (i.e., their set and restraining prejudices).

Even today, the danger here has to do with accepting the limits of the investigation of reality dictated by pre-emptive disciplinary boundaries and personal preference and preparation. By way of an example, Bacon calls into question the conflation of human and divine notions as epitomized in Pythagoras and Aristotle. Unfortunately, the danger of such a pre-judicial error leads to fanaticism caused by a misunderstanding, still present in today's world;

3) *"The Idols of the Market-place"* which regard errors performed in human interaction and are due to linguistic vagueness and incongruity: "For speech is the means of association among men; but words are applied according to common understanding. And in consequence, a wrong and inappropriate application of words obstructs the mind to a remarkable extent." (Bacon 1994, 55) According to Bacon, the cause of error can originate both in "common understanding" inappropriately applied and in a disciplinary use of language, which could name things that do not exist, or apply mere guessed qualities to existing things, thus leading "men into innumerable controversies and fictions.";

4) *"The Idols of the Theater"*, i.e., system errors, "which have crept into human minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from faulty laws of demonstration." It is worth noticing that Bacon does not distinguish here philosophy from Literature or science:

I regard all the philosophies that have been received or invented as so many stage plays creating fictitious and imaginary worlds. (...) Nor again do I mean this only in regard to universal philosophies, but also to many principles and axioms of the sciences, which have become established through tradition, credulity and neglect (Bacon 1994, 56).

The problem highlighted here regards the process of knowledge-acquisition, which is severely faulty if determined by the adherence to any unchecked (by experimental verification) representations of reality. Philosophical systems (referring to non existing worlds given as real), and scientific principles (established only by tradition) produce errors when they represent reality without indicating that they are fictional.

Aristotelian systems are predominantly under Bacon's fire, but "Poesy" is also called into question. Doesn't it create things that do not exist? So: what could possibly be the contribution of Literature to human knowledge, if any? According to Bacon, it is its elegant telling, one that makes the telling itself more desirable than the truthful telling of History in the "theater" of life-representation. "Poesy" regards what can be imagined, but not what is implied as existing; it is a decoration, beautifying something imagined but not necessarily existing in the "real" world.

I do not think that we still agree today with the notion that the cognitive value of Literature is a mere decorative function in the description of "reality". Many literary scholars and scientists maintain that there is a specific epistemological value of Literature. I will address again this crucial issue in the following paragraphs. As I have explained, according to Bacon the epistemic role of Literature is in the production of an ornate picture of *the conceivable*, not of *the real*. Thus, "literary fictions" become errors only when they are "taken for truth", even when they have no claim to truth in themselves. Ultimately, according to him, the psychological factor, i.e., the mode of reception, is

more important than the literal content of a text of Literature in determining its error potential.

As I mentioned earlier, Bacon's taxonomy connects "error" to linguistic and discursive misunderstanding associated with subjectivity and social interaction. In the case of Literature, he blames the addressee for taking as truthful something that it is not so, i.e., for accepting unverified information as "true". In short: the addressee can be a bad reader, so that he is more accountable than the text or the author because he possesses a discerning capability which could prevent literary fictions to be taken as truthful. There is some sort of similarity here with Plato's *Phaedrus*, in underlying the dimension of literary error as contextually "interpretative", even though, as we have seen, Plato's emphasis on error-potential was placed on the vagrancies of the text itself, and more specifically on textual iterability: textual repetition-dislocation produces wrong interpretations by reaching unsuitable addressees. According to Bacon, the unsuitable addressee is psychologically characterized by his ignorance of context and gratuitous inclination to rely on authority, so that there is no blame on textual iterability, but only on the readers who do not verify information.

5. From Text to Reader, and then on to Author: a Humanist Dynamics of Error Location

In addition to the mentioned drifting of focus between *text* (Plato) and *reader* (Bacon), I will recall Sir Philip Sidney's passionate *Defence of Poesy* (1580-81), because he focuses on the *author*, and "absolves" the poet's lies, on the ground of the special statute of art, as different from philosophy, theology and science:

> Now, for the poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth, for, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false. (...) But the poet, as I said before, never affirmeth; the poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes. (...) And therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not... (Sidney 2004, 34)

This quotation accommodates at least three crucial issues: 1) What is the meaning of the statement: "*the poet nothing affirms*"? Does Sidney suggest that literature does not produce knowledge, or that its assertions and references are not to be taken as referential statements? 2) Sidney bases his defense of the poet on the nature of a speech act: "though he recounts things not true, yet because *he telleth them not for true*, he lieth not...". The real problem here becomes: how do we know that "he telleth them for not true"? Why then can so many mistakes occur because fictions "*are* taken for true", as Bacon pointed out? 3) The poet is characterized as implicitly different from the scientist and the philosopher or the theologian who would "speak the truth" and are therefore accountable for it, in the "tribunals of truth". So: is there no truth in/of Literature?

According to Sidney, the poet is not accountable, and also not manipulative: "the poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes". The poet is not accountable because he "nothing affirms" and furthermore he does not "conjure you to believe for true what he writes." But: where is the evidence that he does not aim at persuading? Does

he really not "conjure you to believe"? This is indeed a problematic question, and poets and critics have taken different positions on the issue: Sophists declare their persuasive intent with pride; Plato resists the use of the ornate and bombastic as evil instruments of persuasion; most 18th Century critics and poets oppose "the metaphorical" and "effusive" as potentially misleading, but the Romantics celebrate metaphors and symbols as expansive and imaginative. It is well known that Coleridge indicates the need for a "suspension of disbelief" in the ideal reader. So, even if there is no intentional attempt to deceive on the part of the poet (but how can such an intention be proven?)[6], the definition of Literature has always dealt with its seductive and potentially fallacious powers.

6. Locating the Knowledge of Literature Today: What Errors? And what Mistakes?

In order to define what literary "errors" and/or "mistakes" can be, one should attempt to highlight further what "the knowledge of literature" is, in the double sense of the genitive, i.e., 1) as the knowledge produced by literature, and 2) as the knowledge required to access literary texts.[7]

The entire humanist tradition, still alive in the Twentieth Century, has addressed this double question: 1) does Literature provide some *specific* type of knowledge (presumably one of psycho-social-ethical value)? Would that knowledge be immune from error or from the risk of producing error? And furthermore: 2) does knowing *about* Literature constitute a valuable knowledge, and is it an instrument of *correct* knowledge-production? In other words, two types of knowledge are at stake: knowing "through" Literature and knowing "about" Literature as an object of knowledge in itself.

The answers to the first question have been traditionally affirmative in various cultures, inasmuch as Literature has been included, from the Greek and Roman times, in the curricula of students who were to be acknowledged and respected as the culturally educated, and even as the scholarly and erudite. This educational imperative implies that indeed, literature provides knowledge and, to say the least, promotes the so-called "soft skills" required in today's working world. Furthermore, the proliferation of histories of Literature (national and transnational), and of histories of Reading, as well as of histories of Criticism and Theory support this view to this day.

As for the second question, the entire hermeneutical tradition, including literary theory, is precisely a story of the implication that a greater knowledge about Literature can provide a more profound way of accessing literary and philosophical knowledge, and it can also increase our ways of knowing and feeling. The knowledge of Literature (in the double sense of the genitive) is the condition for evaluating both the depth and appropriateness of the knowledge Literature provide, as well as the condition for developing and assessing the accuracy, coherence, and effectiveness of the methods investigating it.

In this epistemological context of inquiry, it is worthwhile to remember that the definition of the "object" Literature keeps changing, and develops along many different lines of thought and educational styles, leaving the very notion of "Literature" floating, in erratic and erotic meandings (i.e., in non systemic and pleasurable wanders/wonders). Literature has been variously defined since

the early Greek times, and has been connoted with positive or negative values, which predictably affect the definition of literary "errors". However, the pleasure of Literature can hardly be reckoned as an error, unless one focuses merely on the thematic content which, in fact, has led to detections of obscenity or corruption. But the pleasure of literature is in the complex forms of its (un)veiling even the most controversial issues, and not in the didacticism of some ordinary descriptions.

As always in the history of literary knowledge, issues and values are cognitive and/or political, and, among the most stable values of Literature, pleasure occupies a prominent place, which obviously adds to the complex definition of its emphatic effects related to ethical and political knowledge in different historical periods.

In the Twentieth Century, a long and international "formalist tradition" has emphasized the "objective" (*vs.* subjective) specificity of the literary artifact (a text *ad arte factum*), as structurally different from ordinary communication. Formalism developed in order to avoid political and emphatic aspects of Literature and promoted its study as a science, with its specific object in "literariness". In1921 Roman Jakobson wrote: "The object of *the science of literature* is not literature, but literariness – that is, that which makes a given work a work of literature[8]. "Literariness" is the distinctive feature of Literature seen as an object of scientific study, and derives from specific stylistic, rhetorical syntactical, and morphological characteristics. Ignorance of these distinctive features would produce a cognitive and methodological error, which ultimately leads to reading literary communication as an ordinary, or scientific one.

Both Russian and American formalists[9] were interested in valorizing Literature as distinctively structured and separate from ordinary communication and perception. Boris Eichenbaum defines literary perception as one "in which we experience form. (...) *Perception* here is clearly not to be understood as a simple psychological concept peculiar to this or that person, but, since art does not exist outside of perception, as an element in art itself. The notion of 'form' here acquires new meaning: it is no longer an envelope, but a complete thing, something concrete, dynamic, self-contained, and without a correlative of any kind." (Eichenbaum 1926, 112) Thus, errors would be interpretative errors, not intrinsically literary ones (except in the case of an abuse of form), and would ensue from a confusion or clear separation of the "content" of a literary text from its "form", and the systemic error of criticism would be to ignore "perception of form" as the determining and distinctive feature of literary texts.

If literary form "is no longer an envelope", then the forms of literature work on the impossibility of synonyms for the content of form, but thrive on the possibilities of the forms of referential content. Given the non-translatability of form [since any paraphrase would be a "heresy" (Borooks 1947)], Literature qua "pure form" is beyond and outside error, but forms of literariness can be compared, and some can be found faulty in comparison with others. They would be "literary mistakes."

The epistemological bequest of Formalism tells us that Literature is a type of discourse distinct from other types of discourse because each one of them is structurally determined in

different ways. This legacy does not address, and thus leaves open the questions of whether or not the knowledge of literature can make "true assertions" (as well as false ones), and produce "specific truths." However, when in 1926-27, Boris Eichenbaum echoed Jakobson's presuppositions and warnings and insisted on the fact that: "the specific features of the verbal arts had to be studied (...) [*and in order*] to do so it was first necessary to sort out the *differing uses* of poetic and practical language." (Eichenbaum 1926, 115. Emphasis added) By calling "uses" into question he added a functionally cognitive perspective to the merely formalist one (which would presumably valorize only the notion of 'technique').

A focus on "the *differing uses* of poetic and practical language" highlights the particular goals and features of texts, which would distinguish techno-scientific ones from the literary ones, on the basis of a difference of discursive codes and communicative goals.

The notion of "discourse" as defined in socio-semiotics and linguistics underscores differences at the level of a structuring beyond the mere linguistic level: discourse grows on the uses of language. Nietzsche himself acknowledges the impact of a "*web* of metaphors" which differentiates texts, as the pursuit of "truth" is practiced by humans in different disciplines. Uses of language are varying, in the interest of the survival of the species.

At *the referential level*, techno-scientific discourse develops its network of metaphors in order to provide useful information; it also requires data evidence and verifiable proof for its statements. Literary and philosophical discourses release non-quantifiable and non-immediately useful information. Logical interrelations of concepts provide scientific evidence, but for the artist, the correlation of concepts does not provide proven indication, nor do such interrelations deliver immediately applicable outcomes. Science deals with data on which it bases the information it provides, in view of an applicable outcome: mathematized data (validating syntactic and semantic language-based models) support the investigations of the physical sciences, whereas Literature and philosophy (also relying on syntactic and semantic language-based models), produce non-quantitative information and do not develop through structured mathematical or formal concepts, but through symbolic narration.

Literature works on the logic of the fictional worlds it sets up, and Literature's mistakes occur only when the logic and/or the referential system internal to a fictional world-creation are violated. So, literary texts can even challenge a received and habitual concatenation of referents, because literary referents neither establish nor demonstrate the validity of evidence. However, a literary text cannot violate its own fictional logic, once a worldview is established. For example: if the story says that only purple unicorns can fly, then, pink ones cannot, and so it would be a literary mistake to say they do at some point within the same narrative. It is on the basis of wrong repetitions or disconnected anaphoras within the narrative of the fictional world that Literature can make mistakes. Given data can produce narrative mistakes only when they are not consistent with the referential system established within the fictional narrative.

In other words: Literature cannot produce verifiable error(s), but it can make mistakes when it contradicts its own referential logic and premises. This is the main proposition of my investigation, and a few more expansions will reinforce my point.

7. A Cognitive Fable: from Text to Author, to Reader, and to Reading, and then on to Readability

In recent times Roland Barthes has highlighted discursive and semiotic differences in the typology of texts, depending on their "symbolic structuring". The difference he indicates between "Work" and "Text" (in 1971) emphasizes divergences in the uses and taxonomies of textual productions: "*the Text* is that which goes to the limit of the rules of enunciation (rationality, readability etc.). (...) The logic regulating the Text is not comprehensive (...); the activity of associations, contiguities, carryings-over coincides with a liberation of symbolic energy (...); *the work* – in the best of cases – is *moderately* symbolic (its symbolic runs out, comes to a halt); the Text is *radically* symbolic: *a work conceived, perceived, and received in its integrally symbolic nature is a text*."[10] The difference between a "moderately" and "radically" symbolic text implies a tolerance for a deviance from the established rules that organize discourse according to strictly techno-scientific principles and points to an oscillation within the reassuring distinction between purely descriptive representation of "reality" and descriptions charged with symbolic meaning.

Literature produces "Texts", which is to say that: "Unlike traditional science, literature does not conceal its own fictional basis (...). Differently from science, literature displays its unverifiable assertiveness, and even flaunts the rhetorical and consensual dimension of its truth, as well as the intense symbolic energy of its discourse, and a special connection with imagination and feelings" (Locatelli 2007, 9). Indeed, the underscoring of an "unverifiable assertiveness" defines the production of Literature as a sequel of "Texts" (as defined by Barthes), i.e., as the locus of an intense discharge of "symbolic energy" acknowledging and affirming itself outside the boundaries of demonstrable and certifiable referential evidence.

Many post-structuralist theories have valorized the semiotic notion of *unlimited semiosis* (Eco, Pierce), and/or of *difference* (Derrida), as two epistemological modes of meaning-production and signification that would ultimately jeopardize the very possibility of theorizing final and "totalizing" interpretations of a literary text. What Literature "means" and "does" is open to plurality, multiplicity, and even undecidability, and thus the task of defining interpretative errors based on an unambiguous true/false foundation surfaces as the meager and ordinary result of cultural "mythologies" (Barthes).

As a matter of fact, the search of errors shifts from a traditional focusing on the referents and structures of a closed textuality to the openness of interpretation, and the ethics of reading takes the place of a precise identification of textual errors and mistakes.

In the Twentieth Century, starting with the Formalists, the issue of "textual error-potential" lost its clout, and interpretative analysis and deconstruction of referential, structural, and semiotic

meanings became a reading priority. Recent theoretical approaches to defining "literature/Literature," and finding literary errors locate them in *the readers' approach* in understanding, or failing to understand, the strife between a text's semantic assertions and the rhetoric and syntax of its complex articulation.

The deconstructionist findings also highlight the fact that the very notion of "text" is problematic, so that textual interpretation is convoked to define the *tòpos* (no longer a textual place, but a trope) of its plural understanding.

However, contrary to a superficial reception of deconstruction, the attention to linguistic *différance* and to the plurality of "centers" in a "text" did not mean that any interpretation would be acceptable, but rather that the attention to the signification potential of the non-totalizing structure of the "text" itself (however differently defined), could provide unforeseen possibilities of reading (some even contradicting the mere semantic level of the text as a given, and as traditionally interpreted).

After the above presentation and discussion on the various epistemological perspectives concerning the many ways in which errors and mistakes have been defined and theorized (from Plato to the present), I put forward my synthesis: nowadays cognitive and epistemological emphasis about literary errors is no longer placed on blaming "inappropriate readers", nor in sanctioning "the writer's lies", and not even on blaming "the deceiving text" as a source of error, but the locus of error is transferred to "readability" and to contingent readings.

Barbara Johnson has defined "readability" as *the condition of reading* typical of all literature (i.e., techno-scientific, philosophical and literary): "the already read is that aspect of a text that it must have in common with its reader in order for it to be readable at all." (Johnson 1980, 3; see: Barthes 1974) So, readability is determined by previous readability: it is the reader's "already read" which creates the reading possibility.

Based on the unavoidable condition of *readability*, particular *readings* can take place. In this sense, reading is a restricted hermeneutical engagement with a text previously defined (i.e., once readability makes it available as a text). In other words: readability makes a "text" recognizable as the object of a reading. So, literary texts are created by the readers' gaze, and readability is the very condition for the perception of a "text", not as something always already structured, but rather, as readable, and recognizable by different readings, as literary, or alternatively, as scientific, and/or philosophical.

In short: there is no "literary text" per se, but readability makes it so.

Readability as the defining approach to literature does not list empirical "rules" for reading, and yet it *develops forms of understanding* that register and/or promote:

1) the formalist distinction opposing "poetic" to "ordinary" discourse;

2) the readers' reception history, as phenomenological, psychological, social, etc. (highlighting cultural protocols impacting reading attitudes);

3) the literary canon as the mark of an aesthetic tradition (in the case of the literary text).

In any case, as I have said, it would be the gaze of the reader that ultimately determines whether a text counts as Literature, or literature (based on recognized literariness and/or protocols of reading). It is his/her "read-*ability*" which ultimately qualifies a text as literary, and/or scientific, and/or philosophical. This "read(ing)-ability" should not ignore the formal traits of literariness and a tradition of textual protocols of reading, but should take them into account in order to avoid macroscopic interpretive errors and mistakes.

In this light, the *co-textual implications* of texts become pragmatically and theoretically very important. Co-texts are not only the specifically quoted or culturally recognized texts in a later text (as most traditional definitions would maintain); more radically, they are also experiences of reading implicated and in-scribed in the condition of reading (Locatelli 2000). *Reading co-textually*, i.e., in relation to "the already read", can even expand unexpressed methodological and cognitive procedures for renewing and expanding readability itself.

Readability and reading always magnetically attract each other, but they can never coincide: one is the condition of reading; the other is the unstoppable semio-pragmatic effect of readability. At the very "space of the moment" in which readability becomes reading, (because writing, readability and reading irreducibly imply space-time),[11] differences between techno-scientific, literary and philosophical discourses are distinguished. Thus, traditional diatribes on error location in Literature can resurface, regarding the referential "truth" of different references and the "correctness" of the provisional readings of literary texts.

8. Contingent and Concluding Corollaries: Wondering and Wandering

As I have said, when we read a text *as* Literature, our reading choice makes it Literature. So, once this reading decision is made, is there an error potential in making such a determination? Could errors and mistakes occur in the reading possibility and in the performative reading (i.e., in defining a text as Literature, and then in interpreting it)? And can the pragmatic reading identify errors within the texts *qua* texts of Literature? Through these questions, I am highlighting here two levels and two possibilities of error: one depending on the reader's determination of the text, and one intrinsic to the text itself. The reader can go wrong in the description of the text (i.e., qualifying it as Literature when it is not Literature, thus ignoring the logic of the text's narrative world); the text can go wrong by contradicting its own fictional system (structurally and/or referentially). For example, a "faulty" sonnet structure, or contradictory descriptions and chronotopes within the same narrative are blatant textual mistakes. They should be seen as a "mistake", rather than "error", by the practice of reading, inasmuch as they are linked to "inattention and clumsiness." (see: Bondio and Bagliani 2012, VII)

As Barthes suggested, a "symbolic intensity" changes within the movement "from Work to Text" and produces different expectations and responses. So, errors relate to a lack of apprehension of the symbolic dimension of narratives, especially when a "Text" is taken for a "Work" (and vice-versa) because a certain reading does not register the symbolic density at stake.

As Barthes indicated, the "Text" can sometimes challenge rather than sanction the predictable concatenation of ordinary causative theories and hypotheses, notwithstanding the need for syntax as the basic logic of any readable text. For example, within the literary field, I am thinking of "fantasy" and of "transhumanist fictions" as the creations of narrative worlds alternative to the "real world" as conceived by a humanist framework of reference (see: Jackson 1981; Atwood 2003; Houllebecq 2000). In recent times, affective narratology has highlighted the fact that emotional transportation ensuing from literary narrations works on a logic that is strongly divergent from the logic of techno-scientific narrative, and the individual has a much stronger power of persuasion than the statistical one. In other words, scientific evidence and literary exempla produce emotional responses that do not converge (Jenkins 2001; Gallese and Wojciehowski 2011). So, can one talk about literary emphatic errors? The occurrence seems much more frequent in literature (news and fake news), than in Literature, because the communicative model of a literary "Text" is (conventionally) always already removes the fictional world from the immediate context in which writing and reading take place. The literary imperative of deferring incredulity indicates first of all that one refers to belief (albeit a non-naïve credulity), but not to assessment, so that certain types of errors are avoided.

To conclude: errors can occur in reading, but the obligation of readability, i.e. the debt to a possibility of reading, is not erased by erroneous mis-readings, since readability is a non-negotiable requirement of reading itself. The already read makes the specific read-able possible (and this applies to both text and reader), but it cannot guarantee the correctness of specific typological readings. Once the "suspension of disbelief" is achieved, and the dislocation of the referential context is achieved, only mistakes are left for which the restricted textual readings are responsible.

As Samuel Beckett said: "there are many ways in which the thing I am trying in vain to read may be tried in vain to be read." This is the life of Literature, but this is also, as my sagacious readers may have noticed, a wrong quotation, and a citational mistake, for which I ask forgiveness to Samuel Beckett and his readers. [12]

Endnotes:

1. Throughout this essay, heuristically and for the sake of clarity, "Literature" will be capitalized when referring only to literary texts as defined in a Formalist tradition, and will not be capitalized ("literature") when referring to any text. See: Jacques Derrida, *Glas*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); *Writings and Difference*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); *Acts of Literature*. (New York: Routledge, 1992); Richard Rorty, "Philosophy as a kind of writing." in *New Literary History* Vol. 39, 1, 2008, 101-119; *Philosophy as Poetry*. (Charlotsville: University of Virginia Press, 2016); Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. (Minneapolis: Universirty of Minnesota Press, 1983).
2. See, for example: "mistake" and "error" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); and "errore" and "sbaglio" in *Treccani*. (Roma: Treccani Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1995).

3. Jacques Derrida has deconstructed the dichotomous opposition of orality and writing and has ousted the traditional belief that the origin of writing is in orality. See: *Of iGrammatology*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
4. I have created a "figure of thought" indicating the inextricable, simultaneous and unavoidable relations of texts, co-texts, and con-texts. Cfr. Carla Locatelli, "Co(n)testi." in *Co(n)texts: Implicazioni testuali*. C. Locatelli, Ed., (Trento: University of Trento Press, 2000), 11-36.
5. I must note in passing that the development of hermetic traditions in different cultures can be seen as a "defense" against indiscriminate fruition and unworthy addressees. Obviously the complexity of this issue cannot be developed in this essay, but seems necessary to mention it.
6. I believe that the Searle-Derrida debate on "speech acts" has highlighted the impossibility of distinguishing between "serious" and "lying" speech-acts. The former's belief that "the maker of an assertion commits himself to the truth of the expressed proposition" is radically challenged by Derrida. See: *New Literary History*, VI, n° 2, Winter 1975, 322. See Also: Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* (Evanston IL.: Northwestern University Press, 1988).
7. Starting in 2002, Angela Locatelli has developed a sustained reflection on "The Knowledge of Literature" in a 10 Volume Series she has edited. Contributions have been in English and Italian, and from different disciplinary domains: psychology, jurisprudence, phenomenology, rhetoric, philosophy of science, etc.. See: *La conoscenza della letteratura/The Knowledge of Literature*. (Bergamo University Press, Edizioni Sestante, 2002-2011).
8. Roman Jakobson quoted by Boris Eichenbaum in "The Theory of 'The Formal Method'"(1926) in *Russian Formalist Criticism. Four Essays*. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis trans. and eds., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 107. Emphasis added. See also: Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature*. Contributors: Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1987.
9. Among American and British Formalists see: T.S Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*. (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd. 1920); *On Poetry and Poets* (1957). (New York: Octagon Books,1975); Ivor Armstrong. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924). (London/New York: Routledge, 2001); William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930 and London: Faber & Faber, 2003); John Crowe Ransom, *The World's Body* (1938). (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968); *The New Criticism* (1941), (Westport CT.: Greenwood Press, 1979); Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939). (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965); *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947). (London: Dobson, 1968); William K. Wimsat, *The Verbal Icon. Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (1954), (Lexington: University of Kentuky Press, 1967); Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958).
10. In this essay, following Barthes' suggestions "Text" will be capitalized when referring to "Literature," and will not be capitalized in all other cases. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text." in *Image – Music – Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), 157-159.
11. I have discussed the the inscription of space-time in language and narrative in: Carla Locatelli, "Rappresentazione, narratività e linguisticità dello spazio." in *Spazi/o. Teoria, rappresentazione, lettura*. Francesca Di Blasio and Carla Locatelli, Eds. (Trento: Università degli Studi di Trento Press, 2006), 3-25.
12. The actual quotation reads: "There are many ways in which the thing I am trying in vain to say may be tried in vain to be said." In: *Disjecta. Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment by Samuel Beckett*, ed. with a Foreword by Ruby Cohn, London, John Calder, 1983, p.144.

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The Incomplete Finish of Lorca's *The Public*: A New Key

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Abstract:

Lorca's most innovative drama, *The Public* (1929-30), pretends to be incomplete, yet poses the problems of his imperfection as a playwright, of his vacillation between two styles, and of the play's contrived fragmentariness. Our study traces the two styles, "open-air theatre" and "theater-beneath-the-sand", to Gabriele d'Annunzio, his mistress Eleonora Duse, and Duse's admirer, Margarita Xirgu. Examining the scene-by-scene conflict between the two theatres offers a new method for grasping *The Public*. In scene 1, the Director debates with his own passions and critical faculties, he arguing for "open-air theatre," and they for "theatre-beneath-the-sand." Scene 2 stages a symbolic contest between the two conceptions. The Director's double, the Figure in Bells, symbolizes "open-air theatre"; his lover Gonzalo's double, the Figure in Vine-Leaves, represents "theatre-beneath-the-sand". Scene 3 presents *Romeo and Juliet* as a drama of "theatre-beneath-the-sand", but draws symbols from "open-air theatre". Scene 5 parodies an auto sacramental, allegorizing the agony of theatre, while offering multiple possible explanations for the public's destruction of the theatre to protest its revolutionary *Romeo and Juliet*. Scene 6 shows the fatal but inconclusive struggle between the Director, now championing "theatre-under-the sand", and the illusionist, seeing theatre as sleight-of-hand, a view compatible with "open-air theatre".

Keywords: García Lorca, *El público,* modernism, avant-garde, d'Annunzio, Duse, Wedekind, history of theatre, dehumanized art.

Some works of world culture do not require the finished state for maximum appreciation. Michelangelo's sculpture *The Pietà* movingly represents Christ and his mother not fully separated from the original stone, suggesting the imperfection of humankind. Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony in B-Minor*, if completed by a different composer, would lack the authenticity of its original form for listeners. Velázquez's portraits of Juan de Pareja (1615) and Pablo de Valladolid (1635) give these figures reality by having them emerge from empty canvas. In *The Maids-in-Waiting* (1656), Velázquez immortalizes artistic incompleteness in finished form: he paints the infanta Margarita Teresa and her entourage interrupting his meticulous portrayal of her parents, reflected in a mirror. Modernist Spanish literature experiments with artistic incompleteness. Unamuno's novel *Mist* (1914) hints at being a novelistic plot that makes itself as it goes (Unamuno 1995, 178). His work *How to Make a Novel* (1927) alternates between essay on novel-writing and novelistic narrative without a dénoument. Likewise, in his most avant-garde play *The Public*, poet-

playwright Federico García Lorca, Unamuno´s admirer (Lorca 1989, III, 607), offers what passes for an incomplete drama while gathering force from its rough edges.

Lorca´s friend Rafael Martínez Nadal calls it an "Unfinished Play" (Nadal 1974, 3). Nadal recalls his self-praise before reading it to the Morla family, whom he was about to shock: "You´ll see what a play it is! Most daring, using a completely new technique. It´s the best thing I´ve written for the theatre." (19) Almost finished, it merely needed "correcting and polishing." In July 1936, he telephoned Nadal to hear him read the "final version" (19). The manuscript appeared in print posthumously with the date August 22, 1930 (Lorca 1989, II, 672). Therefore, the play was complete enough to satisfy Lorca. Nadal may have labeled it "unfinished" because it exists simultaneously as both complete and incomplete, like Velázquez´s portraits.

Lorca´s subtitle and content indicate incompleteness: "Drama in twenty scenes and a murder." The drama is only six scenes long: 1, 2, 3, 5, an unnumbered one, and 6, with three murders. The present study shows that the work poses the problems of the self-acknowledged imperfection of its author as a dramatist, his oscillation between two styles, and the planned fragmentariness of the drama. For Gwynne Edwards (2013, 61), "Lorca regarded *The Public* as unrepresentable at the time of its composition, principally on ground of public taste and attitudes." In 1933 Pablo Suero remarked that Lorca "assigns no importance to anything he has does (...). If you talk to him of *Blood Wedding*, he speaks with enthusiasm of two works that he has not been able to perform and that are, for him, the theatre he wants to make. Those works are titled *When Five Years Pass* and *The Public* (Lorca, 1989, III, 544-45). Lorca´s view of *The Public* as merely a wish conveys its incompleteness. Suero stresses lack of plot continuity in *When Five Year Pass*, yet the same applies to *The Public*: "Do not seek in *When Five Years Pass* the conventional connection of plot and scenes, the technical development of every day. As technique, perhaps antecedents could be found in some instances of Wedekind´s *The Earth Spirit* and *The Spring Awakening*. But the fantasy and technical courage of García Lorca go further." (Lorca, 1989, III, 553)

When Five Years Pass unfolds in the protagonist´s head (Rodrigo 2005, 206); and *The Public* is the Director´s dream-vision (Nadal 1974, 63). Forms easily flow into other forms, as when male characters become females. Lorca´s most rigorous critics err in attributing to him æsthetic or moral messages (e.g., Newberry 1969, 285; Nadal 1974, 30-31). As dehumanized art (Newberry 1969, 286), *The Public* renounces transcendence in theme and self-importance (Ortega 2005, III, 874). Lorca offers no solutions, we submit, but merely problems in metatheater, the relationship of life to art, and homoerotic passion. Æsthetic enjoyment lies in riddle-solving as the drama unfolds in anguished, unfinished fashion, with reader/spectators choosing interpretations to their own tastes.

The play counterposes two conceptions of theatre without prioritizing either. One is open-air theatre, a more traditional vision of drama as a series of universal symbols, as conceived by Gabriele d'Annunzio; the other is theatre-beneath-the-sand, an avant-garde conception, erasing the dichotomy of fiction and fact and staging the crude realities of sexuality and death. Every scene creates dramatic tension by sharply contrasting the two theatres. The notion of open-air theatre

stems from d´Annunzio, a source we reveal for the first time. Lorca read his theatre and filtered his ideas through statements of d'Annunzio´s one-time mistress, Lombardian diva Eleonora Duse, whose æsthetics Lorca likely learned from Duse´s admirer, Barcelonese actress Margarita Xirgu. In interviews, letters, and conversations, Lorca preferred theatre-beneath-the-sand, yet never abandoned open-air theatre, oscillating between the two styles from 1926 until his death. The oscillation in *The Public* explains its unfinished texture amidst many finished passages. We trace its two dramatic conceptions to their probable sources before examining the conceptual clash scene by scene as a new method for grasping the play.

Lorca owned d'Annunzio´s first open-air drama, *A Spring Night's Dream* (1897) in Spanish translation (Fernández-Montesinos 1985, 29). Translator Ricardo Baeza found Duse to be d´Annunzio´s artistic equal (Baeza n.d., 17-18). He conceptualized open-air theatre; she performed it. In the *New York Herald* (1897), d'Annunzio announced his plan to reform theatre, restoring its roots in beauty. He would construct a temple to the tragic muse near secluded Lake Albano and open his festival theatre in the warmest spring months among olives and fig trees, with twisted branches imitating the "convulsions" of the maenads, Dionysus´ followers (Bell 1991, 287-88). This setting would recall "the rural and Dionysiac origin of the Drama." D´Annunzio distinguished this theatre, on its "serene hillside, from the cramped urban theatres, where (...), before a crowd of stupid imbecility, actors and actresses display their attainments." To revive tragedy, d'Annunzio required that drama regain "its ancient ceremonial character. (...) 'Open the windows! Let the wind and the sun enter!' That is the cry of a man suffocating in a closed room. (...) The Drama, although now descended to the lowest depth of abjection, (...) is always the one living form (...) in which [the poet] can embody for the crowd (...) the revelations of Beauty." (Bennett, 1897, 5)

Overhearing d'Annunzio (Weaver, 1984, 199), Duse, three years later, intensified his contrasts between true drama and actors´ exhibitionism, open air and closed door. In 1900 poet-critic Arthur Symons published Duse´s views remembered from recent conversation:

> To save the theatre, the theatre must be destroyed, the actors and actresses must all die of the plague. They poison the air, they make art impossible. It is not drama that they play, but pieces for the theatre. We should return to the Greeks, play in the open air: the drama dies of stalls and boxes and evening dress, and people who come to digest their dinner.
>
> The one happiness is to shut one´s door upon a little room, with a table before one, and to create; to create life in that isolation from life. We must bow before the poet, even when it seems to us that he does wrong. He is a poet, he has seen something, he has seen it in that way; we must accept his vision, because it is vision.
>
> Since Shakespeare and the Greeks, there has been no great dramatist, and these gathered up into themselves the whole life of the people and the work of their contemporaries. (Symons, 1906, 336-37)

Duse´s air-polluting thespians included actors in the grand French classical tradition,

romanticism, naturalism, and positivism (Re, 2004, 91). Avoiding Sarah Bernhardt´s elaborate costumes and jewelry, Duse affected naturalness by donning "big and long Greek tunics, with soft folds and wide sleeves that accentuated arms and hands" (Re, 2004, 99). Yet she rejected Greek conventionalism. In an Athens museum, she had seen a tragic actress´s mask rigidying grief. She preferred flexible expressions: "In Rome (...) they have found a bronze head, which has lain under water for centuries; the features are almost effaced, but it is beautiful, as if veiled." (Symons, 1906, 339) Duse´s face served as a "mask for the tragic passions", though an ever-shifting one (Symons, 1906, 340). Audiences loved her subtle expressions, stares, and well-controlled hand movements (Re, 2004, 69). The bronze head could have inspired Lorca´s conception of theatre under the sand, veracious, avant-garde drama. Moreover, Duse´s phrases overheard by Symons and subsequently translated to multiple languages reappear in *The Public*.

In Lorca´s theatre, one cannot overstate the impact of Margarita Xirgu, to whom he confessed in public he owed all his successes onstage (Lorca 1989, III, 669). She everywhere carried a signed photograph of her æsthetic model Eleonora Duse. Xirgu knew Duse's æsthetics and made it her own (Rodrigo 2005, 42). Five years after interviewing Duse, Xirgu met Lorca in 1926. She starred in five of his major plays. Therefore, Duse´s opinions on theatrical history, communicated to Lorca by Xirgu, could have passed into the metatheatre of *The Public*. Duse "revolutionized theatre." She early humanized woman in the theatre and became "the first modern actor" (Sheehy 2003, 5). However, while receptive to open-air theatre, she resisted the avant-garde, refusing to perform Pirandello´s plays. Xirgu, amenable to acting in Pirandello´s dramas, shunned Lorca´s avant-garde production. It was Xirgu who most trenchantly must have impressed on Lorca the duality of his playwrighting.

In winter 1927, Lorca endeavored to read Margarita two plays which he hoped would inspire her performances. One was his tragic farce *The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife*, which she premiered in Madrid Christmas eve (Rodrigo 2005, 206). The other, *When Five Years Pass*, eluded her grasp. She intuited Lorca´s two dramatic styles, the more traditional one, which he would call "open-air" theatre, and the revolutionary one, to be labeled "theatre-beneath-the-sand." Of When *Five Years Pass*, Xirgu relates, "I didn´t understand it, and I told him so. Federico tried to explain it to me, but I persisted in not understanding it. Independently, some scenes and the verses seemed very beautiful to me, but what I did not understand was the work as a stage performance." (Pedro 1949, 14)

Let us examine the five major scenes of *The Public*, even more advanced than the subsequently written *When Five Years Pass* (Nadal 1974, 99). The Director moves between the two conceptions of theatre without transition and, like Lorca, cannot exclude either. The idea of the dramatist as a poet could have come from d'Annunzio via Duse. Amidst the ruin of theatre, Duse looked with hope at the revered reality of the poet, isolated at a table, busy creating. *The Public* opens with the Director seated in a jacket while engaging in creative activity. Around him exists a theatre in crisis. The scenery symbolizes creativity: in the decor, the color blue predominates, symbol since

Baudelaire of the Ideal orienting the poet. On the wall, a hand symbolizes human power: Galen saw the hand, opposing the thumb to the other fingers, as the key to mastery of the world (Laín 1986, 112-13). Windows showing X-rays represent the poet's ambition to "expose the truth that lies beneath appearances and façades" (Edwards 2013, 48-49). At opening curtain, everything suggests the poet's empowerment. He dialogues with his servant in an exchange five times repeated throughout the drama about the approach of his public, yet always referring to his changing existential status. At first, he shows his ability to master his own affects, but as scene 1 progresses, he loses control over his creativity. The manservant announces to him the arrival of the public twice during the first scene. Both times the Director bids him to let them enter. The first public consists of four white trumpet-blowing horses – the Director's raw animal passions. Although equine symbolism abounds in Lorca before *The Public* (Nadal 1974, 185-217), the view of humankind as an animal circus stems from Wedekind's *The Earth Spirit*, whose animal tamer symbolizes the implied playwright. He threatens his characters, the animals, with whip and revolver (Wedekind 1921, 1). Likewise, when the horses refuse to depart, the Director asks his servant for a lash, then makes him open the doors and let the animals disperse so that (following d'Annunzio) he can stage open-air theatre (Lorca 1989, II, 600). Because he inhibits spontaneity in life and art, the horses protest, twice calling men "abominable", and twice reversing the syllables to form "blenamiboá," which represents horses as mirror opposites (601).

At a table like Duse's poet-playwright, the Director receives a second group of actors whom the servant introduces as the public. The protagonist, constantly rôle-playing, switches a blond wig for a dark-haired one (601), then faces three dark-bearded men in tailcoats (601). Man 1, Man 2, and Man 3 represent the Director's critical faculties. As theatre critics, they wear the formal evening attire Duse deplored for ruining theatre. The Director and these three perform a play within a play of open-air theatre, disfavoured by his new "public". Addressing the main character as "Mr. Director of Open-Air Theatre", they sarcastically congratulate him on his latest play, "extremely original" with a "pretty title", *Romeo and Juliet* (602). The theme concerns a man and a woman in love, yet Man 1 poses the pan-erotic possibility of the two lovers belonging to any species, while the Director insists they would never renounce their identities as Romeo and Juliet. When Gonzalo, Man 1, always impassioned, inquires whether the Director believes the two characters were in love, he shows the superficiality of open-air theatre by admitting he is not privy to characters' intimacy. This angers Gonzalo, whom Man 2 warns that in nature such an inquiry is suitable, but not in art. Gonzalo takes a revolutionary stance towards theatre (601), which Man 3 defines as the truth of graves (602). Man 2, ambivalent towards the two theatres, underscores the theatricality even of theatre-beneath-the-sand: its graves would have gas lights, advertisements, and rows of seats. Questioning the verisimilitude of open-air theater, he inquires how Romeo performed his most elementary body functions, and whether these are not somehow beautiful (603). Man 2 criticizes the Director's superficiality for not having descended into Juliet's grave. The true protagonist of the play, he says, is Cupid's flower from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare 1965, Act III, sc. 1, ll. l-163, p.

35), whose victims fall in love by chance, like Titania with Bottom – a comic episode, which seriously disturbed Lorca since adolescence (Lorca 1994, 30). The Director, experienced in psychological surfaces, not depths, denies this is the issue, but Gonzalo, in love with him, disagrees. He deems it necessary to "bury the theatre", infected with "cowardice", cause of its superficiality. Gonzalo threatens suicide to inaugurate genuine theatre, for him, theatre-beneath-the-sand (Lorca 1989, II, 603).

The Director shuns such drama for its dire consequences, threatening for his family and outraging the public. If he removed the "railings on the bridge" from one type of theatre to the other, the transitions easing æsthetic passage, along would come the "mask" to devour him, social convention governing mores and punishing non-conformists (604). When the resourceful Man 2 proposes making the threat of the mask a new dramatic plot, the Director objects: the relationship between life and literature requires reckoning with conventional morality and avoiding repulsive plots. Gonzalo reminds that certain materials help dodge such unpleasantness - tin foil, gypsum, mica, and cardboard. Such devices deceive, and Gonzalo prefers breaking through the roots to initiate underground theatre (605).

As the Director´s former lover, Gonzalo asks whether, under his disguise as critic, the poet recognizes him. A struggle between the two theatres ensues in the conflict between Gonzalo to promote theatre-beneath-the-sand and the Director to avoid it with open-air theatre. Fearfully, the Director rejects his relationship with Gonzalo as alien to the true plot of their play. In self-defense, the Director calls upon his former mistress Elena to enter from backstage, her domain of open-air theatre. Yet, before she appears, Gonzalo forces the Director into a dramatic exercise in verisimilitude. In an innovative variation on the use of the dressing screen in Wedekind´s *The Earth Spirit*, present in an artist´s studio but unused (Wedekind 1921, 3), Gonzalo pushes others behind a screen, from which they emerge revealing their subconscious selves. The transformation suggests veracious theatre-beneath-the-sand, caused by Gonzalo´s impulsiveness. The representation of Enrique´s subconscious unveils further disguises, debuting a play within a play within a play. From behind the screen, while pronouncing lines attributed to the Director, comes an actress dressed as a boy in a harlequin costume. Underneath the Director´s dignified façade lies an effeminate self, costumed as an entertainer. Asking for lipstick, he/she receives some from Man 2, the flexible theatrical critic, whom he/she pushes behind the screen. Out comes another female, a woman in pajamas. Unseemly truths unveiled onstage dismay the Director. He again summons Elena, queen of open-air theatre and a comical caricature of a diva (Lorca 1989, II, 608).

With a given name similar to Eleonora Duse´s, Elena dresses like her in a Greek costume (605). Elena´s white hair matches that of the later Duse, met in person by Xirgu when age contributed to Duse´s "tragic image" (Re 2004, 100). Elena´s eyebrows, comically blue, parody the ideal. Duse´s friend, the actress Yvette Guilbert, regarded her eyebrows as "mobile (...) interpreters of the pride of her beautiful forehead" (Symons 1969, 66). Elena has "feet of gypsum", material used to avoid unpleasant theatrical verisimilitude. Her dress, open in front, displays thighs covered with

"tight pink mesh" like a ballerina's. Her dialogue conveys the self-conscious melodrama of a veteran actress. Seeing Enrique as an effeminate boy, baring too much intimacy, the ostensibly decorous Elena scoffs, "The same as ever?" Yet she engages in complicated love-affairs like Duse – and like Wedekind's Lulu. She demands that Man 3 sadistically abuse her, and accuses him of infidelity with her own paramour, Enrique. Echoing Wedekind's *The Earth Spirit*, where the servant carries Lulu the "human animal" away in his arms (Wedekind 1921, 2), the haughty diva Elena commands the Director's servant to remove her, whereupon he obsequiously lifts her in his arms (Lorca 1989, II, 610).

Scene 2 immerses the spectator into another play within a play, whose technique matches open-air theatre, but whose theme of homoerotic strife belongs to theatre-beneath-the-sand. At the end of scene 1, Enrique and Gonzalo announce the start of this play (Lorca 1989, II, 610). The action unfolds in a Roman ruin, symbol of the ruins of theatre (as viewed by d'Annunzio and Duse). The two actors, Enrique's and Gonzalo's doubles (Nadal 1974, 40), wear symbolic costumes, with Gonzalo's Doppelgänger covered in red grapevines, and Enrique's hidden under small bells. The vines, a Dionysian symbol, represent theatre at its origins; the little bells belong to a jester, entertaining audiences at court. Dionysianism suggests a return to nature; jongleurism, cultural activity. The first costume stems from d'Annunzio's *A Spring Night's Dream*, open-air drama wherein a Tuscan aristocrat kills his wife's lover. She, bathed in his blood, goes mad embracing the body all night. Wishing to unite with trees, bushes, and grass, she dons a mask of leaves and binds her hands with grass (Re 2004, 107-08). Hence, Gonzalo's costume, red like blood, consists of leaves. Enrique's costume points to Lorca's proclivity, dating from childhood, to entertain those around him like a jongleur (Lorca 1989, III, 497). Gonzalo, guided by natural impulse, tends toward theater-beneath-the-sand; Enrique, culture-oriented, toward open-air theatre. Their love-battle takes the symbolic form of a dance of the Figure in Bells to the flute of the Figure in Vines. Nadal identifies a mythical source: Bacchus, enamored of the dancer Cyssus, metamorphosed into ivy, next a vine, and finally a fig-tree. Lorca's jester leads and expects the leafy figure to follow (Nadal 1974, 82). Dancing, he says, is "the only way I have of loving you" (Lorca 1989, II, 612). The leader fancies his own conversion into any object, while the follower must imagine another object favouring the first; for pan-erotic love signifies that a lover can assume any guise. Hence, when Enrique's double asks what his interlocutor would become if he were a cloud, Gonzalo's double responds he would be an eye (to contemplate that cloud); if the Figure in Bells changed into an apple, his counterfigure would become a kiss (to adore the rosy, cheek-like form). Yet one metamorphosis proposed by the Figure in Bells is dung, provoking the Figure in Vine-Leaves to suggest becoming a fly (611). The poetic level of dialogue frequent in open-air theatre descends to the level of theatre-beneath-the-sand. Moreover, twice, when the leader inquires what if he became a moonfish, his respondent twice proposes changing into a knife, threatening him harm (612, 613). The moonfish image, recurring throughout the play (cf. 642), is Lorca's lunar modification of the myth from Plato's *Symposium*, where Zeus punished mankind for pride by cutting the human being in two like a flatfish (ψῆττα),

severing him from his other half, thereby leaving half a side only (Plato 1991, 191 d 4; cf. Nadal 1974,79). When Enrique´s double reproaches Gonzalo´s for not letting himself be dominated, the latter scorns him for superficiality. The Figure in Bells wants to seek love elsewhere in the ruins (Lorca 1989, II, 613).

His opportunity brusquely arrives. The Emperor of the Roman Ruins appears, needing to choose between the two characters to achieve wholeness of being, the fusion of two halves for perfect unity (Nadal 1974, 79). Can nature or culture save theatre, ruled by the Emperor? Both candidates vie for him, with the jester scorning the natural man for nurturing himself on roots – an allusion to theatre-beneath-the-sand. The Emperor decides to "espouse" the one in vine-leaves, proud that the Emperor knows him: theatre has Dionysian roots. However, *The Public* lacks a clearcut thesis. The Figure in Vine-leaves, symbolizing truthful theatre, removes his vine-leaves and there emerges a nude of gypsum (Lorca 1989, II, 619), artificial material making theatre palatable to everybody. The Figure in Bells, rejected for someone as "theatrical" as himself, cries, "Treason! Treason!" (620). Interrupting the scene by upending a column of the Roman ruin, he bursts the illusion of dramatic reality by shifting into reverse the drama´s forward movement. The column unfolds into the dressing screen of scene 1, with the three theatre critics and the Director as they were before the screen transformed them (620). On both sides of the screen, everyone protests about the treason: the Director, his double the Figure in Bells, even Gonzalo with his deceptive double. The temporal order of the drama disintegrates, contributing to its unfinished feel.

Scene 3 also conveys irregularity. The scenery changes, for a wall of sand suddenly appears, introducing theater-beneath-the-sand (Lorca 1989, II, 621). Countering expectations of forward-moving action, the dialogue detains it while the Director and the three literary critics assess scene 2. Gonzalo expresses guilt for the betrayal perpetrated by his gypsum double. He feels reluctant to commune with innocents like children or the sky. The Director and the three critics marvel at the fierce struggle between the two rivals in the Roman ruin. The duel, represented in symbolic form proper to open-air theatre, never attained the epic proportions of demigods that the three critics indicate (621). Gonzalo, uneasy about his unlimited desire, deplores the anus, favoured by homoeroticism, as the punishment, humiliation, and downfall of humankind, alien to restrained classical beauty (621-22). Had he and Enrique been true men, argues Gonzalo, they would not have succumbed to desire. The three critics and the Director plan to assassinate the Emperor, hostile to genuine theatre (623). Gonzalo determines to commit the regicide (625). The Director and Gonzalo begin wrestling as they had in the previous scene, but here in physical, not metaphorical, fashion while exiting (626). Men 2 and 3 follow their example to symbolize erotic intercourse (627). This scene, patently sexual, oversteps the bounds of open-air theatre.

Abruptly, there begins a long play within a play of what misleadingly promises to be theatre-beneath-the-sand. The wall of sand opens, exposing Juliet´s sepulchre in Verona. Yet, just as scene 2 exemplified open-air theatre with elements of theatre-beneath-the-sand, so scene 3 mixes theatre-beneath-the-sand with open-air theater. Nothing exists in pure form in *The Public*. The play chosen

for the theatre-beneath-the-sand is *Romeo and Juliet*, the same drama the Director earlier selected for open-air theatre (sc. 1). Juliet´s costume belongs to open-air theatre, no less than does Elena´s (sc. 1): she wears a "white opera gown", exposing two naked breasts of pink celluloid, material which avoids offending delicate sensitivities (Lorca 1989, II, 627).

She leaps from the sepulchre, as surprising as a phantom jumping from the grave. Although this act augurs theatre-beneath-the-sand with its truths about death, her initial soliloquy belongs to poetic drama classifiable by Lorca as open-air theatre. Juliet expresses loneliness like Lorca´s conventional character Doña Rosita the spinster (Lorca 1989, II, 961). She has seen no friend after traversing "more than 3,000 empty arches," a vast cemetery. Using her operatic talents, she sings as Shakespeare´s Ophelia did before drowning (Shakespeare 1966, Act IV, sc. 3, l. 177, p. 146). A key to her aria lies in Lorca´s early poem, "The Death of Ophelia." Ophelia dies in a backwater "amidst the clear waves of a river of illusion" (Lorca 1994, 420, l. 3). Into four lines, the speaker compresses Ophelia´s tragedy: "The tender wonder of the strange woman/ who passes in the tragedy of the phantasmal prince/ Like a dream of clouds/ Modest and chaste." (422, ll. 59-62]. Juliet´s song also immerses her in a dreamy atmosphere. Like Ophelia´s river of illusion, Juliet´s "sea of dream" has a misty covering to form a "sea of white land," with empty cemetery arches filling the sky. Just as Ophelia dies in the water, Lorca´s Juliet imagines the train of her dress passing "through the ships, through the algae" (Lorca 1989, II, 628). Unlike Ophelia, though, Juliet lives obsessed with time like Doña Rosita. She has yearned for night, bringing Romeo. She sings that the train of her dress passes through "a sea of time", with beach bordering on death ["Beach of the woodcutting worms" (628)]. Swimming through the temporal sea, she imagines herself a "crystal dolphin through the cherry-trees", a gracefully pure phantom passing through the pure white of the cherry orchard. She ends her soliloquy repeating her loneliness, her sense of drowning in dreams: "Oh loneliness without an arch! Sea of dream!" (628).

Following her song compatible with open-air theatre, reality outside the staged illusion of fantasy brusquely encroaches on her play within a play. Juliet complains of people gathering at the foot of the stage, brandishing swords and arguing about love and theatre. Her audience comments on her performance. Juliet stubbornly affirms the theatrical illusion, concentrating on loving within the play. A white horse holding a phallic sword speaks to her of love. In scene 1, white horses symbolized the Director´s animal passions, exhorting him to cultivate theatre-beneath-the-sand. When horses become symbolic characters, we have open-air drama, notwithstanding the theme of sexual passion, proper to theatre-beneath-the-sand. Within this hybrid play, the white horse attempts to seduce Juliet. She wishes for "love that lasts only one moment" (Lorca 1989, II, 628), addressing him as if he were Romeo. In Shakespeare´s tragedy, Juliet implores Romeo, "I must hear from thee every day i' the hour, / For in a minute there are many days - Oh by this count I shall be much in years/ Ere I again behold my Romeo" (Shakespeare 1965, Act. III, sc. 8, ll. 44-47, 85). Juliet´s concern with time also appears in her apostrophe to night to return Romeo to her: "Come gentle Night, come loving black-brow´d Night, / Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die/ Take

him and cut him out in little stars, / And he will make the face of heav´n so fine/ That all the world will be in love with Night/ And pay no worship to the garish Sun" (Act III, sc. 2, p. 70). Hearing the white horse ask her when she will realize the perfection of a day, endowed with morning and afternoon, Juliet adds, "And with night" (Lorca 1989, II, 629). The horse divides night from day – like Shakespeare´s Juliet –, and tells her that in a day he can assuage her anguish and chase away the marble of her tomb by carrying her away on his back. Asked for their destination, he responds the dark of night, and she dejectedly answers he will return her to the sepulchre, convincing her that true love is impossible (630). Ironically, the white horse repeats her own earlier words: "Love that only lasts a momento." (631) She yearns for freedom from the "stinging swarm" of magnifying glasses, as a "tumult of voices and swords" beyond the stage again interrupts the dramatic illusion (631).

Juliet gathers from the white horse´s speech that love tends toward death. In her dialogue recurs the image of the moon, Lorca´s death symbol (631). A black horse enters as a death-figure (Nadal 1974, 213), finding that while everyone desires her, this cosmic eroticism coexists with the inevitability of dying. In the dark steed´s rhetoric appear images juxtaposing life-symbols with death-symbols. Juliet scorns these statements as confusing, but the black horse avers that the vital yearning of the blood for form goes accompanied by the world-wearying monotony of the wheel of life (Lorca 1989, II, 633). The lugubrious animal reminds the assembly of horses, augmented by three more white stallions with (phallic) canes, that he slays innocents, "slits the throat of doves" (633).

A scene rich with life and death symbolism, harmonious with open-air theatre, suddenly collects imagery suited to theatre-beneath-the-sand, staging unseemly truths associated with dying. The black horse crudely hints at the proximity of death ["Oh sea buttressed on the penumbra and flower in the buttocks of the dead man" (II: 635)]. The sea refers to Juliet´s aria; the flower, to an esoteric painting by Bosch (Nadal 1974, 81). Repulsive images multiply, recalling Man 2´s earlier question whether Romeo´s basest body functions cannot afford aesthetic pleasure; for the three white horses, preparing to mate with Juliet, spurt their water from their canes, behaving towards her as they do towards their mares (Lorca 1989, II, 636).

When the drama-beneath-the-sand attains its nadir of unseemliness, Gonzalo and the Director halt it. The Director, attired as the effeminate harlequin of scene 1, demands open-air theatre. One white horse refuses, using Gonzalo´s words (sc. 1) that he and his colleagues have inaugurated "true theatre", theatre-beneath-the-sand. The dark death-steed repeats Man 3´s words (sc. 1), but with authority: "So that the truth of sepulchres be known" (Lorca, 1989, II, 637). The white horses with canes parrot Man 2 (sc. 1) and reveal half-heartedness about partaking in drama without theatricality: "Sepulchres with advertisements, gas lamps, and long rows of armchairs" (637). Gonzalo, seeking genuine theatre, sees the play just interrupted as a "first step," but demands that the white horses with canes be banished for cowardice vis-à-vis the public. Another white horse defends his comrades by saying that no one onstage doffs his mask. Gonzalo protests that he wears no mask (637), but the Director, garbed as Harlequin, retorts, "There is nothing but masquerade": in theatre and life, everyone counts on false forms (638). Gonzalo claims to have struggled with the

mask until he has at last seen Enrique naked, unmasked. However, the eloquent white horse likens theatre to a lake, which he says is mere surface, appearance. Gonzalo, irritated, counters that the lake is volume, depth. The white horse laughs that a single volume contains a thousand surfaces. The reader or spectator must decide.

Enrique scorns the superficial theatricality of Gonzalo´s love, for he displays it only before others, as in the Roman ruins (sc. 2). Gonzalo defends his public display because he abhors the mask and has removed Enrique´s (638-39). While Gonzalo professes his love, Enrique, calling him an animalistic "lion´s slave", ironically embraces the white horse as a new lover. Gonzalo, undeterred, advances on Enrique. In self-defense, Enrique disclaims his identity as the lover Gonzalo seeks, and undresses, tossing his harlequin costume behind a column and appearing dressed like a ballerina. Behind the column, another theatrical fiction emerges when Enrique´s empty harlequin costume becomes animated, identifying itself as Enrique. As Gonzalo continues his pursuit, Enrique keeps doffing and donning comic disguises, while the empty garments become the Director´s doubles (Lorca 1989, II, 641, 645). This episode shows the playright´s self-mockery. The doubles, originating during Gonzalo´s erotic pursuit of Enrique, parody scene 2, the love-dance between their doubles, with each one corresponding to a symbolic garment, one of vine-leaves, the other of bells. Juliet, Man 2, and Man 3 also join the mêlée. Doubles multiply: Man 3 disguises himself as Romeo (643), and even a boat´s foghorn passes for Juliet´s nightingale (645). On or offstage, all life feels hilariously theatrical.

The transition to the following scene provides another rough spot in the drama, for the script lacks scene 4, leaping from 3 to 5 (647). Yet the theme shows continuity with scene 3. Calderón´s auto sacramental, *The Great World Theatre* (1633-36), catholicized the theatricality of life. Lorca studied autos in 1927 when Manuel de Falla set Calderón´s masterpiece to music (Orringer 2014, 181). *The Public*, written several years afterwards, contains the unpolished fragment of an auto sacramental in d´Annunzio´s religion of art, with badly rehearsed minor actors and a poorly equipped, apologetic prompter (Lorca 1989, II, 655). The work allegorizes the agony of theatre (Newberry 1969, 291). The audience, remote and indifferent, applauds as the curtain falls on the theatre-beneath-the-sand version of *Romeo and Juliet*. The star of the auto, playing the agonizing Jesus, wonders when *he* will receive attention. His Male Nurse says he must await the public´s opinion of *Romeo and Juliet.* The auto, like previous plays within the play of *The Public*, mixes theatre-beneath-the-sand with open-air theatre. The setting, stylized as in open-air theatre, centers around the dying figure´s bed, looking "as if painted by a primitive painter" (Lorca 1989, II, 647). The Christ figure, with red skin and blue crown of thorns (647), resembles an individual crayoned by a child. The theme of dying and the actors' matter-of-factness smack of theatre-beneath-the-sand. The Male Nurse, unmindful of healing, euthanizes the patient, bleeding his body (648). Because the allegory of theatre in agony relies on public reaction to the avant-garde Shakespearean tragedy, and because signs of its failure are multiplying, the Christ-figure audibly yearns to die (648). He recites lines from the Gospel on Christ´s Passion as he hears adverse news from the Male Nurse, with each

piece of information hastening his end. The Male Nurse serves both as chorus and driving force of the auto. The Nude asks the Nurse the audience´s desire and their opinion of himself, only to learn that they demand the Director´s death and say nothing about theatre in agony (647). It unsettles the Nude that no one knows anything about Gonzalo, defender of drama-beneath-the-sand and potential saviour of theatre, except that the public pursues him in the Roman ruins (648). Asking whether the audience was permitted to exit the theatre-under-the-sand – as if to determine their attitude towards the new æsthetics -, the Nude learns that uneasy soldiers and engineers have all exits blocked (648).

New obstacles, hindering the completion of the auto, diminish its illusion of reality. While the Nude prays his Father to forgive humanity, the Male Nurse argues with the prompter about props and scenery (654-5). As the Nude commends his spirit to his Father, the Nurse scolds him for hastening the death-scene, and asks the thieves to bring the shroud while careful not to let the wind blow off their wigs (656-57). Finally, after the Nude declares that everything is consummated, his bed rotates on its axis, removing him and bringing Gonzalo to view, stretched out in critic´s attire and exclaiming "Agony!" (657) If the Nude symbolizes the agony of theatre, Gonzalo advocates destroying conventional theatre to save the art. Yet no reader can take these agonies seriously: the lighting, say stage directions, turns silver like a movie-screen, while the Nurse and Thieves exit backwards to dance steps (657). Everything on the set bespeaks a masquerade!

Five students assume the Nurse´s function as chorus, narrating the Director´s fate before deriving æsthetic implications. In vain, critics ascribe their æsthetics to Lorca, when he takes no position, leaving artistic dilemmas unresolved. The students find that the horses, accompanied by the Director, have escaped the theatre by breaking through the ceiling over the stage (649). In short, he left the theatre guided by his passions. On witnessing the play below through a theatre skylight, Elena broke into horrified screams, arousing the masses and provoking the bloody revolution, which left her a merry widow (650). The reasons for the revolution stay a mystery, and readers must choose from differing opinions. One boy recounts that the public wants the Director dragged around by horses because that boy discovered the drama´s shocking falseness on seeing the smallness of Juliet´s feet, too feminine for a woman (652). The students offer three additional explanations for the revolution. Student 4 finds it caused by the veracity of theatre-beneath-the-sand: the actors playing Romeo and Juliet truly made love. Contrariwise, Student 2 ascribes the uproar to audience awareness of the actors' inability to make love (due to sameness of sex?): their "skeletons" or bodies loved each other, but their "costumes" rebelled, and Juliet´s train got covered with "little toads of disgust" (652). Student 4 provides another explanation: revolution erupted when the audience, deceived, discovered the "true" Juliet, the actress hired to play her, bound and gagged beneath the seats (652-53).

The æsthetic lessons derived from all this are equally as problematic, allowing readers to choose the most convincing if any. For Students 1 and 2, the Director eliminated the need for the actors playing Romeo and Juliet to be male or female. The public erred by looking beyond the

costumes, causing the agony of theatre. Actors, once costumed, can belong to any species. Student 4 disagrees, thinking it ridiculous for one being to strive to be another. Student 2 views all theatre as mascarade: anyone can be anybody else if the public does not penetrate beyond the letter of the script. Student 4 blames the Director for unveiling the inner workings of many theatrical illusions to the public. The students detest the public´s destructiveness. Like Ortega in *The Deshumanization of Art*, Student 1 holds that spectators should never participate in the drama (Newberry 1969, 285-86). Students 1, 2, 3, and 4 deplore the public´s murders of the actor playing Romeo and of the two Juliets, the male one onstage and the female one under the seats (Lorca 1989, II, 658). Yet Student 1 follows the example of the stage Romeo, enamored of the male Juliet: overcome by æsthetic enjoyment, he offers his homosexual love to Student 5 (659). Further, just as the public has dismantled the theatre, in the atmosphere of revolution, Student 1 yearns to destroy everything – roofs, families, books (660). His judgment about proper æsthetic distance becomes suspect, along with all his opinions.

The final scene of *The Public* repeats details of scene 1, showing the play´s circularity (Nadal 1974, 52). As in *When Five Years Pass*, no time may have elapsed, with each happening merely a possibility in the Director´s mind. In scene 1, he was a director of open-air theatre, but here considers himself a director of theatre-beneath-the-sand. The blue decor reappears, but an eye replaces the hand, while trees with clouds lean against the wall. A horsehead adorns the ground. Whereas the hand in scene 1 represented the poet´s power, the eye here reduces him to a powerless spectator, with the public in control. The trees and clouds against the wall indicate the inefficacy of the dramatic illusion, often destroyed throughout the play. The earthbound horse-head signifies debasement of passions by diminished author and unruly public. The Director wears the suit of scene 1 but enters with an illusionist equating theatre to magic. The equation negates theatre-beneath-the-sand, presenting real life. Magic, thinks the Director, leaves the destruction of theatre unaccomplished (Lorca 1989, II, 663). The illusionist, conceiving the Director as only a "man of masks", sees his magic curtain as a panacea for all theatrical problems (663). He disdains the choice of a "trite" tragedy like *Romeo and Juliet*. The Director, however, preferred an everyday occurrence with a universally known example, originary and limited to a single instant. Hence his theatrical experiment destroyed mediocre theatre by staging Shakespearean drama, which Duse recommended for open-air theatre, except that the Director´s actors would really have loved and died onstage. Neither the Director nor Lorca completely dispenses with open-air theatre. The magician, like Man 2, prefers the plot of the love-inducing flower from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Given Shakespeare´s premise of love subject to chance, the public could have accepted the plot of a boy enamoring the actor Gonzalo (664). Yet the Director argues the efficacy of a drama as wedded to death as *Romeo and Juliet*. For days he tunneled through to Juliet´s tomb, struggling with roots along the way to "destroy the theatre" in Duse´s sense of doing away with superficial convention (665). In conventional theatre, Romeo and Juliet die onstage but revive after the final curtain; the Director´s Romeo and Juliet would ignite the curtain and perish before the spectators (666). The Director

dared gamble on love giving new form to the costumes.

Little did he suspect where this gamble would lead. In scene 2, whenever Enrique´s double suggested becoming a moonfish, Gonzalo´s proposed turning into a threatening knife. In scene 6, Gonzalo´s mother, dressed in mourning, demands the Director to return her son; fishermen took her a decomposed moonfish, identified as Gonzalo. Perhaps the moonfish, born in the imagination of Enrique´s double, materialized into Gonzalo, Enrique´s other half, who committed suicide as he threatened, due to Gonzalo´s unrequited love. Or he could have martyred himself for his art like the Christlike nude to create theatre-beneath-the-sand. Lorca offers no answer, letting the reader decide. Gonzalo´s mother threatens to sue the Director for her son´s disappearance, but upon departing, discovers all exits unusable. The illusionist solves the problem, wrapping her in his omnipotent cape and making her disappear (668).

Nevertheless, the Director refuses to regard theatre as sleight-of-hand. A last episode apparently discredits his refusal, depending on spectator standpoint. In Wedekind´s *The Earth Spirit* (Wedekind 1921, 10), the painter Schwarz, to charm his model Lulu, asks her, "Aren´t you cold?" Lulu counters, "God forbid! No. How did the question occur to you? Are you so cold?" "Not today, No", answers Schwarz." "Thank God!," says Lulu, "One can breathe easily!" In Lorca´s play, when the illusionist fans himself, the Director complains of the cold. Yet he refuses to allow the Servant to kindle the heat. The cold strikes the Director as a cheap theatrical trick after he has proudly destroyed theatre, razing doors and roof. The Servant cannot withstand the cold, but the Director orders forbearance. Both perish, their last words repeating the phrases so often heard, announcing the public´s arrival and admitting it. This time, the illusionist makes it rain white gloves as the Director´s new public. Backstage, disembodied voices intone the same exchange, announcing and admitting the public, as if from beyond the grave. The magician vigorously waves his fan, bringing snowflakes, a frigid public (Lorca 1989, II, 672). Has the Director succumbed to magic, or expired because the play is done and theatre-beneath-the-sand requires death onstage? The reader must decide, for Lorca compels no solution. In conclusion, we have just analyzed *The Public* by studying deliberate uncertainties in its script, produced by two conflicting conceptions of theatre. We have thereby explained irregularities in stage directions and dialogue between the magician and the Director (sc. 6), the students (sc. 5), the Nude and his nurse (sc. 5), Juliet and the horses (sc. 3), the Figure in Vine-Leaves and the Figure in Bells (sc. 2), the three theatre critics, the Director, and his passions (sc. 1).[1]

Endnotes:

1. An unnumbered scene in rhyme, unlike the remainder of *El público,* parodies Thespis´s carriage. It satirizes the mask, conventionalism paralyzing genuine theatre. Thespis carried around masks to represent mythical characters he dramatized. The present carriage, a wardrobe on wheels, holds small masks with different expressions, all bleating like sheep, standing for public conformism. A Shepherd Bumpkin recites poetry of forced rhymes in *-eta* for *careta*, "mask", "poeta", "Julieta", nonsensical like Lewis Carroll´s "Jabberwocky" (Lorca´s "gipaeta"): Lorca 1989, II, 662-3.

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"You weren't acting like you": Holden as Caliban in *Caliban's War*

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Abstract:

"'You weren't acting like you': Holden as Caliban in *Caliban's War*" focuses on the connection between Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and James Holden in Corey's *Caliban's War*. Both characters may be viewed as highlighting issues of monstrousness in the texts through the lens of loss and the Other, as framed by Jacques Lacan's Mirror Stage. By grappling with difficult issues of morality, the characters may be seen as coming to a sense of self and reclamation of identity and humanity at the end of the texts.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, James S.A. Corey, Caliban, Mirror Stage, Monstrousness.

When students write papers, poet's their poems, and scholars their articles, one of the main "hooks" that is used to get the audience interested is the title of the work. Titles have meaning — titles matter. This is especially true when one considers the power of the title in question, *Caliban's War*, in which one of the most famous monsters in Shakespeare's *oeuvre* is mentioned. The purpose of this study is to consider how one's knowledge of characters in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* shapes interpretation and reception of characters in Daniel Abraham's and Ty Franck's *Caliban's War*. It should be noted that though the books are written by the duo, they use the pen name James S.A. Corey, which will be used hereafter in this article. When one considers the characters in Corey's *Caliban's War* through the lens of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, one can draw parallels between the two that highlight the important discussion of metaphorical monstrousness and morality in the Early Modern Period and in (Post-) Modern world today.

In 2014, Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck answered reader questions on their blog, *Lizard Brain*. To the question "I'm sure it's something obscure that I've missed... But for the second book. Who the hell is Caliban? And why is it his war?" Abraham answered "Ah! Caliban is the half-human slave of the wizard Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, who rebels against being controlled. It's his war because there are half-human things driving the war that are rebelling against being controlled" (Abraham 2014). With this answer in mind, it is clear that Abraham would like a reader to keep Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, particularly the character Caliban, in mind when reading

Caliban's War. What is less clear in Abraham's answer is who Caliban is in the novel; he notes that "It's his war", but who is the "his" that is referred to in the answer? It is my assertion that the "his" in Abraham's answer is James Holden. The link that exists between specific characters in Shakespeare's play, like Caliban, and Corey's novels, like James Holden, highlights how an understanding the complexities of Shakespeare's work helps a reader of the modern science fiction novel gain a better insight into issues of monstrousness and morality in our world today.

Although one may go through *Caliban's War* and map out connections between each character therein and their counterparts in *The Tempest*, in this study I have focused my attention on only two characters. The titular character, Caliban, is of course included, and connected with him is Prospero, the self-named ruler of the island. As Karen Flagstad rightly points out, there is a "consimilarity between Prospero and Caliban that works almost subliminally" so it is problematic to discuss Caliban in isolation, without the main character who describes and defines him also being analyzed (Flagstad 1986, 206). Just as there is the connection between the two characters in Shakespeare's text, I posit that one may see the same sort of connections made between the protomolecule (Prospero) and James Holden (Caliban) in *Caliban's War*. Just as Caliban is defined by Prospero, so Holden is defined by the protomolecule, changing his outlook/personality so that, as Naomi Nagata notes, "You weren't acting like you." (Corey 2012, 120). Although a reader may be able to detect Holden's downward spiral without knowledge of Shakespeare's Caliban, when one does have this background, then there is a richer understanding of the layers of monstrousness Holden displays in the text.

Prospero/Protomolecule

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare writes of an island ruled by the master magician Prospero. He uses magic to, among other things, create the tempest that is the impetus to the action at the beginning of the play. He does this as a means of controlling the "world", the island which he rules and all of the inhabitants on it. Prospero's status as a Magus has been discussed by various scholars. Arguments include Barbara Mowat's discussion that Prospero's "linked magic to intellectual study", changes into "godlike control over the natural and supernatural worlds", to finally "the pagan/enchanter brought into the Christian world" (Mowat 1981, 284, 287, and 289). The second stage in Prospero's development as a magic user is taken up by Flagstad, who focuses on the interplay of identity and magic in *The Tempest*. Flagstad comments upon Renaissance views of the occult as a form of creation, noting that, as a Magus who controls the island, "there is a sense in which Prospero 'creates' Caliban, who returns to wreak vengeance on the visionary scheme of things which depend on his exclusion" (Flagstad 1986, 213). This interplay between magic, identity and control is one that parallels the presentation of the protomolecule and its creation/distortion of reality *Caliban's War*.

One of the most obvious parallels that can be made between Prospero and the protomolecule is that both may be seen as using "magic". Just as Prospero is able to call up a tempest and engage in

other fantastic acts, so the protomolecule is able to do amazing things as well. For instance, in *Leviathan Wakes*, the first book in the series, the protomolecule defies gravity and causes Eros Station to "jump" in order to avoid the projectile which is meant to push it toward the Sun and destroy it. In the conversation between Holden and Alex, it is confirmed that "radar and scopes are both sayin' Eros jumped two hundred klicks spinward in a little less than a minute" (Corey 2011, 490). This causes Holden later to meditate on comments that Naomi makes after the station's jump: "She had just spoken directly to the half-articulated fear he'd been harboring since Eros had jumped sideways: that this [the protomolecule] was magic, that the protomolecule didn't have to obey the laws of physics. Because, if that was true, then humans didn't stand a chance." (Corey 2011, 492). This view of the protomolecule as something all-powerful, controlling and frightening is reiterated by Naomi later when she says that it is "an alien God-thing" (Corey 2011, 533).

The protomolecule is, essentially, an entity that works to recreate life to fit its own ends. One might note that, in the process of doing so, it damages life as it currently exists, with the horrors of Eros Sation being a prime example of this damage. Far from simply damaging without thought, though, the protomolecule does seem to be sentient, linking the biomass on Eros together into a hive mind centered upon Julie Mao, disassembling the Aborghast with dispassionate efficiency, creating a ring system of mysterious purpose, among other activities. Because of this, one might posit that the protomolecule is more than just a machine fulfilling a long-ago directive to remap human genetics. It has an ultimate plan, one that by *Caliban's War* is not known, but is generally described by UN Undersecretary Chrisjen Avasarala as like "seeing the face of God and finding no compassion there" (Corey 2012, 253).

It should be noted that in the *Expanse* series the thread of discussion of the role that God and morality play in the Universe can be seen as a main narrative link among the books. *Caliban's War*, as the second book in the series, is no exception. It is the (im)morality of the protomolecule in *Leviathan Wakes*, what it does on Eros Station in using the humans as biomass rather than singular entities with souls, which links to the moral deterioration of one of the main characters, James Holden, in *Caliban's War*.

Caliban/James Holden

It should be noted that a reader might be tempted to view the Caliban figure in *Caliban's War* as the creature which Protogen creates when it manipulates children with auto-immune disorders with the protomolecule. In many ways, the connection between what Mars Marine Bobby Draper calls "the monster" and the "monster" that is Caliban in *The Tempest* does make sense (Corey 2011, 523). The protomolecule creature is literally is a monster, a chimera between a human and "something else" from outer space. Likewise, Prospero calls Caliban "A devil, a born devil" who was "got by the devil himself / Upon thy wicked dam" (Shakespeare 1973, IV.i.188-9 and I.ii.321-2). This description of Caliban might cause one to gravitate toward reading him as a literal monster, a demon that is "other than human" and analogous to the chimera monsters in *Caliban's War,*

however, this is likely not what Shakespeare meant by naming Caliban as "devil". There are various demons and devils in Renaissance drama, perhaps most famously in *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus* by Shakespeare's contemporary, Christopher Marlowe. More often than not, if a Renaissance playwright chooses to present the literally demonic in a text, they would use well-known and recognizable names to cue the audience to the fact that a literal demon is on the stage. Such is the case in *Dr. Faustus*, in which Lucifer and Mephistophilis make an appearance. If Shakespeare wanted Caliban to be a literal devil, then it would not be a problem within the frame of Renaissance drama to make him one. He did not, though, so one might consider that the monstrousness of Caliban is something that is more metaphorical than literal. This reading of Caliban is supported by Kristen Wright, who notes that "Renaissance authors and scholars are increasingly interested in...how behavior can be monstrous, thus blurring the line between monsters and humans." (Wright 2018, 172) When one views both Caliban and Holden in this way, then a richer discussion of what makes a monster might ensue with the equation of the monstrous connecting the behavior of Caliban and that of James Holden.

James Holden is self-reflective concerning his behavior, noting that one of his good qualities/faults, depending upon perspective, is "this righteous indignation you wield like a club at everyone around you" (Corey 2011, 399). The problem with Holden through much of *Caliban's War*, though, is that he has been so psychologically damaged by his experiences on Eros Station with the protomolecule that he has lost who he is and what righteousness means. At this point, it is useful to introduce Jacques Lacan's concept of the Mirror Stage to frame a discussion of who Holden is in *Caliban's War*. Although most often applied to children, I believe that it is appropriate to use Lacan's theories to highlight the Holden's psychological distress in the novel, for although a physical adult in the book, he is psychologically reverted to a child-like state. With the revelation of the protomolecule to the Solar System, the entire foundation upon which humans based their understanding of existence is displaced. All become, once again, as children who try to understand the world/Universe around them under new and very different physical, moral and theological parameters. This is underscored in the third volume, *Abaddon's Gate*, when Reverend Doctor Anna Volovodov discusses the relationship between humans and protomolecule and casts humans as "children" who react against it with the base instincts of fear and violence (Corey 2013, 339 and 404).

In trying to understand the world that can often be confusing and scary, Lacan posits that a child creates an Other, a mirror image of himself, to help grapple with difficult issues. As nicely distilled by Dany Nobus, "in the mirror stage, the human being is alienated from his or her nature, inasmuch as he or she grasps his or her uncoordinated amalgam of sensory or motor processes via an *unreal, inverted image with which he or she will never coincide*" (Nobus 2016, 117, emphasis added). What is disturbing to Holden in the realization of this inversion is that, since Eros Station, he is less and less like himself and more and more like a version of Josephus Miller, who becomes in *Caliban's War,* Holden's Mirror Stage Other. It is the Other "which constructs and controls a human being's

external world, and which regulates his or her assumption of a 'self-image'" (Nobus 2016, 120). This is problematic because Miller, the "thin, gray, broken man…[who] had walked away from his official job to obsessively follow a missing persons case", at one point deeply concerned Holden (Corey 2012, 21). For instance, in *Leviathan Wakes*, they encounter Dresden, the man directly responsible for the manipulation of the protomolecule. Miller, disgusted with the twisted logic that Dresden uses to justify his experiments, summarily executes him; Holden is horrified at Miller's actions, throwing him off the ship because he is "a psychopath and a killer" (Corey 2011, 533). Foreshadowing, though, just how similar Holden and Miller are, and how Holden will morph into a version of Miller in *Caliban's War*, Naomi says to Holden:

> "You might be the best person I know. But you're totally uncompromising on what you think is right and that's what you hate about Miller."
> "I do?"
> "Yes", she said. "He's totally uncompromising too, but he has different ideas on how things work. You hate that. To Miller, Dresden was an active threat to the ship. Every second he stayed alive endangered everyone else around him. To Miller, it was self-defense." (Corey 2011, 479)

Although Holden and Miller initially seem to have inverted views on morality, this changes in the second installment of the series. The protomolecule didn't change Holden's physical form and make him into a literal monster, but it does modify his personality, twisting his view of the world and making him a metaphorical monster. Much of this change centers upon the ideas of loss and fear, which are so important to Lacan's views about identity and individuation. In *Leviathan Wakes*, Miller's identity is centered upon him being a man marked by loss — loss of his status, his job, his dignity, and Holden might argue because of Miller's violent recklessness, his soul. This sense of loss shifts to embody the character of Holden in much of *Caliban's War*. One of the most profound examples of Holden's modified personality may be found when Naomi, though the executive officer and not the captain, negotiates with criminals on Ganymede so that their ship can leave safely. Naomi says:

> "You were acting like that asshole Detective Miller, so I just acted *like you used to*. What I said was the kind of thing that you say when you are not in a hurry to wave your gun around".
> "I wasn't acting like Miller," he said, the accusation stinging because it was true.
> "You weren't acting like you."
> Holden shrugged, noticing only afterward that it was another imitation of Miller (Corey 2012, 120, italics added).

Key lines in this passage are that Naomi, striving to do the good and righteous thing, acts "like you [Holden] used to" (Corey 2012, 120). By saying this, she verbally acknowledges the change in Holden's character; he has faded away in favor of a person who is "in a hurry to wave your gun

around", a man like Miller (Corey 2012, 120). In short, she succinctly notes, "You weren't acting like you." (Corey 2012, 120) Why Holden has changed is not surprising. In his escape from Eros Station, he was forced to confront human after human being used as biomass, as "things" rather than humans. Seeing such horrors may very well have seemed like "seeing the face of God and finding no compassion there" (Corey 2012, 253). A reader might consider the various reactions that result from seeing such horrors; for Holden, his reaction becomes "monstrous" with him becoming suspicious of others and prone to violence as an initial reaction to threat. This is a modern illustration of the observation by Thomas Brown in his 1642 book, *Religio Medici,* that we may "naturally know what is good, but naturally pursue what is evil... In brief, we are all monsters." (Brown 1964, 55)

Constance Jordan's work on *Shakespeare's Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances* is important to underscore at this point as it helps to illuminate the idea of the monstrousness that Holden displays in the text. Jordan focuses on how Renaissance perspectives of Aristotelian texts impacted views on class and behavior in Shakespeare's society. The focal idea is that society is a civilizing force and that, outside of it, a person must be seen as a "bestial" man. John Kunat does a fine job of distilling Jordan's larger argument when he notes that characters outside of "civilized society" may be seen as "'purely sensuous' and driven by instinct, this pre-political creature was incapable of rational deliberative choice and was incapable of action definable in moral terms" (Kunat 2014, 308). This may be applied to Holden, who, working outside of the Earth, Mars, and often even OPA parameters, is a man on his own and outside of "civilized society"; in this position as outsider, one might say that he has regressed into the "purely sensuous" bestial man, ruled more by his emotions of loss, violence, and fear than of logic, order and compassion.

One might equate this to Caliban in *The Tempest*, who also is defined in the text through the sense of loss, violence, and position as an outsider. He notes that "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother / Which thou tak'st from me" (Shakespeare 1973, I.ii.133-4) and "I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant, / A sorcerer, that is by this cunning hath / Cheated me of the island" (Shakespeare 1973, III.ii.44-6). This loss of the island frames the psychological perspective of Caliban, who once controlled the island but now is reduced to being a servant to a cruel master. This reduced status is often the focus of attention for post-colonial critics. Critics, most notably Stephen Greenblatt, in his seminal "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century", centers upon the oppression — linguistic, cultural and physical — of native peoples by a colonizing force. This stance is taken up by Kristen Wright, who addresses both the physical "otherness" of Caliban, as a descendant of an Algerian parent, and his linguistic use/misuse of language. From these perspectives, Caliban is an innocent whose birthright is stolen from him and, as a result, he is not culpable for his actions. Wright even notes that "Caliban is not particularly physically threatening" (Wright 2018, 185). Such perspectives often overlook points of tension in the text, such as Prospero's reasoning for framing Caliban as a monster, because he tried to rape Miranda and, of his own admission, "Thou dist prevent me; I had peopled else/ This isle with Calibans" (Shakespeare 1973, I.ii.350-1). Such a comment presents Caliban's intention, one that runs counter to Miranda's wishes,

and therefore must be considered to be violent in nature. This violent nature is compounded with Caliban's desire to get Stephano and Trinculo to kill Prospero. As such, I do not believe that we can view Caliban as an innocent, but rather, his actions are disturbing and reflective of a base nature. Caliban "remains in a state of war with Prospero and Miranda, but since the state of war is always also a state of nature, he has simply returned to the natural world from which he never departed" (Kunat 2014, 322). Just as Caliban is representative of the "bestial man", so Holden is as well. One might hear echoes of Caliban's violence in Holden's desire to engage in violence with no remorse for doing so: in a firefight, he "brought up his gun and across them into a full auto sweep. Three of the five men dropped, their armor blooming red. The new Holden rejoiced; the old was quiet" (Corey 2012, 209).

Although I do dispute some of the characterizations by post-colonial critics of the innocence of Caliban, I do agree with their emphasis on the impact of his language. One of the most overlooked of Caliban's lines, and one that most closely aligns him to Holden, is Caliban's exasperated outburst that "I do not lie" (Shakespeare 1973, II.ii.48). One might question when Caliban says this if he is a reliable source or not; does he or does he not lie? Taking up this question of truthfulness and sincerity, Joshua Held discusses Caliban's last few lines of the play — "I'll be wise hereafter/ and seek for grace" (Shakespeare 1973, V.i.194-5). From Held's perspective, one must question the (in)sincerity of Caliban's language in judging his character: "Given Caliban's history of evolving, mutable logic and rhetoric audiences simply cannot know his final purposes (Held 2017, 83). Although I would agree with Held that there is ambiguity in Caliban's character, as evidenced in previously mentioned associations with Miranda, Stephano, and Trinculo, I think that it is important to consider Caliban's language in comparison with other "truth challenged" characters in Shakespeare's *oeuvre*. When one does, it is clear that the slippages of language to outright lies that characterize Iago or Richard III, for instance, are not present in Caliban. Driven by a sense of loss and lashing out verbally in a violent way with his curses, Caliban does not restrain his emotions or his words. He does not mask meaning, but lays bare both emotion *and* meaning; he does not lie.
Likewise, Holden does not equivocate; Avasarala notes to Bobbie that "I think Holden has a long history of babbling whatever he knows or thinks he knows all over creation. True or not, he believes it." (Corey 2012, 384) In much of *Caliban's War*, though, this moral compass of righteousness and "truth at all costs" has been lost because of fear and its resulting sense of loss and isolation. In a conversation with Holden, Naomi says:

> "Fear doesn't make you a coward."
> "No," he said. "Of course it doesn't. But refusing to face up to it. To not admit how you felt. To not let you and Alex and Amos help me. That was cowardice. And it may have cost me you, the crew's loyalty, everything I really care about. It made me keep a bad job a lot longer than I should have because the job was safe." (Corey 2012, 374-5)

The job that Holden references is the one that he takes from Fred Johnson, the former Butcher of Anderson Station and now de facto leader of the OPA. For 359 pages of *Caliban's War* Holden has held a job that he hates, but he keeps it only because he is too immobilized by fear to do anything else. For Holden, loss led to fear, which then led to violence, inaction, and anger; these combined help to get Holden fired from Fred Johnson's employ and in doing so, he is forced to confront his fear. It is only when Holden faces this fear, as evidenced in the passage above, that he can begin to stop his descent into metaphorical monstrousness and begin to regain his identity. For Holden, it is the turning point from a Miller/Holden identity to the beginning of being just "James Holden" again.

After he has been fired and comes back to the ship, Holden is described by Prax as somehow different: "Prax couldn't see at first what was different about him, but that something had happened… had changed…was unmistakable. The face was the same; the clothes hadn't changed. Prax had the uncanny memory of sitting through a lecture on metamorphosis… the captain turned to leave and then stopped in the doorway. He looked like someone still half in a dream." (Corey 2012, 363) It is directly after this observation that Prax tells the crew that he doesn't have enough money to pay for a rescue mission for Mei. Holden's response to the question of who Prax might ask for money is "How about everyone?" and suggests that Prax make a wide-band broadcast to the whole Sol System, telling everyone his and Mei's story (Corey 2012, 364). This broadcast that Holden encourages lays bare all information — the Protogen experiments, the bombing of Ganymede Station, the horrors of the protomolecule. It is a return to the perspective that egalitarian access to information is truth; anything else is a lie.

In addition to the concept of truth, the above passage is remarkable in its connection to *The Tempest* through its reference to Holden being "still half in a dream" (Corey 2012, 363). Flagstad argues that one of the qualities of the island that readers often forget is that for as much as Prospero is a dream maker, so Caliban is as well (Flagstad 1986, 205). It is this quality of the dream making/state is of importance in one of the most celebrated speeches that Caliban makes, and arguably one of the most beautiful in all of Shakespeare:

> Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
> Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices
> That, if I then waked after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming
> The clouds methought would open and show riches
> Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,
> I cried to dream again. (Shakespeare 1973, III.ii.140-8)

It is in a dream state that we have Caliban say these lines, which critics like Greenblatt, Flagstad, and Wilkes would underscore as important in a reading of the text from the perspective of dominance/repression, and by extension, I would argue, of Caliban's potential versus his stereotyped monstrousness. He may be described by Prospero as "a born devil, on whose nature/ Nurture can never stick", but it seems like the contrary is true (Shakespeare 1973, IV.i.188-9). When Miranda and Prospero "teach me [Caliban] how/ To name the bigger light, and how the less/ That burn by day and night" (Shakespeare 1973, I.ii.336-8) they give Caliban the gift of their language and through it a way to understand and order the natural world. Like Holden uses his righteous indignation in both positive and negative ways, so Caliban uses his language in both ways as well. He misuses language through his boasts that "You [Prospero and Miranda] taught me language, and my profit on't/ Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you/ For learning me your language!" (Shakespeare 1973, I.ii.365-367), but as can be seen in Caliban's soliloquy, he also uses language to craft beautiful descriptions of the island that he loves. It is through this dichotomy that we see Shakespeare problematizing the limitation of Caliban as the bestial devil; he shows through the language of this dream state that Caliban has the potential to be more than Prospero's limiting stereotype suggests.

Furthermore, in Caliban's description that "the isle is full of noises,/ Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not./ Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments/ Will hum about mine ears," he highlights the importance of sound/music as a defining quality of the natural environment (Shakespeare 1973, III.ii.140-3). There have been many articles written about the use and quality of music in *The Tempest*, but perhaps the best for the purposes of this study is Joshua Cohen's aptly named "The Music of *The Tempest*". In it, Cohen underscores the importance of the Music of the Spheres. He notes that "from antiquity to early modern times, the Music of the Spheres was regarded as the quintessential expression of divine order governing all of creation at every level of the Chain of Being" (Cohen 2013, 71). If this is the case, and if Caliban can hear the music, then he, perhaps, has more potential than Prospero and the others on the island recognize; he is a being with a soul, capable of connecting to the divine and of redemption.

There is a natural connection between the setting of *Caliban's War* and the realm of the Spheres. It makes sense that Holden, immersed in the environment where the Music of the Spheres music is made, connects with this force in his journey from the depths of monstrousness to regain his righteousness and identity. Perhaps it is this music that Holden hears after he enters the ship "transformed." Prax notes that "Holden tilted his head like he was listening to something that only he could hear" and, after this, finalizes the deal that Holden and his crew will find and save Mei (Corey 2012, 364). Like the music on the isle that seems to sooth and bring out the best in Caliban, so here Holden reconnects with a bit of who he used to be by "listening to something that only he could hear". Holden, in resolving the Mirror Stage, underscores the idea that "a human being is not determined by the past, but determines both the future and the past through the expression of his or her desire" (Nobus 2016, 122). At this point in Holden's character, there is a shift from the

monstrous — the loss of self, fear, and selfishness — to a more mature, external, altruistic desire to help others. Avasarla later says to Holden that his desire to save Mei is "not some personal crusade" where the focus is on Holden, but rather on Mei and them, as a group, "trying to save a little girl from some very bad people" (Corey 2012, 464).

Although Holden's journey back to himself begins at this point, it does not mean that there is no backsliding. For instance, in the final battle at Io, Holden shoots Nguyen in the throat and after doing so, "Somewhere in his brain stem, Detective Miller nodded in approval" (Corey 2012, 543). This may, initially, seem like the Miller/Holden identity still exists, but because of the next few lines, we know that it does not, or at least not entirely. Holden apologizes for his actions to Naomi saying "Sorry... I know I sort of agreed not to do that anymore", to which Naomi forgives him saying, "I know you'll feel like shit about it later. That's good enough for me." (Corey 2012, 543) Even though he may still have vestiges of "Miller-like actions", Holden has regained enough of his identity that he can problematize these actions and feel remorse, something that Miller in his monstrous actions, like executing Dresden, never had.

It is this sense of remorse and a change in perspective that Held wishes to emphasize in Caliban's "I'll be wise hereafter/ and seek for grace" (Shakespeare 1973, V.i.295-6). Whether Caliban truly has learned to forgive the loss of the island and accept Prospero or not, we as readers will never know. Shakespeare's play ends with ambiguity in Caliban's character and the audience is left with the task of grappling with his sincerity. For a reader of *Caliban's War*, we end with ambiguity as well. At the very end of the book, Holden is sitting alone in the galley of the *Rocinante*. He turns and sees Miller who "stood next to the galley refrigerator as if he'd always been there, rumpled gray suit and dented porkpie hat... His expression was one of discomfort and apology. 'Hey,' Detective Miller said. 'We gotta talk.'" (Corey 2012, 594-5). Just as there is ambiguity in Caliban's final lines, so there is ambiguity in this final scene with Holden as well. The recurrence of Miller at the end of the novel may be seen as a reminder to the reader of the Miller/Holden identity and how it is still part of who Holden is; the connection, though tenuous, is still there.

Holden/Volovodov

With the continuation of the series in *Abaddon's Gate*, we see a Holden who is much more like the righteous man in *Leviathan Wakes* than the monstrous man in *Caliban's War*. Even though he has returned to be more "like himself", Holden has seen too much and, as a result, has been touched by the monstrous; he can never again be the wholly righteous moral compass of the text. The role of morality in our world, that thread which weaves the books together, shifts from Holden's character and is transferred to Reverend Doctor Annushka (Anna) Volovodov. She acts as the moral compass of the narrative, problematizing humans' understanding and characterization of the protomolecule and our place in the Universe. She asks questions that others wish to ignore. For instance, in a conversation with Tilly she notes that "theological anthropology is a lot simpler when humans are the only ones with souls," and continues with a series of questions:

> But how does the protomolecule fit into that? Is it alive? It murders us, but it also builds amazing structures that are astonishingly advanced. Is it a tool used by someone more like us, only smarter? And if so, are the creatures with a sense of the divine? Do they have faith? What does that look like?... It calls into question the entire concept of Grace. Well, not entirely, but it complicates it at the very least. The things that made the protomolecule are intelligent. Does that mean they have souls? They invade our solar system, kill us indiscriminately, steal our resources. All things we could consider sins, if we were doing them. Does that mean they're fallen? Did Christ die for them too? Or are they intelligent but soulless, and everything the protomolecule's done is just like a virus doing what it's programmed for?" (Corey 2013, 129-30)

As such, we have a continuation of profound questions regarding identity, morality, and the place of man and God in our Universe. I believe that we may equate these questions to the drowning of Prospero's book, likely a book of the occult, and exit from the island at the end of *The Tempest*. The small island of experimentation which Prospero tightly controls through magic is abandoned in favor of returning to Milan, a place of decidedly more uncertainty. Likewise, in *Abaddon's Gate*, the certainty of what the protomolecule is and its place in the Universe is revised/rewritten. The "alien God-like thing" that Naomi so fears in *Leviathan Wakes* changes to be a symbol of the potential for life and exploration outside of the Sol System. At the end of the book, Reverend Hector Cortez is concerned about the implications of this, noting that "God gave man the Earth. He never promised him the stars. I wonder if He'll follow us out there", to which Anna replies "The God I believe in is bigger than all of this. Nothing we ever learn can be an attack on Him as long as that's true" (Corey 2013, 539).

In one of her more philosophical moments, Anna posits the questions "Do you believe in the concept of forgiveness? In the possibility of redemption? In the value of every human life, no matter how tainted or corrupted?" (Corey 2013, 364). I think that these are good questions as one comes to a final analysis of Caliban in *The Tempest* and Holden in *Caliban's War*. In both texts, we have characters who may be described as monstrous. Though beyond literal monsters, the play and novel take on the difficult questions of what makes a metaphorical monster, what is (im)moral, and actions that one may or may not take under trying circumstances. Such profound points of contemplation help to make these texts more than a play and novel that are read once and then forgotten. Through these issues, they underscore complex ideas that ask the audience to define what it means to be human, a question that one may return to time and time again.

For Caliban in Shakespeare's text, the defining moment of redemption may be those final lines "I'll be wise hereafter / and seek for grace" (Shakespeare 1973, V.i.295-6). If so, then Caliban's potential, as indicated by the elevated language in his soliloquy and his capability to hear the Music of the Spheres, finally may be realized. For Holden, the journey to regain his identity is also a painful and chaotic one. From the horrors of what he sees on Eros Station causing a sense of loss of self, to the fear that immobilizes him throughout much of the novel, to his final transformative turning

point, Holden is a dynamic character who changes significantly throughout the text. In the end, he is able to subdue the Miller/Holden persona and reassert his own identity. In doing so, he regains his humanity allowing Naomi, the girlfriend who watched the man she loves descend into monstrousness and struggle to be redeemed, to be able to finally say to him, "I feel like I got you back" (Corey 2013, 431).

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Gendered National Bodies & Racial Difference in *A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras*

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Abstract:

This article contextualizes Mary Lester's *A Lady's Ride Across Honduras* (1884) within the overall production of travel narratives and the conceptualization of British Empire identity and gender codes during the Victorian period. First of all, it explains how Lester's narrative provides a "gendered" representation of the Honduran landscape and populations. It also contends that, while Lester's writing does reveal some details about the culture, local people, and socio-political climate in Honduras, it should be interpreted more so as a written manifestation of British identity, gender roles, and values of the era. This argument is evidenced by explicating how Lester was able to negotiate with discursive structures and pressures associated with femininity and (masculine) colonialism and by illustrating how she textually constructed herself as both an exemplary and superior British female subject through her protagonist Maria Soltera. Overall, this essay attempts to bring to the forefront a piece of literature that is mostly unknown and understudied, but that reflects the undeniable interrelationship between travel literature and discourses of gender and colonialism.

Keywords: Female Travelers, Gender, Nineteenth-century Honduras, Imperial Powers, Ideology of Separate Spheres, Victorian Era.

As part of the State's efforts to modernize and populate the young nation of Honduras, the then Secretary-General, Ramón Rosa, signed on May 3, 1879, the Presidential resolution on the solicitation made by a British subject, Priest William L Pope. The decree conceded to Pope lands and various exemptions to establish in the region of Trujillo a colony of Irish immigrants who would dedicate themselves to agricultural work and other enterprises. These colonists would construct roads as well as build primary and secondary schools, all of which were to be served by foreign instructors.[1] After receiving approval for his solicitation, Pope, widely circulated in Europe a pamphlet that called for workers, including a leading teacher, to migrate to Honduras, help him develop his colony, and in return obtain a generous land grant from the Honduran government.[2] However, some of the information he imparted to possible interested parties did not correspond with the approved solicitation. Among those was an English educator by the name of Mary Lester, who, after hearing about how Honduras had opened its borders to European and US-American

immigrants and receiving a personalized invitation from Pope, ventured to Honduras during the summer of 1881.

The invitation received by Lester included a guarantee of employment and a concession of land in Pope's proposed colony. According to Lester herself, she was offered the position of head teacher for a school that was to be erected in San Pedro Sula, – for which she would receive a small, but good salary — and was promised the appointment of organ player for the local church so that she may have an additional source of income (Lester 1964, 6).[3] The opportunity to continue her profession as teacher appealed to Lester, but the chief motivation for her willingness to immigrate to Honduras was the assured land grant that would allow her to establish a home of her own. Notwithstanding her education and her societal background, a middle-class upbringing, Lester had no assets to speak of; she was poverty-stricken (Lester 1964, 8-10). Unfortunately, Lester's possibility for economic improvement was doomed from the onset because much of the information provided to her was fabricated. Pope's written communication indicated that the proposed colony would primarily be made up of British and French immigrants, rather than the accorded Irish, and that the colony would be established in the city of San Pedro Sula instead of Trujillo, which during that time was far more industrialized than Trujillo and would indeed seem more enticing. More importantly, there was no immediate plan for a school nor an organ at the nearby church. In the end, Lester was left with no other recourse, but to return home to England. Despite her ill-fated journey, Lester kept and published a written account of her experiences in Honduras.

This article seeks to contextualize Mary Lester's *A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras* within the overall production of travel narratives and the conceptualization of British Empire identity and gender codes during the Victorian period. First of all, it explains how Lester's narrative provides a "gendered" representation of the Honduran landscape and populations. It also contends that, while Lester's writing does reveal some details about the culture and local people of Honduras, it should be interpreted more so as a written manifestation of British identity, gender roles, and values of the era. This argument is evidenced by explicating how Lester was able to negotiate with discursive structures associated with femininity and (masculine) colonialism (Mills 1993, 106-107; Mills 2005, 64); and by illustrating how she textually constructed herself as both an exemplary and superior British female subject through her protagonist Maria Soltera, a woman who traveled to a nation whose Bay Islands and parts of the Caribbean coastline were an informal British colony for about two hundred years.[4] Overall, this essay makes an effort to bring to the forefront a piece of literature that is largely unknown and understudied, but that reflects the undeniable interrelationship between travel literature and discourses of gender and colonialism.

Travel, Gender & Identity in the Victorian Era

In the historical consciousness of many, the Victorian period in England is often associated with restraint, religiosity, a strong work ethic, and family values based on defined gender constructs. Women, upper and middle class, in particular, were expected to uphold those ideals by focusing on domestic matters; tending to the well-being of their family members; and demonstrating a series of

behaviour patterns considered "feminine" and "natural for women", such as frailty, morality, piety, sympathy, general emotion, and interest in developing relationships. (Mills 1993, 94-96). In other words, during this epoch, women were in large part restricted "in their movement" to the private sphere, as well as socialized by those same discursive limitations that were supposed to define them. These constraints should come as no surprise because although the elements do change over time, women in Western society, have been characterized and circumscribed by "femininity"[5] (Mills 1993, 94). However, despite these restrictions, some women were able to move into the public sphere, exercise influence in spaces other than the household, and to an extent challenge feminine norm. In opposition and relation to femininity, discourses of "masculinity" also circulated widely in the West and had established a set of roles that men were to follow; they were supposed to be providers, protectors, strong, and active in the public arena. Also, and particular to British men of the Victorian era, "nobleness, bravery, and an adventurous spirit became staples of the loyal, male, [and superior] imperial subject" (Linsley 2012, 2).

But, how and why was the ideology of "separate spheres"[6] promoted by the British Victorians? The answer is not simple; it requires a discussion of the solidification of Britain as a preeminent empire and industrialized nation, and the effect that these changes had on different facets of nineteenth-century British society. British (initially English) imperialism began with the creation of colonies and establishment of ports in the Americas, the Caribbean, and India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the ensuing two hundred years, Britain's borders and influence expanded to parts of Oceania, Asia, and Africa, becoming the world's leading commercial and trade entity during the second half of the nineteenth century. Because of this territorial expansion and increase in capital, the British nation saw among many of its advances, an improvement in transport infrastructure, technological innovation in the printing process, and the rise of a middle-class (Mangan 1989, 2). All of this, subsequently, led to "a large-scale movement of its men and women into the wider world on both temporary and long-term bases" (Frawley 1994, 19-20) and an increase in knowledge of these new and "exotic" places and peoples.

Economic gain was indisputably a primary impetus for the many men who traveled to the territories of the expanding empire. Yet, there were also "new" types of men who took excursions as administrators, diplomats, military men, scientists, missionaries, and trained writers who had distinct motivations for their journeys and who, in addition to traveling in a professional capacity, sometimes ventured out beyond the British metropolis for leisure as well (Watts 2009, 775-776). Although the majority of women who traveled did so to accompany their husbands or guardians, some women did so as single females and as a result of their professions (Rodenas 2014, 1-7; Wagner 2015, 175). Nevertheless, whether consciously or unintentionally, both men and women, served in some capacity to legitimate and reified both the spread of empire and the definitions of British masculinity and femininity mentioned above. The success males and females had (or at least claimed to have had) in making tangible gains and contributions to the commercial, ideological or intellectual needs of the society as well as in bringing Christianity and order to nations that were formally or

informally colonized were considered manifestations of the authority and superiority of the British Empire (Thompson 2011, 174-175). In addition, the heroic episodes of "adventuring" and war that were included in official imperial records and personal writings – which, later permeated popular British culture and were utilized as edifying tools for the formation of future "manly" males (Watts 2009, 775) – reflected the masculine nature of these individuals and empire as a whole (Linsley 2012, 2; Woollacott 2006, 59).

British Victorian superiority and masculinity were also realized through the employment of the language of difference. The colonizers usually marked a clear distinction between them, the members of the British race, and the peoples who were subject to their control, in order to classify, form hierarchies, and establish their behaviors, culture and values as the benchmark by which the "Other" should be measured (Hall 2002, 17; Mercer 1999, 148). The British represented themselves as civil, racially-pure, intellectually and physically strong while at the same describing the non-Europeans populations as immoral, lacking in beauty and intellect, weak, and to an extent, female, "thus arriving at their optimistic conclusions about British and Western cultural superiority" (Bolt 1971, 27). Philosophical and religious ideals were used to substantiate these claims, – as they had been used in the past – but during the nineteenth century, Victorians found in pseudo-scientific theories pertaining to both race and gender, further justification for their intervention in the global world. The notion of scientific polygenesis argued that the human species had no single origin, that "innate" biological differences existed among the races, and that these primordial "dissimilarities served as the basis for their hierarchization or place within the scale of civilization" (Jackson and Weidman, 2006, 34–44). Scientific studies that assessed cranium sizes, physical features, and language variation (among other things) served as evidence for the theory of polygenesis and as justification for the hierarchy of the races with the Caucasian "white" race on top of the scale, the African race on the bottom, and the Asian and American races in the middle (Bolt 1971, 208-217).

Many of the scientific discursive practices that were used to dominate the non-European races were also applied to the female sex. The study of female anatomy was employed to show female physical frailty and intellectual weakness. In particular, the examination of the female reproductive system and the conclusions drawn from such study were of great interest because in it men claimed to have found the source that in the eyes of a patriarchal society, both redeemed and condemned women – motherhood and sexual desire (Mercer 1999, 150). Social evolutionary theories found in Darwin's *The Descent of Man* that noted that "women possessed characteristics of the lower races and the past lower states of civilization" were also adopted to validate male governance (Bandyopadhyay 2014). To this, we must also add that science became another discursive justification for the construction and promotion of defined gender roles. That is why the mobility of Victorian women was restricted; why women of the upper echelons were believed to need protection; and why, although never fully-recognized, women themselves were also a necessary force for socializing other women into limited roles (Mills 1993, 95). In essence, the empire was not only

masculine, but it was also feminine, and this fact was at the crux of much of the growing societal anxieties.

Female Laborers, Women Writers & The Maneuvering of Conflicting Discourses

The ideology of separate spheres was a "bourgeois" ideal that was not always achieved. The same transformations that brought about numerous advances as well as changes in urbanization and social structure in nineteenth-century Britain, also provided a space, a type of "borderlands"[7] in which women could both challenge Victorian customs and have a role outside the family. First of all, women worked in the labor-intensive, philanthropic and professional fields because few households were completely economically-dependent on the father figure. Females from the lower-classes would often work for low wages in factories and mills to supplement the male wages (Digby 1993, 204-206). As a result of the promotion of philanthropy as a feminine quality and the increasing educational opportunities for middle-class ladies, some women were able to serve as missionaries, nurses, teachers, writers and even leaders of political and public movements (Watts 2009, 779-781). Although the female presence in the public arena was undeniable, their subversion of the dichotomy of private and public spaces was not always overt. Yes, some women indeed were considered rebellious and even an "aberration" of femininity by Victorians, but many worked within the binary system. Women exercised agency, to an extent, and formed socio-political networks by demonstrating lady or "feminine-like" behavior in public; they educated young ladies by using a curriculum that reinforced the idea of the proper woman while at the same time equipping them with the skills essential to earning a living because women themselves knew that with the exception of a select few upper-class ladies, all would have to work at some point in their lives (Digby 1993, 206-211).

The ability to travel and to write about their journeys during the 1800s were two additional ways in which women could escape the limitations imposed on their gender. Hundreds of middle and upper-class females traveled to territories near and far from the British metropolis and found in them a sense of freedom that they could not enjoy at home (Mills 1993, 2; Wernecke 2012, 2). The distance from the metropolis coupled with the different environments found in the formal and informal colonies allowed women more physical and intellectual mobility – freedom to "accomplish feats of physical endurance and courage that would be inconceivable for a middle-class woman in England" (Frawley 1994, 38). The act of travel bestowed on many of these women a form of "cultural competence" and authority derived from their experiences. Unlike men, they "were able to enter female spaces such as the harem, zenana, or seraglio, and their descriptions of everyday life", often provided a different perspective from the typical Orientalizing essentialism present in male travel works (Wagner 2015, 175-176). Also, because many of these female travelers were educated, they could record and publish their experiences, and in the process gain public recognition (Frawley 1994, 23-24).

Except for a few "extraordinary" women, females did not write about their journeys until the nineteenth century. The genre of travel writing, as well as the literary market, were largely male-

dominated. Nevertheless, the increase in literacy and rising interest in periodical literature, coupled with improvements in the printing process, provided the conditions for the production of a copious amount of women's nonfiction, which was enormously popular and widely-read by Victorians (Frawley 1994, 7-15). Readers became interested in the female production of travel narratives because through them they could vicariously transport themselves to distant lands, learn about "exotic" cultures, and feel as if they too were participating in the empire-building process. In essence, women's travel writing became a form of "symbolic capital"[8] that was valued and recognized by citizens, the nation, and institutions such as the periodical presses and publishing firms (Frawley 1994, 29).

The press became one of the most important resources of information for British society during the nineteenth century. It was the principal medium by which people learned about current events and different forms of proceedings taking place within and outside of Britain, as well as a source of both education and entertainment. Thus, it is not surprising that women chose to initially publish the results – images, observations, and thoughts – of their voyages in newspapers and journals (Frawley 1994, 28). As previously indicated, the demand for travel narratives written by and for women existed, but it is important to note that during this period the end product was restricted by established conventions and discursive factors about genre and gender. There were two dominant forms of travel writing, one with a more "factual"/scientific or guidebook structure and the other with a more literary (and romanticized) tone, with the latter considered more appropriate for a female writer (Mills 1993, 84-85). Furthermore, women were encouraged to focus on feminine matters, those concerning the private and emotional sphere, rather than the public or political arena, while at the same time appealing to the public's desire for episodes of adventure and physical accomplishment (Frawley 1994, 18; Wagner 2015, 177). That is not to say that there was no diversity in women's travel writing because there was, given the differences in age, the purpose of the journey and ideological beliefs among other factors (Bassnett 2002, 228-230). In addition, not all women limited their writing to the feminine; in fact, some women challenged these discursive pressures by adopting "male" qualities or a narratorial position deemed "masculine" (Mills 1993, 94-99). Nevertheless, as members of the British empire, female travel writers had to negotiate with these "conflicting discursive pressures" (Mills 1993, 106-107), and we can certainly see this in the works of prominent Victorian authors like Mary Kingsley, Isabella Bird Bishop, and Frances Trollope,[9] and lesser-known writers like Mary Lester, our focus of study.

Mary Lester and the Construction of María Soltera, A Female Subject

Mary Lester was a woman who was a product of her era, and in many ways, an anomaly for a middle-class British lady. Although of English descent, Lester was born in the Pyrenees region and lived in numerous parts of the world, including Oceania, which inculcated in her a natural inclination for adventure, and more importantly, allowed her to acquire an adaptability to distinctive environments as well as a cultural competency, both of which she displayed during her journey across Honduras. She was not a neophyte traveler who ventured out into the world for the

first time, but rather an experienced traveler. In addition, Lester was a strong-willed single female who wielded authority from being the daughter and sister of English soldiers, both of whom had died, and of having been compelled to depend on herself.[10]

Lester was fully aware of the expectations and limitations of her gender and cognizant of the need to meet certain established conventions for travel writing. In her semi-autobiographical travel novel, *A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras*, Lester utilized the pseudonym María Soltera to create a distinction between her, the author and historical figure, and the narrator and protagonist of her work. (To adhere to this differentiation and to avoid any confusion by the reader, the author's last name, Lester, will be used when specifically speaking about the author, and Soltera will be utilized when referring to the protagonist/narrator.) Returning to our study: In making this separation, Lester was able to create a female British subject who was able to maneuver both "the power of a patriarchy which acted upon [her] as [a] middle-class woman, through discourses of femininity: and the power of colonialism which acted upon [her] in relation to the people of the country [she] described" (Mills 1993, 18). As the title of Lester's travel log indicated, Soltera was a "lady," – a term that accentuates social status and femininity (Frawley 1994, 105) — and her voyage was quite an undertaking given the reference to her movement "across" the Honduran landscape. In the end, Soltera accomplished this feat, while providing the reader with a series of cultural and geographical referents of the country and demonstrating the qualities of her gender, class and "superior" British nature.

María Soltera was the protagonist who assumed both masculine and feminine traits. First of all, although motivated by economic reasons, Soltera displayed courage and a sense of adventure by choosing the more difficult of two possible routes by sailing down the Pacific coast from San Francisco to the port of Amapala, Honduras, before commencing her two-hundred-mile mule back ride to San Pedro Sula. Soltera further accentuated her valor and the difficulty of her enterprise by indicating that her trip over "the grand" Honduran mountains was one that "few Englishmen, and still fewer Englishwomen" had ever completed (Lester 1964, 3). The mere fact that Soltera traveled as a single woman and that, except for a muleteer and a servant she hired, she completed her trajectory with minimal assistance and insufficient knowledge of the land, challenge the assumptions about the female need for protection and the frailty of the female body. The latter point was further substantiated by the wear and tear that Soltera's physical body suffered – the mosquito bites, the hunger, less than hygienic sleeping quarters, and the extreme sun that resulted in "the skin of the one side of [her] throat and face peeled away in strips" (Lester 1964, 251).

Because she was a single woman, Soltera also faced incidents in which locals would try to take advantage of her by attempting to charge her exorbitant prices for products and services, and in which Honduran men would often try to speak for her when she was more than capable of communicating in Spanish reasonably well. The ability to speak in Spanish allowed Soltera to both handle difficult situations and to establish her authority by demonstrating to others that she could take care of all necessary transactions and logistics. For example, in Amapala, the main Honduran

port in the Pacific Coast, Soltera stopped all discussions and attempts at being cheated when purchasing a side-saddle, when she interrupted her *mozo* (servant) Eduardo and

> walk[ed] into the circle [of people], and said in the best Spanish [she] could command, 'I will not buy one of these; and, moreover, I will not give more than twelve pesos for the best saddle in Amapala'... and express[ed] her surprise that they should combine to take advantage of a stranger, and that stranger a 'Soltera,' [she] added with great emphasis (Lester 1964, 100-101).

Soltera's strong character was evident to the people. She was also able to gain sympathy from them by emphasizing her status as a single female and economic condition of being poor, a challenge to the prevalent assumption in Honduras that all British were rich and could pay any amount for services. In the end, Soltera was able to purchase a right-sided saddle at the price she sought to pay, but this was only one of many occurrences in which she would be inconvenienced, forced to be stern with the local people or compelled to defend herself for being an English woman. In fact, she faced indirect attacks from both Hondurans and other Europeans who viewed most British as being dishonest, thieves, and most debase for "getting off the natives all they could before returning home and canting about the wickedness of the peoples" (Lester 1964, 38). This view was also due to transnational conflicts over the informal British colony that existed since the eighteenth-century on the Mosquito Coast in the form of a protectorate and on the Bay Islands in the shape of permanent settlements,[11] as well as the blame that was placed on the British for the failed interoceanic railroad project of the 1850s that left the country and many local investors in ruin.[12] Soltera did not address the latter reasons for the negative image of the English. She often changed the subject when such topics were broached in discussion, – perhaps because they were tied to politics, and as such, should not be tackled by women at this time – but of the first reason she made it known that she did not disagree with such assessments and that she knew them to be true from her prior travels and from friends she trusted. Having said that, Soltera also made it a point, through the words of a British expatriate by the name of Mr. Cookes, to relay to the reader that the swindlers were "low whites"; they were not representative of the British gentleman of noble breed (Lester 1964, 38-39).

Soltera's courage was undeniable; it was even recognized by the local men who bestowed on her the title of "brave little lady" (Lester 1964, 191). Her bravery was on full display during an incident in which she and her servants were forced to cross what John Lloyd Stephens called the "tortuous river Juan" (Lester 1964, 193) on mules' back because there was no canoe for them to use. The danger was even greater due to the flooding of the river, and this was made evident to the reader by its personification. Soltera saw the river and said,

> There it was— broad, turbulent, almost defiant... The water leapt and swirled over and about these in all directions. The very sound was a laugh aimed against us, and the solemn dark trees which bordered the side were very far from being an enlivening feature in the prospect...There is nothing for it but sink or swim: the river must be crossed, ford or no ford, and the sooner we go, the better...

> The elder of the two Indian women now came towards me.... 'The river is so strong – it is very dangerous. You will go; but *'ay di mi,'* you have much courage.' Much courage! Had she felt my throbbing pulse; could she but know kind soul, the struggle that was going on in my proud English heart not to appear to be afraid. True, my words were measured, and I smiled because I felt I must not give way one inch (Lester 1964, 193-197).

In the description above, the human-like qualities attributed to the river add to its formidable and treacherous presence; they made the river a worthy adversary that Soltera had to defeat in order to demonstrate her heroism. In addition, the statement made by the local women about Soltera having "much courage" in conjunction with her resolve not to show any fear by remaining calm further validated her strong nature. To this we must add, that Soltera indicated to the reader that courage, pride and proper restraint are qualities of a true Brit; they are what made the British superior to other peoples. Also, to an extent, Soltera took on the persona of a knight who overcomes obstacles, was "measured," kind, – by showing generosity to the women who helped her roll up the hem of her dress (Lester 1964, 197) – and Christian, as demonstrated by her gratitude to "the Lord in sincerity and truth" (Lester 1964, 202) for allowing her to cross the river safely. In essence, this episode and others served the purpose of satisfying the Victorian public's desire for reading a travel narrative with examples of "English imperial superiority and control abroad" (Frawley 1994, 106).

Nature was at times an obstacle for Soltera, but it was also something to contemplate and to appreciate for its beauty. Before Soltera's encounter with the "turbulent" river Juan, she found herself "much engrossed by the beauty of the scenery, and in admiration of the glorious country" (Lester 1964, 164). The first time her sensibilities were awakened was by a landscape that was so pristine that it was like looking at a painting. As Soltera argued,

> The painter of river scenery can nowhere in the wide world find more charming subjects for his brush than the lovely water-courses of Spanish Honduras. The cascades among the mountains are simply magnificent and deserve to be classed among the finest in any land...My fervent wish for Honduras is that she may ever deserve her name. *Hondo*, being interpreted, means a pond or brook; and the brooks of this fair region are so pure and health-giving, that when the iron hand of progress penetrates here, may its mission be other than that of tainting, for commercial greed, the life of a country. Ah, how many in our own England turn to spirits and to beer, because the only water to which they have access is poisoned by chemical drugs or is made the receptacle of all foul things (Lester 1964, 131-132).

Two things are made quite clear by her words: the first being that, like many of her class, Soltera was influenced by the sensibilities of the picturesque movement[13] and was cognizant of the interest of the upper classes for scenic references in art and literature (Donaldson et al. 2017, 44); the second, that unlike many male travelers, Soltera's description of the terrain moved beyond the search

for material gain and the typical "imperial gaze,"[14] or authoritative position, and was characterized by a reverential awe. She did not want to see the waters destroyed like they had been in her home country because they are essential to all life source. Soltera criticized the industrialization of her country for having polluted its waters and caused "typhoid fever and blood poisoning… half of the ailments of the English people" (Lester 1964, 131).

Another episode in which Soltera drew on the picturesque to display female sentimentality occurred as she crossed the mountains between Goascorán and Comayagua. Soltera's representation of the foothills is not without impartiality, (a fact she does not deny) but its beauty is undeniable. She began her description with the following:

> Behold the sky! A sea of opal light, upon which floated minute masses of soft pink colour. One of the largest of these rested for a time upon the summit of one of the lower mountain-peaks, as if a rose had fallen thereon and waited to be kissed. A few moments later and the whole of the rosy tufts had faded away like a shower of leaves, and a blue-green light shimmered in their wake, the herald of the sun. He rose at once in the full glory of his strength, enveloping cloud and colour in his golden robe; flushing high mountain and lowly canon with his regal tints, and upon all things making his presence to be felt… My own (weak woman's) tribute was a gush of tears. It could not be restrained, all was so beautiful and so grand; and Nature seemed to greet, with a mother's love, one who was alone in the world… Here, rock, wood, tree, shrub, and water are on a grand scale – all, so to speak, the best of their kind; and the humble wildflowers, adorning the far-stretching fertile valleys which slope between the clefts, are rich in colour, and far from wanting in perfume. The varying lights – the glimmering opal and the deep purple haze alternating with the fairest blue of the heaven and the blackest depth of the cloud – as we passed on our way, presented a scene, the like of which I had never seen before, and never expect to see again (Lester 1964, 156-165)

In ten pages Soltera presented us with images of nature in all of its splendor: its various tones, scents, and movements all in perfect harmony. The rich poetic language and Soltera's reaction of a "gush of tears" emphasized the idealism of the picturesque environment and created a series of balanced landscape compositions. While we should not discredit Soltera's reaction, we can argue that this representation is a literary recourse to appeal to the emotions of the possible female readers and to appease the publishers who expected its female writers to both use a more literary (novel-like) rather than scientific discourse, and to focus more on the creative rather than the analytical when speaking about foreign lands (Frawley 1994, 32).

Although Soltera did espouse masculine characteristics under certain conditions, she was and foremost a lady. Soltera's femininity is stressed through her use of a side-saddle; her decorum, dress, and sentimentality; her knowledge of the picturesque; and through the relationships she developed with other women. It is also through Soltera's interaction with other women that we are privy not only to mores that developed in Honduras but also to her values as a middle-class British woman. Two women, both European, in particular, she found to be quite pleasant and

hardworking: Victoria Berlioz, known by locals as Madame Victorine and Madame St. Laurent. Berlioz was a "nice-looking [French] woman" who provided Soltera with lodging in her comfortable and clean inn while she passed through Comayagua, the colonial capital of Honduras. Although Berlioz claimed to be unable to entertain her properly because she and her sister were departing for France, Soltera showed that despite Berlioz's impending departure, Berlioz was very hospitable and that her abode was comfortable, clean, and decorated in the European style. Lester dedicated numerous pages to the conversations between Berlioz and Soltera – some of it in French, so as to show that like many educated women, Soltera was fluent in the French language – and a few to the food that was consumed in the Berlioz household, which Soltera found to be "very luxurious" given most foods she consumed prior to her arrival in Comayagua. Soltera was given pigeons, rice-pudding for supper and had both cognac and wine to drink.[15] Berlioz was a woman with a sophisticated palette, but what most impressed Soltera was her self-sufficiency and work ethic, a quality that Victorians valued (Lester 1964, 208-229). According to A. Curtis Wilgus, Berlioz was a woman who had instituted a sugar cane mill, developed a small coffee plantation, established a large store and held many properties in Honduras, all of which allowed her to amass great wealth and to conduct business with high powered officials. Berlioz's wealth was so abundant that, on numerous occasions, she even loaned the Honduran government hundreds of thousands of pesos (1964, xxx).

Like Victoria Berlioz, Madame St. Laurent of Potrerillos was a successful businesswoman who owned a hotel and whose husband was the "head-man" of the town. Soltera indicated that Madame St. Laurent and her husband were quite courteous and generous; Madame St. Laurent was especially "agreeable and friendly, and...a woman of advanced education" (Lester 1964, 264). In addition to the pleasant conversations Soltera shared with her, it was Madame St. Laurent who informed her that William Pope was not a priest at all, but a former Protestant minister who had tricked the Honduran government and several Irish small farmers "of a respectable class" into supporting his proposed colony. The land was provided, but Pope was no more than a drunk who wanted to live off the colonists' little money and hard work. That is why many colonists had returned home or decided to settle elsewhere, and why Soltera was left with no prospect of settling in Honduras (Lester 1964, 265-267).[16] Despite the unfortunate news, it was at Madame St. Laurent's home where Soltera was again able to bathe and dine comfortably and able to contemplate the beauty of a garden that Madame St. Laurent had created. In doing so, Soltera once more demonstrated her understanding of aesthetics. In addition, Soltera stressed the relationship between an appreciation for beauty and western superiority when she indicated that Madame St. Laurent's garden was proof of the way the French, and Europeans in general, could both make use of space and bring beauty to "unsightly places" (Lester 1964, 268).

Mrs. Francisca Ramos, locally known as Chicaramos was another woman whom Soltera described as both physically handsome and affluent. Chicaramos was a white Creole woman of Spanish descent who had established in the city of San Pedro Sula an inn, a billiards hall and a salon where many social events took place (Lester 1964, 282-283). In fact, a day after Soltera arrived in San

Pedro Sula, the mayor, a Scotsman by birth, hosted a ball in honor of the city. Soltera attended the ball as a guest of the mayor and was impressed by the invitees' decorum and appreciation for culture. For example, during the playing of a selected classical piece, the guests listened "with marked silence to the end, [which Soltera] could not help contrasting this politeness with the rude inattention which [she] ha[d] seen displayed in circles of far higher pretension" in England (Lester 1964, 296). Soltera also described in detail the *Lanza* dance, a Honduran national dance, which was adapted from the Lancer Quadrilles that was very popular among Europeans and elites in the colonies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Lester 1964, 297-298). Overall, Soltera was not only pleased to have attended such a "dignified" ball but also pleasantly surprised by having witnessed a second major example of the development of culture in Honduras. The first having occurred in Goascorán where she not only observed but participated in an intricate ribbon dance known as the *ronda* of the muleteers because the women and men "mazed between the quadrupeds, waltzed back, formed a ring in the center" all while being surrounded by mules. The *ronda* was preceded by a reenactment of the Spanish tradition of the running of the bulls and followed by a waltz dance (Lester 1964, 151-154).

It is evident from the above accounts that Soltera had espoused the common-held-belief that European peoples were characterized by certain bodily and behavioral traits: physical beauty, proper etiquette, and attention to both hygiene and culture. Soltera emphasized these characteristics in her descriptions of the European women, and men to a lesser extent, she met to reify them as racial markers, to illustrate difference, and to establish them as the standard by which the "Other" should be measured. Although Soltera did not directly describe the natives as "aesthetically-unpleasant," she curiously did surround herself and hire workers whom she considered to be more handsome and concerned with appearing presentable. For instance, the initial impression Soltera had of her *mozo*, Eduardo, was that he was "nice-looking," and "that *rara avis*, a very clean-looking lad" (Lester 1964, 82). In addition, Soltera was pleased with his work ethic, his presentability as indicated by his "clean shirt" (Lester 1964, 108) and his attentiveness with always providing her with clean water, which helped to ensure her tidiness (Lester 1964, 141). Similar to Eduardo, Soltera found the Indian wife of an Italian doctor who had settled in Goascorán to be "pretty" and having good manners. According to Soltera, the Indian woman was a gracious hostess for providing her with the best possible sleeping arrangements and meals she and her husband could offer, and someone who had truly "touched" her for recognizing in her voice kindness and innate beauty. Also, their interactions were marked by respect and "woman's sympathy." The latter sentiment was especially present in Soltera's criticism of the way the "white" Italian doctor had never given his wife her rightful role as mistress of the house because she was racially inferior to him (Lester 1964, 161). While we can assume that the empathy and concern that Soltera showed for this Indian woman were genuine, we should not forget that their relationship was not of equality. What may be interpreted as an act of solidarity with the "Other" cannot be dissociated from the "discourse of philanthropy which

circulated through the nineteenth century and involved middle and upper-class women" like Soltera (Mills 1993, 96-97).

Soltera's "systematic play of difference" (Hall 2002, 18) was more pronounced in her depiction of the one Black individual she met and the American women she interacted with on board the boat to Amapala. For example, Soltera described the American consul's cook at Amapala, locally-known as the "captain," as a black man who was a brute, ugly in appearance and manner, and "smelt of fish and black man strongly." In essence, according to Soltera, this cook not only lacked all the superior qualities of Europeans but also had a particular scent that characterized his race (Lester 1964, 106-108). Even though Soltera was careful not to appear blatantly racist, we can infer that she transferred her intolerance and that of the Honduran people to the town dog, Lobo, who had scared off the captain because Lobo "had a special dislike to black people and the 'captain' in particular" (Lester 1964, 108). She also agreed with the consul's (Mr. Bahl) assertion that the cook was a strong worker, for she, like many Europeans and US Americans, believed that the Black race was naturally conditioned for hard labor (Lester 1964, 109). Soltera did not portray American women in a positive light either; She described Mrs. C, a lady from the US who was on her way to the coast of Guatemala with her daughters after incurring debt and evading her tradespeople in San Francisco, as a "demi-semi-gentlewoman" whose manners and appearance were both "very unfortunate." Mrs. C. was also a brazen woman and, like her daughters, had a loud and shrieking voice (Lester 1964, 43-44).

It is important to note that while Soltera did use the "language of aesthetics" (Bohls 1995, 242) to mark difference and race, she refrained in large part from making overt statements about the non-European races or any nationality but her own in order to not contravene "the discursive positions established for women" (Mills 1993, 97). Since "race" was considered a "masculine" topic, it was the male characters who spoke directly about the considered "innate" characteristics of African, indigenous and mixed-race populations. As mentioned above, it was Mr. Bahl who made the correlation between physical labor and Blacks. It was also Mr. Bahl who referred to the Indian race as "apt to be idle" (Lester 1964, 95), a characteristic that had made everything slow or late "a custom of the country" (Lester 1964, 110), and ultimately resulted in Honduras' underdevelopment, lack of infrastructure and corrupt local governments. Don Graciano, the Italian doctor, also shared this sentiment because he too referred to the indigenous and mixed-race muleteers as idle (Lester 1964, 144). Nonetheless, the most prejudiced comments were produced by the US doctor on board the boat to Amapala who described Mexican "indigenous" men and women as "too lazy to walk in even if the door were opened to them", as having "no brains" or "usefulness." He also considered the women as aesthetically inferior, as "dirty" and having "glaring, beady, black eyes without intelligence" (Lester 1964, 15). It is obvious from the descriptors the doctor used that he had racialized the Mexican people in hygiene, body, and manner, and he had done so in order to legitimate the imperialist attitude that not only he, but many US nationals, had towards Mexico and Latin America in general since the nineteenth century. Soltera was aware of the politics of the time as well as the conflicts that had existed between Britain and the United States over American

territories, but because politics, like race, was not a subject appropriate for Victorian women, the references to the US desire to annex parts of Mexico and Central America were all uttered by males (Lester 1964, 14). Overall, the more "feminine" and "sentimental" elements dominated the narrative, but like in most, if not all, travelogues produced by Westerners during the era of imperialism, discourses of race and politics were also present.

Concluding Remarks

Lester's *A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras* was published in magazine format in *Blackwood's Magazine*[17] and in book form by Blackwood & Co in 1884. The reviews of her travel manuscript, in general, commended Lester for her entertaining and pleasant style and underscored the protagonist's courageous nature and ability to overcome numerous obstacles. Ironically, Lester was criticized for focusing too much on personal relationships and domestic topics, such as the household and food, and not providing much detail about the native population or landscape.[18] The incongruity of the reviews rests on the fact that the narrative's emphasis on the "feminine" was the result of patriarchal forces and discursive limitations, based on the ideology of separate spheres, which were extant during the nineteenth century. Lester was critiqued for the topics she was restricted to and expected to write by the periodical presses, publishing firms, and society as a whole. Given the period, the reception of Mary Lester's work is to be expected. However, we cannot deny how in her work Lester interweaved various disciplines and discourses such as ethnography, gender, geography, politics, and romanticism; negotiated between conflicting frameworks, those pertaining to femininity and colonialism; and how through her protagonist María Soltera she self-fashioned herself as an adventuress, an observer, a multi-faceted discursive persona, and a model British lady. In all, we hope to have underlined in this article the significance of *A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras*: how this text provided us with both a glimpse of Honduras during the late nineteenth century as well as numerous textual representations of British societal standards and values and identity and racial ideologies that were prevalent during the Victorian Period.

Endnotes:

1. The resolution signed on May 3, 1879, titled "Acuerdo sobre la solicitud del Presbítero Guillermo L. Pope," appeared in the official government newspaper, *Gaceta de Honduras* No. 45, on May 9, 1879, 4, https://tzibalnaah.unah.edu.hn/handle/123456789/3679.
2. Among the periodicals to publish Pope's pamphlet/letter was the *Longford Journal* on the 15th and 29th of November 1879. On both days, Pope emphasized the opportunity for a land grant, a home and education. Furthermore, Pope exaggerated the supposed salubrious Honduras environment and underlined the lack of diseases that were common in Europe and the United States. Copies of the newspapers were accessed from the British Newspaper Archive, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.
3. Although Mary Lester's narrative was originally published in 1884, I will use and cite from the 1964 edition of *A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras* published by the University of Florida Press.

4. For the most complete historical analysis of the British presence in Honduras, see Robert A. Naylor, *Penny Ante Imperialism: The Mosquito Shore and the Bay of Honduras, 1600-1914: A Case Study in British Informal Empire* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989).
5. See Susan Brownmiller, *Femininity*, (New York: Lindon Press, 1984) for an extensive discussion of the conceptualization of the concept of femininity.
6. An extensive discussion of the concept of "separate spheres" can be found in Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), a seminal work on British middle-class society during the nineteenth century.
7. In her essay on Victorian values and women, Anne Digby uses the term borderlands to refer to the flexibility or to an extent porous nature of gender roles. "Victorian Values and Women in Public and Private" in *Victorian Values: A Joint Symposium of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the British Academy, December 1990*, ed. T.C. Smout, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 195-215.
8. See Pierre Bourdieu's seminal work, *Outline of A Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
9. For a detailed analysis of the writing of these three women see, for example, Tamara Wagner, "Travel Writing" in The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Writings, ed. Linda H. Peterson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 175-188.
10. Because very little is known about Mary Lester, the woman and author, most autobiographical details come from her travel narrative of her journey through Honduras.
11. See Troy S. Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1970).
12. See, for example, Sharon Hartman-Strom, '"If Success Depends Upon Enterprise": Central America, US Foreign Policy, and Race in the Travel Narratives of E.G. Squier,' Diplomatic History 35, no. 3 (2011): 403–443 and Charles L Stansifer, 1966. "E. George Squier and the Honduras Interoceanic Railroad Project," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 46 no. 1 (1966): 1-27.
13. For a detailed explanation of the picturesque movement by one of the initial exponents, see the artist and theorist, William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772: On Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland*, (London: Printed for R. Blamire, 1788).
14. See the seminal work by Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (London: Routledge, 1992).
15. Although Soltera was careful not to appear ungrateful to her non-European hosts when presented with meals and indicated that she did enjoy some the fresh fruit found in the country, food was clearly a marker of difference. For instance, of the local food, she said the following: 'The soup, called chicken-broth, was nothing better than drowned hen; and the meat, cut in strips, looked like leathern sandals from the remotest antiquity. Everything that could be chopped up was chopped up; vegetables which would have passed muster had they been served whole, were tormented into squash, and little black beans in yellow dishes were the only edibles which, owing to their small size, had escaped the universal carnage" (Lester 1964, 90).
16. Even though we do not have the exact number of Irish who immigrated to Honduras in an attempt to establish a colony under Pope, we can infer from records provided in the section "West Indies" of the *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette*, dated March 31, 1880, 2; and in the section "South America" of the *Evening News and Star*, dated April 3, 1880, 4; that at least sixty-three individuals sailed to Honduras from Ireland. Both records were accessed from the British Newspaper Archive, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

17. Lester's manuscript appeared in Volume 135 of the magazine in the following issues: No. 819, January 1884, 115-142; No. 820, February 1884, 185-197; No. 821, March 1884, 291-309; No. 822, p. 452-468; No. 823, p. 582-604. https://archive.org/details/blackwoodsmagazi135edinuoft.
18. See, for example, the reviews included in "A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras" of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 5, 1884, 4; "Literature" of *The Morning Post*, January 13, 1885, 3; "New Books" of *The Standard*, April 3, 1885, 2. All newspapers were accessed from the British Newspaper Archive, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

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The Hyper Sexual Hysteric: Decadent Aesthetics and the Intertextuality of Transgression in Nick Cave's *Salomé*

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Abstract:

Salomé (1988), Nick Cave's striking interpretation of the story of the Judean princess enhances and extends the aesthetic and textual analysis of Oscar Wilde's 1891 French symbolist tragedy (*Salomé*), yet it is largely overlooked. As we examine the prior *bricolage* in the creation of such a hypertextual work, we initiate a captivating literary discourse between the intertextual practices and influences of biblical and *fin-de-siècle* literary texts. The *Song of Songs*, a biblical hypotext inverted by Wilde in the creation of the linguistic-poetic style he used in *Salomé*, had never previously been fully explored in such an overt manner. Wilde chose this particular book as the catalyst to indulge in the aesthetics of abjection. Subsequently, Cave's enterprise is entwined in the *Song*'s mosaic, with even less reserve. Through a semiotic and transtextual analysis of Cave's play, this paper employs Gérard Genette's theory of transtextuality as it is delineated in *Palimpsests* (1982) to chart ways in which Cave's *Salomé* is intertwined with not only Wilde but also the *Song of Songs*. This literary transformation demonstrates the potential and skill of the artist's audacious postmodern rewriting of Wilde's text.

Keywords: Salomé, Nick Cave, Oscar Wilde, *The Song of Songs*, Aesthetics, Gérard Genette, Intertextuality, Transtextuality, Transgression, Puvis de Chavannes.

"No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything."
The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde

"One hand slips beneath her robe, while the other holds a large apple which she eats. Her toenails are painted the colour of blood. Salomé fingers herself." The opening stage direction of Act 2 in Nick Cave's audacious 1988 rendering of Oscar Wilde's symbolist tragedy *Salomé* (1891) presents the deviant female hysteric in all her abject glory. In doing so, Cave creates a distinct narrative to serve as a mask to his phantasms, while demonstrating *Salomé*'s enduring legacy for causing shock and controversy for well over a century. Cave's radical departure from previous interpretations of the biblical narrative offers a fascinating insight into the continual success of the mystifying Judean princess. Clearly influenced by Wilde in dramatically showcasing Salomé's sexual perversity, Cave smashes the sexual taboo by further transgressing Wilde's aestheticism.

In Wilde's play, the author inverts the biblical book of the *Song of Songs*, strikingly imitating Ernest Renan's French translation from the original Hebrew, *Le Cantique des Cantiques* (1860). In using the biblical text, Wilde interweaves a number of abject themes: beheading, castration, murder, sacrifice, and incest, to name the most striking. Wilde takes the image of the Shulamite in the biblical book the *Song of Songs* and subverts it, tailoring it to create the corrupt, depraved and hysteric Salomé. Cave takes such abject themes from Wilde and extends them to present the reader with a hypersexual hysteric, a character that is "no yearning, lonely soul in search of ideal beauty but a bored, sadistic, narcissistic, and hypersexual teenager who engages in masturbation on stage" and who "enjoys ruthless verbal and physical power and play" (Dierkes-Thurn 2011, 188).

When we examine the prior *bricolage* in the creation of such a hypertextual work, we initiate a captivating literary discourse between the intertextual practices and influences of biblical and *fin-de-siècle* literary texts. Nick Cave's striking interpretation of the story of the Judean princess enhances and extends the aesthetic and textual analysis of Wilde's French symbolist tragedy, yet it is largely overlooked. Through a semiotic and transtextual analysis of Cave's play, this paper employs Gérard Genette's theory of transtextuality as it is delineated in *Palimpsests* (1982), to chart ways in which Cave's *Salomé* is intertwined with not only Wilde but also Wilde's hypotext, the *Song of Songs*. Subsequently, Cave's enterprise is entwined in the *Song*'s mosaic, with even less reserve. This literary transformation demonstrates the potential and skill of the artist's postmodern rewriting of Wilde's text.

A multifaceted talent, Nick Cave is an Australian musician, songwriter, and author, best known as the front man for *Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds*. Described as "the peerless Prince of musical Darkness" (Maume, *Independent* 9 June, 2015), "a sinister lord of malevolent melancholy, the Darth Vader of rock" (Wilson, *Noisey* March 3, 2015), Nick Cave's career spans over thirty years producing an impressive, and at times controversial, body of work. A recent study, entitled *Cultural Seeds: Essays on the Work of Nick Cave* (2009), is the first collection of academic articles that claims to feature a "comprehensive scholarly and critical overview of Cave's work" (Dalziell & Wellberry 2009, 3). The compilation did not, however, include any work on Nick Cave's *Salomé* from his 1988 collection of poems, song lyrics, and short plays entitled *King Ink*.

Cave's play consists of five extremely concise acts, each entitled "The Seven Veils," "Dialogue with the Baptist," "Salomé's Reward," "The Chop," and "The Platter". Some acts are so terse ("Salomé's Reward", for instance, consists of only twenty-six spoken words) that one can assume Cave created *Salomé* to be appreciated more as a poetic exploration in abjection than to be produced for a live performance. Nevertheless, Cave boldly takes Wilde's Salomé to the extreme to enact Genette's notion of transtextuality and more precisely his concepts of transmotivation[1] (motivation, demotivation), and transvaluation[2].

Since "any text is a hypertext, grafting itself into a hypotext" (Prince 1997, ix) the transmission between author and reader "is always partnered by a communication or intertextual relation between poetic words and their prior existence in past poetic texts. Authors communicate

to readers at the same moment as their words or texts communicate the existence of past texts within them." (Allen 2011, 38) Wilde's *Salomé* has most certainly inspired Cave. However, the Australian author is in no way beholden to him as Cave took the notion of abjection to the extreme while investing an element of the burlesque.

Cave's *Salomé* begins with the mysterious character of the Vestal Virgin, described simply as a "young girl" (86) who enters and moves to the centre front of the stage to announce the title of each of the five proceeding acts. She is the Mistress of Ceremonies, who presides over the action of the drama. In Greek and Roman mythology, "Vesta was the original and divine virgin", Kroppenberg explains, "the virgin goddess *par excellence*. In her worship, her virginity was expressed by the fact that she was the only goddess who was not portrayed but illustrated by a flame that burnt in her unadorned and empty house." (2010, 418-9) Kroppenberg describes the Vesta's virginity as being "equated with her invisibility; her constant presence, on the other hand, was symbolized by the nonphysical flame: 'She is a presence, not a vision'" (2010, 419).

Kroppenberg's claim provides an enlightening insight into Cave's choice of the Vestal Virgin's mysterious presence who is not only visible but who also verbally announces each act. Ironically, she declines to name the first act entitled "The Seven Veils", instead the Vestal Virgin introduces the play in a "deadpan" voice while declaring: "The Story of Salomé and John the Baptist in five parts. See this mess of thorns" (SFP, 86). By describing the drama as a "mess of thorns", the reader is immediately confronted with a juxtaposition of ritual and religion, pleasure and pain. "The thorn on the rose-bush", for instance, "helps to emphasize the counterpoise or 'conjunction' between thesis and antithesis, that is, between the ideas of existence and non-existence, ecstasy and anguish, pleasure and pain" (Cirlot 1967, 322-3). Taking this into consideration, if one was to correlate Cave's ambiguous depiction with that of Christ's crucifixion, then he or she is also thrust into a web of religious intrigue. The thorns, representing the martyrdom of Jesus: the symbolic crowning of thorns, which as the biblical accounts inform us, was used to mock the saviour's kingship while administering torment, pain and agony.

Similar to Wilde, Cave displays a taste for paradoxes in the obscure nature of his stage directions. For example, while the first act opens with Arabic wailing and the sounding of bells, which consequently shrouds the scene in a characteristic depiction of the orientalism required to correspond to the biblical narrative, the stage direction also informs the reader that "all props, crown, throne etc. must look like they were made by children" (86). The childlike setting creates the perfect atmosphere to enhance Salomé's immature and petulant attributes. Cave describes Salomé as an obnoxious, yet dangerous, upstart. Salomé "sulks and sighs and allows her heavenly body to pursue conquettishly [sic] the serpentine rhythms of music in a manner of cruel titillation... Salomé is bored and finds small pleasure in the torment" (86).

Compelled by Salomé's sexual torment, Herod asks the princess, "What ails thee, my precious Salomé? What is it that has put your pretty little nose so out of joint?" (SFP, 86) While Cave chooses to use an archaic form of speech in the use of 'thee', a striking similarity to Wilde, he swiftly

provides a unique interpretation by using the contemporary idiom "so out of joint". In doing so, Cave's poetics mirror his aesthetics as the juxtaposition of Arabic wailing and bells is set against props made to look like children constructed them. King Herod desires Salomé to dance for him: "Dance for me, my peach... Come, my petal, dance and you shall be rewarded." (86) Herod's words provide a compelling insight into the intertextuality produced in literary production, in particular, the theory of imitation. Imitation is seen "as a theory not only of writing but also of reading as a performative act of criticism and interpretation" (Still & Worton 1990, 7). Herod's words "my peach", "my petal" echo that of the Shulamite in the *Song of Songs*, as she recalls her lover's declarations of love: "My dove" (112), "My love" (112), "my beloved" (112), "my fair one" (112). Still and Worton suggest "Every literary imitation is a supplement which seeks to complete and supplant the original and which functions at times for later readers as the pre-text of the 'original'." (Still & Worton 1990, 7)

Considering "that all texts are potentially hypertextual" (Allen 2011, 108), Genette argues, that "sometimes the existence of a hypotext is too uncertain to be the basis for a hypertextual reading" (Allen 2011, 108). Cave may not have been aware of the biblical borrowings, which reside in the *Song of Songs*. However, the beauty of engaging in a hypertextual study of Cave's *Salomé* is to discover these subtle semiotic reiterations of the text's biblical hypotext.

Cave makes a departure from Wilde's *Salomé* in pushing the *enfant terrible* to the extreme. Cave's Salomé appears bored, narcissistic and entitled. When Salomé hears that her dance will be rewarded, she responds "[with a pout] A reward?" (86). Wilde's Salomé, on the other hand, states, "Will you indeed give me whatsoever I shall ask of you, Tetrarch?" (132) While Wilde names Salomé's dance in an iconic stage direction "Salome dances the dance of the seven veils" (140), Cave's Salomé triumphantly announces the naming of the dance within the text: "Music! Let's have some life! Your Majesty, 'The Dance of the Seven Veils'." (86). The previous imitation of the *Song of Songs* may have appeared subtle as an ambiguous semantic reference to a pre-existing biblical text unearthed in a study of intertextuality: "My peach," "my petal," however, Salomé's announcement of her Dance of the Seven Veils is a blatant reworking of Wilde's creation. Since Cave chooses to borrow from Wilde in the naming of the dance he is acknowledging the relevance and therefore, the importance of the Dance of the Seven Veils as being pivotal to establishing the dramatic turning point in Wilde's drama. By making Salomé announce this dance in the first act, Cave abandons the theatrical prelude, established by Wilde, to build the anticipatory tension required to establish Herod's intense erotic desire. Moreover, the ambivalent association of the seven veils serves to metaphorically elucidate the play's subtext.

Cave's interpretation of Salomé's dance is unique in representing the unconventionality of post-modern minimalist dancing. Cave's stage direction reads: "The music pulses and snakes, but Salomé remains stock-still, facing Herod. She removes, one by one, the veils that are bound about her body" (86). Postmodern minimalist dance enacts an active engagement between performer and spectator. As the spectator engages in the subjectivity of Salomé's minimalist dancing, there is a

"reverse strategy of seduction at work... whereby spectators are drawn to the absence of spectacle" (Claid 2006, 114). In Cave's interpretation of Salomé's iconic dance, the absence is intriguing and thereby initiates a multitude of interpretative possibilities.

As Cave describes the removal of Salomé's seven veils, he portrays the princess as possessing hair "as liquid gold. Her lips are blood-heavy and as clinquant as cut rubies. Her teeth are like pearls. Her breasts are hillocks of honey-coloured sand. Her quim is shielded by a fine lace." (86-7) Such descriptions evoke the language reminiscent of the *Song of Songs*, whereby parts of the body are depicted and eroticised as metaphorical objects. For example, "Thy hair is like a flock of goats... Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep newly shorn... Thy lips are like a thread of purple," (114-5), "Thy lips, my spouse, distill honey; honey and milk are concealed under thy tongue" (115), "his lips are as lilies gushing with myrrh" (117-8), "thy two breasts are as the two twins of a gazelle" (120). However, when Cave refers to Salomé's vagina, he uses the slang and vulgar term "quim": "Her quim is shielded by a fine lace" (87). Cave transgresses the *Song of Songs*' biblical language that depicted metaphorical terrestrial beauty to the grime of the whorehouse. The choice of the lace is also alluring as it conceals yet reveals, offering a brief sight to her genitalia but at the same time concealing it as forbidden.

While Cave's choice of poetics initiates the imitation of pre-existing language, either consciously or unconsciously, borrowed from the *Old Testament*, he engages, however, in the transgressive debasement of crude speech. The "locatable intertext need not necessarily be located by the reader who, for reasons of education, time etc., may never know or find it" (Still & Worton 1990, 26). Still and Worton cite Riffaterre in suggesting "what is essential is that in each individual reading, the (various) readers sense, indeed presuppose that there is an intertext through their perceptions of the symptomatic nature of the (un)grammatical articulations of the text itself" (Still and Worton 1990, 26). As Cave imitates Wilde's text, he indirectly engages in an intertextual relation with the *Song of Songs*. By injecting Wilde's *Salomé* with a heightened degree of abjection, Cave further plunders the poetic language of the biblical text.

Watching Salomé dance, King Herod becomes "increasingly delirious" (87) and eagerly counts the cascading veils one by one:

> ONE!...oh! see how it flutters from your hand. TWO!...ohh! downward like a dying bird...THREE!...oh! beautiful Salomé, I love you...oh! Now, FOUR!... see how the veils cause the floor to storm, yet their absence reveals such still and silent flesh... FIVE!... oh! my heart pounds out to you. What you create with your seven veils God, creaking at the hinges, could never approach with his seven days. Oh... SIX!! [Herod clutches painfully at his hear as he collapses] (SFP, 87)

Before the audience hears the definitive number seven, which thereby indicates that Salomé is completely naked, "Herod clutches painfully at his heart as he collapses" (87). The stage direction indicates that the power of Salomé's erotic minimalist striptease overwhelmed King Herod to the point of his near demise. By employing overdramatic theatrics characteristic of an exaggerated farce, Cave's parody of Wilde's *Salomé* is "relegating male voyeurism and the metaphysical elevation of

female sexuality to the realm of the absurd" (Dierkes-Thrun 2011, 189). Male voyeurism is brought to an abrupt end with the entrance of John the Baptist.

The first act ends as John the Baptist enters dressed in camel skins to ask "What evil here?" (87) Suddenly Salomé calls to the wings of the stage mere moments before blackout and commands, "Seize him, guards! Seize the Baptist!" (87) Unlike Wilde's play, the prophet is not imprisoned in a cistern, having previously been arrested for denouncing the incestuous relationship between King Herod and his wife, Herodias. Nor is the Queen present in the play at all. Cave decided to forgo the queen's presence and elected to exhibit the relationship between Salomé and men only. Apart from the Vestal Virgin who may preside over the drama but who does not, however, engage in dialogue with fellow actors, Salomé is the only female character in the text. The play consists of Salomé alone, engaging in dialogue with King Herod and John the Baptist, while the character named the Negro executioner appears in the final act to talk of Salomé. Cave's departure from pre-existing treatments of the Salomé story to exclude the pivotal relationship between mother and daughter highlights Cave's act of demotivation even further. By drastically cutting dialogue, Cave does not provide any motivation for Salomé's demand for the Baptist's head, except for her own narcissistic and self-centred pursuits. "The circumambient semantic pressure is such that cancelling one motive may be enough to suggest another irresistibly (by virtue of the formidable principle *no motive, no action*), without even having to identify it explicitly" (Genette 1997, 328). There is no mention of John the Baptist's denouncement of the incestuous relationship between Queen Hérodias and King Herod. Nor is there any mention of Salomé's unrelenting desire for the prophet. Instead, Salomé exists as a self-centred and egotistical child who, by her mere existence, feels entitled to defiantly possess that which she desires.

As soon as the Vestal Virgin introduces the second act, entitled "Dialogue With The Baptist", the audience is greeted with a disturbing scene of the prophet caged in a wooden kennel with a wire-screen frontage. As the Baptist is incarcerated "like an animal" (88), Salomé "sits atop the box while swinging one long bright naked leg in front of the cage" (88). All eyes are on Salomé, as "one hand slips beneath her robe, while the other holds a large apple which she eats. Her toenails are painted in the colour of blood. Salomé fingers herself." (88) The apple, like the apple depicted in the biblical Garden of Eden, is symbolic of indulgence and earthly desires. Cirlot reminds us that the warning not to eat the forbidden apple "came from the mouth of the supreme being, as a warning against the exaltation of materialistic desire" (1967, 14). Cave embraces the concept of the forbidden fruit to the extreme, as Salomé brazenly engages in masturbation. In this instance, such a display of sexual self-gratification is abject.

While Wilde's Salomé yearns for Iokanaan's love, Cave's Salomé employs a sexual activity where man, in this case, the sacred prophet, is not necessary to satisfy her sexual yearnings and appetites. The fact that Salomé is masturbating while simultaneously eating an apple provides an insight into the psychological structure of her character. Salomé is the threatening Other, as she revels in the taste of a forbidden fruit. In this regard, Salomé's garden is the garden of sin, highlighted

by the sexual act of masturbatory self-gratification. Cave takes an image usually associated with the biblical Eve in the Garden of Eden and further transgresses the religious motif to the extreme. While Eve is certainly damned in the Bible, Cave further exploits the biblical narrative by subjecting the female to perform a blasphemous and degrading act.

Salomé's actions do not go unnoticed by the Baptist, as he hurls insults at the princess: "You are sin. Lucifer, the dark angel, watches over you knowing that one day he will claim you. You are the wicked and you have his mark upon you. Repent now or suffer horrors too vile to mention." (88) There is an apocalyptic warning in the prophet's speech. However, just as his physical body is caged and imprisoned so too are his ominous words of prophecy, as they have no effect on Salomé. Furthermore, her fearless scoffing reply renders his threats null and void and reveal her obnoxious immaturity: "If I have my way, pompous turd, you won't have a brain for much longer!" (88) John retorts, as he barks back, "Spawn of incest, you are damned for eternity. Too vile for the grave, too vile for the grave. You are beyond redemption! Marked with devil blood, ruled by the moon! O hellish vixen! O cloven gender!" (88) Describing Salomé as "cloven gender" offers an intriguing insight into Cave's view of the gender ambiguity present in the young *femme fatale*.

'Cloven' is the past participle of cleave. The verb 'to cleave' is to split or divide. For instance, goats have cloven hoofs. "Cloven" gender refers to Salomé's "split" gender as her character, as demonstrated in Wilde's text, exhibits signs of gender ambiguity, which is represented in the variable oscillation between the character's masculine and feminine attributes. Cave takes inspiration from Wilde whose protagonist initially appears innocent and virginal but swiftly morphs into an assertive and masculinized *femme fatale*. Wilde's Salomé becomes masculinized, as she gazes longingly at the object of her desire who is in turn feminized by a succession of blazons: "I am amorous of thy body, Iokanaan! Thy body is white, like the lilies of a field that the mower hath never mowed. Thy body is white like the snows that lie on the mountains of Judaea and come down into the valleys." (82) The poetic blazons are once again borrowed from the *Song of Songs*: "I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys! As a lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens." (111)

The intense adoration illustrated by Salomé's fetishization of Iokanaan's body continues until the prophet rejects her unquenchable advances prompting a sudden caustic backlash: "Thy body is hideous. It is like the body of a leper. It is like a plastered wall, where vipers have crawled; like a plastered wall where the scorpions have made their nest." (82) Salomé's words embody a masculine aggressive quality. She moves from the seductress to the aggressor. She rapidly transforms from the ethereal virgin to the vindictive masculinized femme fatale. Powell suggests that "[t]he passionate language of Salomé's addresses to Jokanaan, in turn, is modelled on the love poetry of Song of Solomon, except that in the biblical source the passionate speaker is a man extolling the beauty and sexual allure of a woman. Within the frame of this gender shift, Salomé is "like" a man, and Jokanaan "like a woman" (61).

Powell is not alone in making the error of attributing the adoring declarations of passionate love borrowed from the *Song of Songs* to that of the man. Ellmann also states: "But the Song of Songs

describes a woman's beauty, not a man's" (1988, 344) and Davies refers to the biblical book "in which a man lauds a woman's beauty" (2011, 63). In the *Song of Songs*, there is a mutual exchange of poetic love between both the male and female characters of the biblical text. Furthermore, the *Song of Songs* is an ambiguous text as "the Song has a variety of contexts that shift frequently in no apparent dramatic sequence and within which many different kinds of voices speak. There is no reason to assume only a few fixed speakers in the Song, and even less justification for viewing Solomon as a central character." (Falk 1990, xiii) Nevertheless, we can assume that in Wilde's *Salomé* the "fetishization of the male body by a woman signifies a sexual/textual inversion" (Fernbach 2002, 56).

Cave draws from Wilde's approach to gender ambiguity and consequently reduces his text: "cloven gender". In doing so, Cave's reduction of Wilde's play can be seen in terms of Genette's notion of *excision*, whereby a text can be reduced "without diminishing it or, more precisely, without subtracting from it some part or parts. The simplest, but also the most brutal and the most destructive to its structure and meaning, consists then of suppression pure and simple, or *excision*" (Genette 1997, 229). Genette views such a practice as not necessarily diminishing the text's value. Rather, "it is possible to "improve" a work by surgically removing from it some useless and therefore noxious part... reduction by *amputation* (a single massive excision) is a very widespread literary, or at least editorial, practice" (Genette 1997, 229). Genette's theory of excision is evident, as John the Baptist describes Salomé as "marked with devil blood, ruled by the moon" (88).

The moon plays a prominent role in Wilde's play. From a statistical point of view, the moon is mentioned nineteen times by six different speakers (Toepfer 1991, 79). In opposition, Cave's drama refers to the moon seven times and by only two speakers: the characters of John the Baptist and Salomé. Although Cave is extremely economical in his references to the moon, his choice of language establishes the reverential potency of the moon symbol. However, the moon is not an omnipresent motif, watching over the events but is aligned with the devil's blood. Cave demonstrates a Wildean influence as his literary forefather used numerous descriptions of the moon to signify its power as a dominant feature in the play.

In Wilde's text, the "Slaves bring perfumes and the seven veils and take off the sandals of Salomé." (138) Although Herod initially appears overjoyed to watch the princess dance: "Ah, thou art to dance with naked feet! 'Tis well! 'Tis well! Thy little feet will be like white doves. They will be like little white flowers that dance upon the trees" (138), he suddenly repeals his sudden delight: "No, no, she is going to dance on blood! There is blood spilt on the ground. She must not dance on blood. It were an evil omen" (138), and turns to the moon which has become red as blood, "Ah! Look at the moon! She has become red as blood. Ah! the prophet prophesised truly. He prophesied that the moon would become as blood. Did he not prophesy it? All of ye heard him prophesying it. And now the moon has become as blood. Do ye not see it?" (138) The moon has moved from descriptions of white and silver to one portrayed red as blood. Cave's choice of language presents the reader not only with a degree of ambiguity but also within its concise semantic structure, Cave's text

remains dense and informative. John's striking words "Marked with devil blood, ruled by the moon" conjure up visions of a young girl damned for eternity who is herself, psychologically caged in bloodlust and lunacy. Cave prefers to forgo Wilde's numerous descriptions of the moon and instead chooses to make a triangular connection of satanic symbolism in correlating the moon, devil blood, and Salomé.

Salomé responds, "Cleanse me, Baptist. Take this yoke, the moon, under which *ah* slave, the terrible Empress of *mah* body" (89). Salomé recognizes her enslavement to the moon as depicted by the image of the "yoke". The yoke is a symbol of subjection, servitude, and slavery. "A yoke is a burden or a bond or both." (Ferber 2007, 245) Ferber states: "The burdensome aspect of being under a yoke is the more frequently found, especially in the *Old Testament*, where "yoke" (Hebrew *'ol*) usually refers to social or political subservience." (2007, 245) Ferber cites Deuteronomy in the *Old Testament*: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God," Moses warns his people, "Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies," and the Lord "shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee" (Deut. 28.47-48). The image of the yoke is also present in the *New Testament* in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me: for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:29-30) Cave momentarily removes Salomé from this biblical setting and inserts her enslavement into an historic period of American chattel slavery.

Cave demonstrates this shift linguistically by Salomé's exaggerated speech: "under which *ah* slave" and "*mah* body". Salomé embodies the African American slave by enacting a characteristic southern accent in order to align the dialogue's delivery with the colloquial speech of pre-civil war America. However, although such imitation may initially appear as a simple parody to a particular period of American history, the high degree of sensitivity in relation to the historic narrative of North American race relations is disregarded by Cave and therefore abject. As Cave turns this sensitive issue into the theatre of the absurd, he conjures up historic images of a painful past which still have ramifications and can cause turmoil and division in the twenty-first century. Cave's venture into burlesque travesty reinforces the notion that Salomé has no regard for the sacred and furthermore separates her from society's norms.

Salomé makes a mockery of the sanctity of Baptism as she taunts John the Baptist feigning a desire to be cleansed and made holy. She states: "I am woman. Cleanse me. Wash away all that's comely. Chasten me, Baptist, with your waters." (89) At which time, the stage direction reads: "The moon appears above them. It is a gold platter." (89) Cave's description of the moon as a "gold platter" presents an interesting intertextual reading. This study has shown that the sun inundates the Shulamite in *Song of Songs* in direct contrast to Wilde's Salomé, who is aligned with the sterile, white and silver qualities of the "chaste" moon. However, in Cave's treatment, he reintroduces a golden moon.

John the Baptist lashes out at Salomé: "Get thee behind me, Satan!" (89), his words taken directly from the book of Matthew in the *New Testament*, where Peter tempts Jesus with a secure

option and a way to avoid his impending suffering and painful death: "But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matthew 16:23) Cave's borrowing from the biblical text marks a powerful reflection on the notion of temptation. Temptation represents a psychological struggle within an individual and possesses the power to override one's values and ideals.

As powerful as temptation is, however, the sacred prophet is immune to Salomé's sexual taunts and request to cleanse her with his waters. John the Baptist's forceful rebuke is intensified by his acidic tongue: "A single strand of your hair would pollute the sacred Jordan river. Was it you who dipped her toe in what is now called the DEAD SEA? I would suffer an eternity in darkness, clothed in worms, rather than make a mockery of the blessed mystery of baptism." (89) An undeterred Salomé responds: "Suit yourself, dick breath!" (89) Once again her language is childlike and insolent. She is a petulant child eager to have her own way.

Drawing the act to a close, the moon lowers itself and "appears to hover just above and behind Salomé's head" (89). The princess mocks John as she incarnates traditional religious iconography: "See, Baptist. The moon sanctifies me. It sits behind my crown of curls like a gloriole" (89). Cave presents the reader with an image of Salomé in a holy state. Symbolised by a golden halo surrounding her head, Salomé's ambiguous "holiness" attempts to elevate her inner spiritual qualities to that of the divine. The halo surrounding icon motifs "is a well-known symbol which denotes a sanctified state" (Solrunn 2004, 23). Solrunn explains the aesthetics of icon imagery in terms of portraying a source of light that is not manmade but is rather the divine light of God: "According to Orthodox tradition, an icon shall be honoured, because it manifests and actualises the spiritual reality towards which the faithful turn. In this way, an icon may be a reminder of God's presence and an aid in prayer" (2004, 23). As Salomé is aligned with the light of a divine God, she presents the reader with an ambiguous identity. While depicting a hallowed and anointed outer self, she is fundamentally a woman who is murderous, narcissistic and ready to commit sin. In Christian tradition, sin is regarded as breaking the laws of God as established by the Ten Commandments given to Moses, the patriarchal leader of the chosen people. Sin that comes from within is deceptive, perceptually misleading and ambiguous. In Creed's view:

> The definition of sin/abjection as something which comes from *within* opens up the way to position woman as deceptively treacherous. She may appear pure and beautiful on the outside but evil may, nevertheless, reside within. It is this stereotype of feminine evil - beautiful on the outside/corrupt within - that is so popular within patriarchal discourses about woman's evil nature. (1997, 42)

As the audience is left with the lingering image of the gold platter resting behind Salomé's saintly appearance, the stage is enveloped in darkness to signify the end of act two.

However, Salomé's corrupt nature returns to reveal itself in the proceeding third act. The shortest act within Cave's play, act three entitled "Salomé's Reward", begins with the customary announcement of the Vestal Virgin before a single spotlight illuminates Salomé centre-stage. The

title is brief but thought-provoking. The concept of reward is treated ambiguously since it is usually bestowed upon a person as an award for doing good, but in the case of Salomé, it is inverted, and she gets rewarded for acts of evil. The fact that Salomé receives the head of John the Baptist as her reward attests to her innate diabolical nature. "In an evil whisper" (90) Salomé speaks, "My mouth asks for it. My heart weeps for it! My cunt yearns for it!! The moon, in turn, demands it. THE HEAD OF JOHN THE B.!!" (90). Cave explores a number of performative acts derived from ecstatic speech. Ecstasy or the experience of an ecstatic state originally referred to the realm of religion, with the ultimate connection to God. Toepfer views "in its original sense, ecstasy ('ekstasis') refers to a condition of being 'outside oneself'. If we assume that language is central to the construction of a self, then ecstasy also implies a condition of being 'outside' language" (1991 13). Salomé's mouth asks for John's head, her heart weeps out of intense longing for the head of the Baptist, and her cunt sexually yearns for it. Salomé's lewd and obscene language confesses her carnal motive, as John's impending death is aligned with sexual satisfaction. Cave's linguistic choice shakes the confines of accepted speech, confronting the reader with a sense of destabilization. Cave transgresses biblical rhetoric customary to the Salomé story to offer the reader a blasphemous departure from Biblical authority. Furthermore, Cave invites pagan ritual sacrifice in the association with the moon and its demand for the head of the Baptist.

To announce the fourth act entitled "The Chop", the Vestal Virgin appears to be vestal no more as the stage direction indicates: "Stands back; fingers herself absent-mindedly as she looks on." (91) Cave's bizarre interpretation of female eroticism displayed by the Vestal Virgin's distracted yet voyeuristic act leaves the possibility for interpretation open and impels the reader to collaborate in the construction of the text's meaning. The Vestal Virgin who initially appeared as an impassive actor, who guided the reader through the play's five consecutive acts, now engages in an active transgression of public masturbation. Considering the impending death of the Baptist, as the title suggests, this exhibition of abject voyeurism shatters the confines of normal behaviour. The position of the abject "is radically excluded" and draws the reader toward the place where meaning collapses (Kristeva 1982, 2).

Following the Vestal Virgin, Cave's stage direction indicates: "As in the remarkable painting by Puvis de Chavannes the scene is thus: (left to right) NEGRO with axe; JOHN THE BAPTIST, hands roped and kneeling; SALOMÉ, hand working diligently between her sugar thighs" (91). The painting Cave is referring to is entitled "The Beheading of St. John the Baptist" (1869) which is housed at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham (Fig. 1). This work is not to be confused with the larger version produced in 1870 that shares the same title and is exhibited at the *National Gallery* in London. Namely, the addition of the male figure in the red robe, assumed to be Herod, and the seated woman who shields her eyes from the horror of the sacred beheading. Due to the compositional aspect of the previous rendition with regards to Cave's stage direction, it is clear that the author was referring to Puvis de Chavannes's three-figured work.

Considered to play a critical role in the history of late-nineteenth century French art, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, "specialized in the depiction of women's stately listlessness. His work, in turn, helped give direction to the wilting females of the symbolists." (Dijkstra 1986, 77) Similar to the symbolists, who preceded Cave, Puvis de Chavannes's treatment of the female aesthetic spoke to the author's creative spirit. Not only did the subject of Salomé inspire Cave but he was also influenced by the painting's compositional structure. The compelling aspect of Cave's treatment is his abject translation of the pivotal scene. While the painting depicts an ambiguously demure Salomé, her head inclined modestly, as she clasps her cloak to cover her body, Cave smashes the sexual taboo. He brazenly depicts Salomé once more in an act of sexual self-gratification as her hand works "diligently between her sugar thighs".

One similarity between the painting and Cave's play is the presentation of John the Baptist. In both treatments, John is peacefully surrendering himself to the Lord. Puvis de Chavannes depicts the holy prophet already sainted with a golden halo; his arms open in an act of holy sacrificial offering. Similarly, Cave's submissive John surrenders to a holy sacrifice as the stage direction indicates: "He looks heavenward" (91) and the prophet states: "I am ready, Lord!" (91) The one contrast between the two treatments is that in Cave's play, John fires a threatening outburst to Salomé before his ultimate surrender: "All Heaven and Hell are watching, evil one! The angels puff up the clouds for me, the poker is in the furnace for you!" (S91). Although in Puvis de Chavannes's painting, one can only imagine John's spoken words before the executioner strikes, his demeanor is one of tranquillity and peace.

Another contrast to be considered between the two works is the active involvement of the princess. In Puvis de Chavannes's painting, Salomé passively stands back, platter in hand as she awaits her trophy. She appears to be almost lingering, as the platter is held downward by her side. Her expression seems listless, as does her placid holding of the platter. Cave takes a more active approach as Salomé "in climatic ecstasy" (91) torments the prophet until he takes his last breath: "And so am I! Let the axe drop, and silence this fucking do-gooder!" (91) When John the Baptist utters his final words, "I go to my God. Though narrow are the gates, he will show the way" (91) the "moon blinks on and blood runs down the insides of SALOMÉ's dress" (91). The blinking moon signifies life. The ancients depended on the cycle of the moon for the planting of their crops. "Also known as 'Lunar Planting', or 'Moon Lore', moon planting was adopted as farmers observed improved germination and growth of plants during certain moon phases." (Bagnall 2009, 10) As previously addressed, the moon also depicts a woman's menstrual cycle. The flowing of blood from the insides of Salomé's dress leaves the interpretation open to ambiguous semantic references. For example, Salomé's menstrual blood flow is abject and is furthermore ambivalent as it signifies life and death. A woman's menstrual cycle confirms her fertility, which is a life force, whereas Salomé's blood flow may also imply death in the representation of a miscarriage. The paradoxical notion of life and death aligns itself with the blood flow of John's beheading which is certain death.

The last act, which is entitled "The Platter", is, without doubt, the most shocking in terms of glorifying Salomé's disturbing abject eroticism. The Negro executioner enters with John the Baptist's head on a platter. Cave insists the "head must be infinitely bloody and so on" (92). Herod recoils in horror and clutches his "problem heart" (92) before the Negro states, "This my most worthy master is the head of John the Baptist... minus the tongue, which Salomé demanded for herself. She said to inform you that you may eat the head but she's gunna teach her cunt to talk good" (92).

The fact that Salomé insists on keeping John's tongue presents a number of interpretative possibilities. It forces the reader to engage in an act of co-authorship, since the work of art is "constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity" (Eco 1989, 4). Eco's notion of open work requires the collaboration of interpreters to derive meaning from the text's inherent ambiguity and incompleteness. He states:

> Every work of art, from a petroglyph to *The Scarlet Letter*, is open to a variety of readings - not only because it inevitably lends itself to the whims of any subjectivity in search of a mirror for its moods, but also because it wants to be an inexhaustible source of experiences which, focusing on it from different points of view, keep bringing new aspects out of it. (1989, 24)

Cave's foray into decadent aesthetics invites the reader to complete the work, elevating the role of the reader to that of co-author. The reader may embark on any number of pathways to explore this notion by questioning Cave's ambiguous employment of abjection. What is the reason for Salomé's insistence in claiming the prophet's tongue? Is the tongue a trophy, a lover's keepsake or a token of sexual degradation? Is the tongue a prop to be used in Salomé's abject sexual self-gratification? Or is Salomé implying that in order to be baptized she requires the tongue to instruct her in scriptural rhetoric? Will the prophet's tongue bestow upon the princess John's authority and power? Will Salomé in turn finally acquire the prophet's discipline and strength? The questions are endless and reinforce Eco's notion of an open work. However, when taking Eco's concept into consideration, nothing seems more ambiguous than the play's finale. Moments before blackout, a mysterious pre-pubescent girl enters for the first time "naked but covered in bloody hand-prints" (92) to announce the play's end: "GIRL: (Deadpan) The end" (92).

In drawing to a close, this study shows how Cave joins Wilde's intricate tapestry of transgression and demonstrates Salomé's enduring legacy for causing shock and controversy. For as Wilde once stated: "It is only the shudder that counts" (Ellmann 1988 341). Both Cave and Wilde take the biblical text of Salomé and subvert it, engaging the reader to journey with them to the extreme limits of what is permissible in society. By transgressing the Biblical book of *Song of Songs*, Wilde created an original narrative as he explored the aesthetics of abjection. In doing so, Cave is entwined in the Song's mosaic. This literary transformation sheds light on the author's motivating desire to represent the femme fatale in all her abject glory. Gérard Genette's theory of *transtextuality*

further illuminates the decoding of the intricate *Salomé* tapestry, its hidden threads and its loose ends.

The interwoven tapestry of creating something new with something old recalls Genette's theory of transtextuality. Genette provides the concept to examine the literary transformations both Wilde and Cave utilized as inspiration in their rewriting of the biblical myth. The process of adopting and consequently combining both literary and biblical influences to create an original work such as *Salomé* provides the reader with an inspiring literary tapestry so ambiguous that the reader is compelled to explore the play's foundation. Genette proposes that at times the existence of a hypotextual work is uncertain. However, this study illustrates the way in which Cave engages in a biblical borrowing of the *Song of Songs* by imitating some of the poetics exhibited in Wilde's *Salomé*. The reader is, therefore, able to experience the pleasure of discovering subtle semiotic resurgences of Wilde's biblical hypotext.



Figure 1: *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* (1869), Pierre Puvis de Chavannes
The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

Endnotes:

1. Transmotivation is the original motivation being displaced by a newly invented one (See Genette 1997, 330-335). Genette points to Wilde's "substitution of an emotional reason for the political reasons of Jokanaan's execution" (1997, 330).
2. Transvaluation is the substitution of values that "can be roughly described as axiologically homogeneous" (Genette 1997, 367). Genette's definition of transvaluation is the rewriting of a text "as a double movement of devaluation and (counter) valuation bearing on the same character" (Genette 1997, 367).

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Researching and Remembering the Past in Markas Zingeris' Novel *Grojimas dviese* (*Playing Duo*)

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Abstract:

The paper aims at analysing how the topic of memory is handled in the novel *Grojimas dviese* (*Playing Duo*), which is written by Markas Zingeris and originally published in Lithuanian. The novel deals with the memory of the Holocaust in Kaunas (Lithuania) and the main character's search for knowledge about the painful past. The analysis is based on a conceptual framework of trauma and memory studies and relies on such specialists in the field as Nicholas Chare, Jenny Edkins, Wulf Kansteiner, Marianne Hirsch, John Sutton, and others. It focuses on secondary trauma and its remembering which is currently gaining more and more interest in different fields of study, but in literary studies, it is still an underresearched topic. In Zingeris' novel, traumatic memory and speaking about it seem to be complicated in many ways.

Keywords: memory, Holocaust, trauma, secondary witnessing, Markas Zingeris

Introduction

Trauma is "a widely employed conceptual tool" (Kansteiner 2004, 194) in contemporary literary and cultural studies as well as other fields, for the "rise (...) [of it,] as one of the key interpretative categories of contemporary politics and culture" (Kansteiner 2004, 193), has provided new possibilities to research processes and events of the past and the present. The study of traumatic experiences is tightly linked to memory, for one can hardly be imagined without the other. In fact, "memory is often in use when it is not explicitly in question" (Sutton 2017, 379). Nevertheless, Paula McFetridge states that "memory is not absolute", so contemporary writers and artists frequently use it to question the past, reimagine it or "lead to a new memory" ("Roundtable: Moving Memory, with Stef Craps, Astrid Erll, Paula McFetridge, Ann Rigney, Dominic Thorpe", subsequently "Roundtable: Moving Memory", 2017, 166). This is the case in the novel *Grojimas dviese* (*Playing Duo*, 2002; this translation of the title was used by Aurelija Mykolaitytė in *Trumpa lietuvių literatūros istorija/ A Brief History of Lithuanian Literature* (2014, 340). Its author, Markas Zingeris (b. 1947), is a Jewish Lithuanian writer, poet and translator who has received numerous awards for his literaty work ("Markas Zingeris" 2017, 1).

One of the reasons for Zingeris to write is "the feeling of a contradiction or paradox in human character, society or history" ("LKI. Markas Zingeris" 2017, 1; translation by the author of this article). The issue of remembering and forgetting one's painful past is frequently seen as paradoxical, for traumatic experiences have to be remembered in order to avoid their repetition in the future, work them through and move on, but at the same time the traumatised (people or societies) would like to forget such experiences and refuse to speak about them. The campaign #WeRemember all over the world and the opening of the Memory Bureau (lt. Atminties biuras) in Kaunas (Lithuania) are some of the initiatives of 2018 to remember the past. This article aims at analysing manifestations of memory in relation to the Holocaust in Lithuania in Zingeris' novel *Grojimas Dviese* (*Playing Duo*), which was published sixteen years ago. All the quotes from the novel have been translated into English by the author of this article.

Remembering the Past

According to Nicholas Chare, memory is related to both remembering and forgetting (Chare 2011, 182). Although remembering of a particular experience is often associated to the participant of the event directly related to that experience, remembering itself can actually be of several types, since they are related to the primary and secondary witnessing of, for instance, traumatic situations. Esther Jilovsky discusses the memory related to secondary witnessing by claiming that, even though it is difficult to imagine that someone could have a memory of an experience that was not obtained firsthand, this is what happens to many second-generation Holocaust survivors, who can be seen as secondary witnesses (Jilovsky 2008, 149). Their memory is often related to knowledge of familial history or visits to the so-called sites of memory (or memory sites) that remind of tragic events that the second generation did not experience but nevertheless acquires memories about those events. Jilovsky emphasises that

> (...) contemporary experience of Holocaust sites by post-Holocaust generations provides a practical dimension to their perception of the Holocaust, sometimes even evoking a sense of witnessing the Holocaust itself. Consequently, for children of Holocaust survivors, these trips can provide a tool for bypassing the process of secondary witnessing and attempting to become a primary witness of the Holocaust. (Jilovsky 2008, 145)

Considering the fact that the Holocaust took place many years ago, it is important to point out that when post-Holocaust generations visit the mentioned memory sites, they probably get as close the Holocaust as they possibly can (Jilovsky 2008, 155). In addition, in the "Roundtable: Moving Memory", Stef Craps notes that transmission of historical traumas and traumatic memories to other generations is becoming especially important as time passes by and memories about such traumas start fading away ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 184). Here one could speak about both the loss of the topic of the Holocaust in the living memory in general ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 184) and the memories of primary witnesses, for there

are fewer and fewer of such still living witnesses. Therefore, the two factors can definitely lead to forgetting.

In her article "Scenic Memory: Experience through Time and Space", Paula Reavey discusses "[m]emoryscapes and geographies of memory – the material objects occupying space that interweave with multiple narratives about the past" (Reavey 2017, 107). Reavey argues that when people physically visit memory sites, they also enter relations related to them (Reavey 2017, 110). This site-visiting fills in the gap of experience and memory and provides a link to the past of one's loved ones to some extent, even though the sites themselves can only be seen "as partial representations of the Holocaust" or other historical traumas (Jilovsky 2008, 154). Other representations, such as works of art and books, as Jilovsky states, do not provide a link of similar scale (Jilovsky 2008, 154), but Wulf Kansteiner believes that "various combinations of discursive, visual and spacial elements" (Kansteiner 2002, 186) as such, "help us construct and transmit our knowledge and feelings about the past" (Kansteiner 2002, 186). In a similar manner, Reavey points out that:

> memory investigations are beginning to recognise the uses of multi-modal methods to understand better the manner in which people remember, which perhaps more accurately reflects what we do in everyday life – put to use a variety of text-ures, including visual, sonic, verbal and physical movement. In terms of visual methods, this has included photography, SenseCams, video diaries and other recording techniques to bring scene as well as narrative together – time-space, in other words. (Reavey 2017, 110)

However, John Sutton, in his editorial of *Memory Studies*, called "Memory Perspectives," rightly emphasises that the way one remembers might be affected not only by the content of what is remembered but also by the methods that are used in order to remember (Sutton 2014, 142). This includes everything "from cultural and filmic practices to fragmentary sensory images or diffuse affective states" (Sutton 2014, 142). In the novel, which this paper later analyses, a photograph, archives, and other sources help to construct the protagonist's postmemory, for he is not a primary witness of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

The second and other generations do not acquire the actual memory of the Holocaust or any other historical trauma but rather a postmemory. In other words, "[p]ostmemory is not identical to memory: it is 'post', but at the same time, it approximates memory in its affective force" (Hirsch 2008, 109). This kind of memory is far from direct memory of primary witnesses, but Mariane Hirsch notes that even though the events of the Holocaust took place decades ago, their consequences are long-lasting and continue to this day (Hirsch 2008, 107). These effects are often referred to as vicarious trauma or vicarious witnessing. Sutton, for instance, writes about "vicarious remembering", that can be described as "memory of other people's experiences" (Sutton 2017, 380) and related to secondary witnessing. Sutton adds that this type of memory can be used in a variety of contexts and applied in many fields of study (Sutton 2017, 380-381).

Vicarious trauma and remembering are currently gaining more and more interest in different fields of study, especially in psychology, but in literary studies, it is still an underresearched topic.

In order to cope with the above-discussed effects and, at the same time, learn more about the past, communication with those who possess knowledge about it is crucial. Nevertheless, it often takes much effort for the traumatised to speak about their experiences, so silence prevails (Hartman 2006, 251). Consequently, as Jenny Edkins states, "[w]hat survivors have witnessed has long been recognised as 'unimaginable' and 'unspeakable'" (Edkins 2003, 2), but this may not always be the case. Geoffrey Hartman expands on the idea of unspeakability by stating that it is important that the traumatised speak with themselves and with others about what happened to them (Hartman 2006, 251). The ways to speak about the past can differ greatly depending on who experienced and what kind of experience it was, while Susan J. Brison suggests, considering the choices one makes when providing a traumatic narrative: "how much to tell, to whom, in what order and so forth" (Brison 1999, 46-47). Similarly, in the "Roundtable: Moving Memory", McFetridge lists the following three questions she asks herself about art created by others:

1. Is it the right time to tell the story?
2. Am I the right person to tell it?
3. Who is it for? ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 171).

The same questions could be asked by both trauma victims and researchers. Since primary witnesses find it difficult to put their experience into words, secondary witnesses, especially those of the second generation, have to rely on diverse forms of representation of the past (discussed above) and search for answers themselves in order to have the memory of something they did not experience firsthand. This leads to the idea that memory is very individual. In the "Roundtable: Moving Memory," McFetridge refers to this memory as "completely personal and as unique as DNA" ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 166). On the one hand, memory "emerges from specific scenes or settings, as much as time periods or stories" (Reavey 2017, 107), and is related to identity issues and norms of a particular group ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 167), but on the other hand, memory "cannot be neatly insulated and isolated" (Sutton 2017, 379), for it is influenced and influences others. In short, the topic of memory seems to be multidimensional and more complicated than it might seem at first sight, for it includes various types of memory and remembering and issues related to ways how to communicate this memory.

Memory in Markas Zingeris' Novel *Grojimas dviese* (*Playing Duo*)

In Zingeris' novel *Grojimas dviese* (*Playing Duo*), Erazmas Rastinis, the protagonist, is a university professor who is going to leave for the United States on a scholarship for his research with his wife Rita. Before the trip in 1996, he visits his mother and remembers a photograph he saw at the apartment as a child. This photograph is an artifact that facilitates the development of

the main plot line of the novel. It is described as "a photograph that shines in the mist of memory" (Zingeris 2002, 13), but it does not reveal to Erazmas anything else than the physical appearance and name on the other side of it. When Erazmas was a child, in the graveyard he accidentally hit his leg into a tombstone that had the engraving "LILĖ GAST 1943" on it, and later he used to come back and check if it was still there. The function of tombstones is to commemorate and remind others about the person who is no longer alive, but Erazmas did not know anything about Lilė when he was young. Now he makes a connection between the picture at his mother's home and the tombstone he saw years ago: "one of the women in the fading pictures, hidden between father's books in the old apartment of the Rastiniai, is the one whose name is engraved in the mysterious tombstone" (Zingeris 2002, 15). As a result, he is encouraged by this unexpected finding to learn more about the woman. Erazmas sees everything with the eyes of a historian of wars and measures "by events of historical importance" (Zingeris 2002, 110), so the story that he does not know yet attracts his attention. For the professor history is also "a way to hide from contemporary times" (Zingeris 2002, 41), but the interest in this particular story turns into an attempt to understand the European and Lithuanian history through the lense of a drama of one family – the Gastai (Ervinas and Lilė, who was also referred to as Lydchen by her friends). In other words, Erazmas' personal interest is intertwined with his professional life as a historian and researcher at the Archive of National Memory and Conservation: he tries to understand the collective experience of the Holocaust through an individual story of one family. The protagonist feels that "old wounds in Eastern Europe never healed!" (Zingeris 2002, 51), and this particular story may be seen as a wound that is still open. Erazmas, as a narrator, starts telling the story when he knows it all and foreshadows the development of the plot by letting the reader know that this story has affected him greatly.

Not telling about traumatic experiences or simply being silent about them is a feature of post-traumatic response to individual trauma. However, secondary witnesses might not be eager to tell what they have seen happening to others or know what happened to those who have once been close to them. In Zingeris' novel, the issue of unspeakability is complicated in many ways. When Erazmas attempts to ask his mother, Bianka, who the woman in the photograph is, "to his surprise, his mother pressed her lips tightly!" (Zingeris 2002, 15). Erazmas does not give up and tries to come back to the topic of Lilė Gast whenever he can, but it appears to be difficult to extract information from his mother. On the one hand, since everything happened a long time ago, Bianka may have forgotten everything, but on the other hand, "she avoids his question about the sad pre-war beauty by starting to speak about other things because of which her heart cries, too" (Zingeris 2002, 17). In fact, he knows his mother well and assumes that she tells only about the things that do not reveal anything specific in relation to the story he would like to hear. According to Dominic Thorpe in the "Roundtable: Moving Memory", "it is important to question the value of recalling and recounting traumatic experience, (...) because deciding to leave certain events and experiences in the past, in so far as may be possible, can be important and

necessary for many people" ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 176). In the novel by Zingeris, Bianka probably embodies this necessity, which many trauma survivors or witnesses feel, to forget or leave out some details from the past when they tell what happened. Nevertheless, Erazmas understands that not only does Bianka avoid the topic, but she also lies about the past, and he does not know why. The reason is revealed only at the end of the novel, and the reader is kept in suspense until then. When it is told that Erazmas is actually Lilė's son, Bianka's reluctance to speak about the past becomes understandable.

According to Kansteiner, "[w]e have to (...) focus on the communication among memory makers, memory users, and the visual and discursive objects and traditions of representations" (Kansteiner 2002, 197). In the novel, Bianka is a memory maker, while Erazmas is a memory user (although he later becomes a memory maker as well). Communication between Bianka and Erazmas does not work, but visual (e.g. pictures) and other objects (e.g. the tombstone and the park that is seen through the window of Bianka's apartment) help to communicate or rather facilitate the revelation of the truth. Through her unspeakability, Bianka has tried to protect Erazmas and her own family, since Erazmas has never been told that Bianka and her husband are not his biological parents. In fact, according to Kevers et al., "some silences are (...) socially accepted and created in order to restore normal life" (Kevers et al. 2016, 629). It might be that Bianka's silence is the only away to lead a normal life for the whole family. It serves as a personal strategy to deal with her painful past related to the Holocaust and a coping mechanism at the same time. Bianka creates a safe narrative that does not reveal the great and long-kept secret:

> (...) I found this photograph on the ground when the police took my parents in order to shoot them down. After every of such actions, scattered albums of photographs stayed in the streets of the ghetto. (Zingeris 2002, 25)

Although Erazmas repeatedly asks her to speak about the photograph, she keeps asking him to leave her alone. Bianka pretends not to know Lilė, the woman in the photograph, at all. She would like Erazmas to think that they have the photograph at home by accident because Bianka has found it and decided to keep it. Thus, Erazmas' questions do not make sense, since Bianka cannot speak about someone she has never known. Kevers et al. note that the "forgive and forget approach" is often ignored by many officials and even trauma survivors (Kevers et al. 2016, 629). In Zingeris' novel, it might seem that Bianka employs this approach when she avoids speaking about the past, but at the same time, the actual forgetting never happens, since forgiving never happens either. Because of what happened, she now has one more son, which is not something she should forgive for but should rather be happy about. On the other hand, she has lived through the Holocaust but lost a good friend of hers, which she cannot forgive for or recover from, and even the view to the park from her apartment reminds her of the past every single day.

Brison notes that the very fact that one tells about his or her traumatic experiences does not always include recovering and does not mean it has therapeutic value (Brison 1999, 40).

Nevertheless, in *Grojimas dviese* (*Playing Duo*), Bianka changes her point of view slightly and reveals that she actually knew Lilė and her husband. She even tells how the two met in the cinema in Berlin, in 1935. Lilė sent letters to Bianka to tell about it, which proves they were actually close friends rather than strangers. In short, at first, Bianka presses her lips tightly when she is asked about Lilė, which shows her unspeakability physically. Then she hides information by avoiding the topic and even lies about it. Later, due to Erazmas' persistence, she admits of having known Lilė. And yet, she does not tell what happened to Lilė straight away but provides some details about her personal life instead. Since Bianka tells him about Lilė's letters, Erazmas asks about them, for they would be a good source of insight into her life and destiny. At this moment Bianka sticks to her storyline of the war, most of which she kept inside: "Stalin lived in Bianka (...). (...) Inside her, there was deception, orchestras of pipes" (Zingeris 2002, 19). Everything, including the letters, was lost during World War Two. This is the reason that there is nothing to tell about those times.

Erazmas leaves for the United States to carry out his research as a historian. However, he cannot forget Lilė and decides that he may be able to find something about her there and, through her story, to learn what happened in his hometown many years ago. While staying in the United States, "Erazmas suddenly had a suspicion or rather a clear understanding that Bianka, in the far Lithuania, knew much more (...) than she had told him" (Zingeris 2002, 143). Bianka has never told him about Lilė's husband, Ervinas, and the child they had, but he is sure that she knows what happened to them. Erazmas learns about the child from Lilė's letter that he has found in a file with musical notes in one antique shop in New York: "If he hadn't had faith and determination, the pianist's letter would have been lost in the shadows of history. And no one would believe that it is reality. That is why his voyage was necessary." (Zingeris 2002, 128) Erazmas is so excited about the letter and knowledge about Lilė's child that even calls his mother in Lithuania to tell the news that may not be new to Bianka after all. Bianka has a stroke when she finds out about Lilė's letter that Erazmas possesses. Earlier she stayed silent and avoided speaking about Lilė, but now she cannot speak because of a brain hemorrhage. In other words, her former unwillingness to tell about the past becomes a physical inability to speak about it. According to Dominic Thorpe in the "Roundtable: Moving Memory," "[j]ust as remembering is continually acted out in personal and collective consciousness, forgetting is also acted out, behaved and performed" ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 173). The discussed case of Bianka's brain hemorrhage that leads to her unspeakability can be seen as a kind of acting out of her traumating experience, but of course, Bianka still remembers and that is why is affected in such a way.

The issue of memory is of primary importance in the novel by Zingeris. Unless it is transmitted to other generations, individual memory disappears when those who have this memory pass away and thus are not able to transmit it. Collective memory, on the other hand, stays much longer. In his novel, Zingeris writes about the former one when he refers to "speechless history", which can be described as history that is untold because there is no one to tell it since

the memory of it died together with the dead. However, while reading various reports from the past, Erazmas can imagine the great horrors of the passed years. As a person who has "a reputation of a radical historian who digs under foundations" (Zingeris 2002, 49), he knows that some of the hidden and forgotten memories can be found in various written sources and brought back. Therefore, he searches for information about the Gastai in the archives and elsewhere. Nevertheless, he also understands that only a small part of what happened years ago stays on paper: "What stays is only on paper but it is not much: this paper truth is so poor when you think about a person's life." (Zingeris 2002, 96) His task is to find more – what is not written on paper – in order to obtain details, recreate the story about Lilė and find out what happened to her and her child. He understands that the past was cruel and painful and even starts perceiving some historical facts and details he finds in the archives as his own memories. In other words, Erazmas experiences secondary or "vicarious suffering (or trauma)" (Kansteiner 2004, 210) by "gain[ing] emotional insight into the suffering of actual victims" (Kansteiner 2004, 211). Although these memories are not his own per se, they become his memories because of his active involvement in the search for truth. In Sutton's terms, this can be seen as "vicarious remembering" (Sutton 2017, 380).

According to Trauma Theory, the traumatised make an effort to repress and thus forget their painful memories. The more time passes by, the less it should hurt because of various strategies of forgetting that the traumatised use in order to work through and cope with their traumatic experience, but certain memories can also become fixed in one's mind and, therefore, be remembered clearly. In *Grojimas dviese* (*Playing Duo*), the aftermath of the Holocaust trauma is revealed as follows: the more time passes after the event, the better the memory about the event becomes. This happens to Bianka who has never talked about her experience during World War Two in Kaunas, Lithuania. Bianka is so much affected by what happened to Lilė and others that it seems to constitute her own personal life story that she cannot forget. For instance, she remembers a Jewish pharmacist who poisoned himself, and how "they were urging some Hungarian women, who were wearing stripped clothes (...), through the fence" (Zingeris 2002, 292). In other words, she remembers what she saw herself or what she heard at that time but was not a primary witness of. On the other hand, she does not want to remember and tell about the past because of the following reason that she provides at the end of the novel: "If I started counting how many of my friends and acquaintances poisoned themselves and saved children, I would have to remember a half of old Kaunas!" (Zingeris 2002, 291). That is, Bianka refuses to speak about the Holocaust in general because too many painful events took place. What happened to Lilė is one of them, and since it is related to her own family, this refusal is even greater.

Erazmas, meanwhile, only imagines or creates memories about the past: "in front of him, he saw the face of Lilė that provoked a sense of longing. Where is your Eldorado, pianist, who peeled frozen potatoes in the ghetto and died in Lithuania?" (Zingeris 2002, 181). Erazmas is so

fascinated by what he knows that he tells his wife he could write a book about Lilė and her husband, Ervinas. In order to do so, he has to recreate the past from papers, pictures, films and Bianka's story which might reveal the missing and the most important details of the puzzle that Erazmas tries to solve. Moreover, he is haunted by Lilė and her story in his dreams: "When Erazmas Rastinis was asleep, he used to dream about another woman [not his wife], another epoch" (Zingeris 2002, 92). He does not dream of what could have happened to her or how she died, but his dreams are related to Tranquility (Ramybės) Park, which can be seen through the window of his mother's apartment. Lilė had been secretly buried there as he later finds out: "In the dreams of Erazmas Rastinis, (...) a woman with sad eyes was walking in Tranquility Park. She stopped and turned a half of her profile with a coat collar up (...). Lydchen, the professor cried out like a hurt child." (Zingeris 2002, 82) This is one of the passages which help the reader foresee that the child Erazmas would also like to learn about is himself.

By searching for the truth, Erazmas wants to undo the wrong that he feels has been done to the Gastai, but Erazmas learns that Lilė was his biological mother, and he has researched the painful history of his own parents that had been transmitted to him neither by his real parents nor by the parents that brought him up. His personal and professional interest in the tombstone with the name of a woman he saw many years ago and the picture hidden between his father's books were the clues that were not expected to be connected by anyone. Although quite often, children of Holocaust victims are aware of at least some details about the traumatic experiences of their family and want to know more about the part of their stories that is untold or unknown, in his novel Zingeris creates the protagonist Erazmas who is not aware that he was born in another family and therefore researches the story as someone else's (without knowing it is his own). When Erazmas returns to Kaunas from the United States, Aidas, the son of Erazmas, asks his father to tell him about Lilė and why she killed herself. Erazmas tells that the Germans did not want her to be a pianist and have children, so she tried to protect her son by giving him away. However, the reader knows a more detailed story, since some parts of the novel are about the years of World War Two when Lilė is alive. In other words, the reader is given the power of knowledge that the protagonist would like to possess.

The moment of truth comes at the end of the novel when Bianka is standing by the window and is about to tell what she should have told him a long time ago. She does not look at Erazmas but is probably looking through the window into the park in which Lilė was buried after her suicide, for it was not allowed to bury her body in the graveyard. The body was given to the Department of Anatomy at the Institute of Medicine, although rumor had it that later somebody stole it and buried it in the park without any tombstone. In fact, Lilė's friend, Dolė, and some opera singers did this, so no one knows where it is exactly. Now only nature reminds of the past: "Old elms (...) remind of memorials of the Holocaust. The tree trunks of the middle generation look like rifles." (Zingeris 2002, 213) After the war, Bianka with her husband bought a tombstone and put it in the Jewish cemetery, even though they broke the law by doing this. Therefore, there

are two sites of memory now: Erazmas has found the tombstone but not the exact place where Lilė's place of rest is. On the other hand, the whole park can be seen as such a place. Only after looking at it Bianka is able to tell about Lilė and the past. Erazmas' reaction to the news is the following:

> Why me? Why did this happen to me? I'd better die! May the Earth fall on me! I'd better die. This is my misfortune, not yours, I don't want to live! (Zingeris 2002, 301)

Although Erazmas is a historian and knows about many people and events, he learns about his own story only now. At that moment his world is shattered and his identity is put into question since his mother and brother appear to be not relatives to him but rather people with whom he grew up and whom he used to call his family. However, the testimony that Bianka has provided him with might "enable the process of grieving to begin" (Chare 2011, 185), for he has already been haunted by his findings about Lilė. He will now be able to rethink and reformulate not only his relationship to the Holocaust but also to the people who have been the closest to him. According to Craps, remembering is not necessarily beneficial, while forgetting is not necessarily harmful since it can be either destructive or constructive ("Roundtable: Moving Memory" 2017, 178). It seems that remembering or rather post-remembering may be both constructive and destructive to Erazmas at the same time. His systematic search for information about Lilė and what happened to her can be seen as constructive, while the result appears to be destructive, for Bianka has protected Erazmas from post-memory and identity problems for a long time, but in the end he still is left with them and lives in close proximity to the historical time of the Holocaust years, after the Holocaust itself. It does not mean that Zingeris intends to end the novel on a negative note, for destructive news might open new horizons to the reader and encourage thinking about many different outcomes the character of Erazmas might have faced if the novel had continued. The reader is also made to think how he or she would react or behave in a situation like this. The end of the novel makes the reader question whether it is a good idea to research the past and to what extent (not) remembering of the painful past is necessary.

Conclusion

The paper does not focus on the time span of the Holocaust and what "actually" happens to Lilė and her husband but rather deals with the memory of the events that took place many years ago and how they are (not) remembered. As a historian, Erazmas undertakes a mission of finding out more about Lilė, after seeing her picture at his mother's home. Since it is her home, it is natural for Erazmas to ask her first. However, it is difficult to receive answers to his questions. To overcome his mother's unspeakability, Erazmas carries out his own research but is very much affected by what he learns, for example, he has nightmares as a secondary witness of the Holocaust. In addition, he imagines a lot of memories of the Holocaust and starts perceiving

them as his own. Therefore, he seems to acquire a postmemory although he does not know then that he is a child of a Holocaust victim.

In Zingeris' novel, both Bianka and Erazmas are secondary witnesses. Bianka lived at the time of the Holocaust and experienced it herself as a primary witness, but at the same time she saw and heard about many other victims, including her friend, Lilė, so she can be seen as a secondary witness of the Holocaust. Meanwhile, Erazmas is a second generation and a secondary witness who acquires partial knowledge about the past after the events. This is one of the reasons that the memories of the two (Bianka and Erazmas) are very different. This might be a choice made by Zingeris in order to demonstrate that memory is a complicated and manifold issue. In other words, different characters in the novel might stand for or represent different types of memory and witnessing of traumatic experience. Places, such as parks, and objects, such as pictures, also might serve as reminders of the past and help or facilitate remembering, whether it is voluntary or not.

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Literary Narratives of the Antebellum South: Conceptualizations or Polarizations?

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Abstract:

The focal point of the present essay is examining the representations of the Old South in Southern American literature. The South as a region (and the pre-war epoch) occupied the American imagination for so long, and still does. Not only it gave birth to some of the greatest writers worldwide, but it produced songs, movies, much cotton and also myths. Thus, it is important to investigate the portrayal of the Antebellum South in southern literary works. William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* are one of the novels that marked the southern renaissance (1930s) like no other two did. However, their representations of the Civil War and the southern way of life cannot be more dissimilar. In what way(s) are these narratives different? And what is the impact, if any, of such difference on their reception? These are the main questions that the present research aims to answer.

Keywords: Old South, American Southern Literature, William Faulkner, Margaret Mitchell, Reception, Collective Memory.

Introduction

Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, Katherine Anne Porter, Thomas Wolfe, and Flannery O'Connor, along with many others, contributed in the creation and maintenance of prominent fictional images of the Old South. Some of these images achieved through time the stature of myths. The Southern Frontier, the Old South, the Solid South, the Sun Belt, the Benighted South etc. are but a few of the many 'souths' that Americans believe(d) in. In this study, particular attention is given to the myth of the Old South (also called the Plantation Legend) and the pertinence or subversion of its characteristics in two major southern narratives. Accordingly, *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind* by William Faulkner and Margaret Mitchell, respectively, are studied as reflections of larger literary, cultural and historical aspects.

The importance of the present research stems primarily from the significance of the two novels and their relevance to the questions we raise. On the one hand, the resonant effect which *Gone with the Wind* left and still leaves in readers' minds though it was published several decades ago (1936) and speaks of a distant event back in history (1860s) only proves its enduring impact. In a

span of a few years "the Scarlett fever" became a phenomenon sweeping the whole world (John Wiley 2011). So, it is quite impossible to neglect such a work in our scope of study. On the other hand, one hardly needs to argue Faulkner's importance as a subject of research in American Southern literature. He is one of the most discussed authors and his works have been subject to diverse analyses and critiques. *Absalom, Absalom!* is no exception; it, in fact, is one of the most challenging works in modern times. Thereby, the present study is an endeavor that aims at providing useful insights into the two narratives and their due reception.

The pre-war South banked on cotton plantations and so the aftermath generations were - more or less - brought up with a sense of cherishing to all that was related to the plantation: the architecture, the dialect, the lifestyle and sometimes even the war itself. They were nurtured on the myth of the Lost Cause which looked beyond the defeat to "the ol' good days" with a keen nostalgia. Thomas Nelson Page, John Pendleton Kennedy, William A. Caruthers, William Gilmore Simms, and others are the ones who "created an idyllic picture of the old plantation South and laid the foundation for a southern version of the legend about it" (Suponitskaya 1992, 878). Eliza Andrews' book *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-1865* provides a synoptic overview of the myth of the Old South. The image, more or less, corresponds to the following: in a beautiful white mansion, on the skirts of a beautiful bygone time, there lived an unfailingly graceful gentleman under the noble shelter of whom swayed a delicate wife in her fragranced hoofs softly tending kids and watching over happy darkies who joyfully work the blooming cotton fields. Life in the south seems to resemble an idyllic sanctuary into which nothing intrudes but grand balls, moonlight and magnolia. Honor, loyalty, and truth are the moral guidelines that the Old South lived by, guidelines that "Yankees" were unable to understand, future generations unable to picture and Southerners unable to let go of. The "extravaganza" of such tradition was reached in Mitchell's one-thousand-page novel.

In examining the two narratives and their portrayal of the southern society and history, before and after the war, the study bases its analyses almost entirely on the novels themselves. In other words, the issue in question (i.e literary representations of the antebellum south) could be approached from several angles that are indicative of the subject's social, cultural and historical intricacies. As these are beyond the scope of the present paper, it initially avoids all reference to judgment or analyses made by critics, journalists, researchers or readers, until a later stage, in order to focus on the two texts and the significance of their portrayal of the South. Therefore, *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind* will be closely analyzed in terms of their rendering of some key aspects recurrently found throughout the southern literature, namely: the Southern ladyhood, the Southern manhood, the institution of slavery and the Civil War.

1. *Gone With the Wind's* Romanticized Past

After reading the last line of *Gone With the Wind* and turning the back-cover, the novel does not close to an end. The still-raw memory refuses to shut Melanie's departure scene out, Rhett's

final words or Scarlett's desperate 'tomorrow is another day' either. It prolongs its existence outside the covers. An uneasiness that sweeps over by the end of Mitchell's thick and heavy tome triggers one to view in a play-back motion the falling-by-inches South. For a few seconds, one would even lose sight of the fact that it is just a fictional work. What is of peculiar interest is that the events of the novel start only two days before the war erupts, yet it does not fail to provide a vivaciously detailed picture of the Old South all along the narration.

1.1 The Southern Ladyhood: Belles

The main female figures in the novel are Scarlett, her mother Ellen and Melanie. Between the three of them, they draw a clear portrait of the Southern ladyhood which encompasses the so-called "Southern belle", "plantation mistress" and "angel in the house" types. Scarlett O'Hara, being the protagonist of the novel, stands out as a unique Southern girl who shifts from the state of a sweet-looking belle to a life-beaten unladylike – much to her neighbors' dismay – businesswoman. The coquettish sixteen-year-old girl who is overly proud of her magnolia-white skin and seventeen-inch waist gives a good imitation of a typical Southern belle at the beginning of the novel. Yet, as her mathematical tactfulness emerges to the surface, parts of her early image fall down to give way to a greedy opportunistic woman whose "gumption" is the only means for the family's survival in the aftermath of the war. Essentially, Scarlett is exactly what her mother – a Coast aristocrat of French descent – taught her not to be. She "learned only the outward signs of gentility. The inner grace from which these signs should spring, she never learned nor did she see any reason for learning it." (Mitchell 1999, 48) Since a tender age, she dreams of being like her mother "a lady in the true Southern manner (...) and then, everyone would love her (...) and they would say how unselfish she was and call her "Lady Bountiful". (568) Yet she cannot bring herself or bend her will to follow her mother's teachings. She is "a girl of rare spirit (...) with a passion for living." (99) This particular quality though it allows her to pull through all the impoverishments and hardships of the war, it brings much disdain and contempt upon her head. Her unscrupulous willfulness is considered as a deviant conduct and an outlandish trait that is not fit for a Georgia-born woman. Her folks' disapproval of her running a mill annoys her so much that she once stormily questions Rhett Butler, her male counterpart, for an explanation. He answers:

> All you've done is to be different from other women and you've made a little success at it (...) that is the one unforgivable sin in any society. Be different and be damned! (...) Remember, a well-bred female's place is in the home and she should know nothing about this busy, brutal world (...) the inference is that you should have starved genteelly and with pride. (570)

The standards of perfect ladyhood in the novel – ones against which all other worthy (or unworthy) women are measured – are embodied by Ellen. She possesses all the Southern virtues of ideal femininity; "she had been reared in the tradition of great ladies, which had taught her how to carry her burden and still retain her charm" (47). She teaches her daughters the basics that make for

the Southern ladyhood, which is the only means to support their standing in a male-dominated society. Those creeds are the following: "The man owned the property, and the woman managed it. The man took the credit for the management, and the woman praised his cleverness." (47) Ellen is the breathing incarnation of those creeds. That is why she is seen as resolutely unwavering as any of Tara's antique pillars. When she passes away – a side effect of her too kind soul – Gerald, who used to roar like thunder, loses his mind and resigns to a semi-invalid existence. "There was something breath-taking about Ellen O'Hara, a miracle that lived in the house (...) awed and charmed and soothed" others black and white alike (32). Though the whole image hints at some implicit matriarchy it is undermined by the author's insistence to show Ellen as "a great lady" because of her prideful graciousness and austere placidity which every Southerner is bred to prize since infancy. Consequently, Mitchell places the epitome of ladyhood in the person of a Southern plantation mistress asserting that Southern ladies are "a legend – the gentle, self-effacing but steel-spined women on whom the South had builded its house" (872).

Another variation of Southern ladyhood is represented by Mrs. Melanie Wilkes. A mousy little Melly who appears at the opening chapters as the subject of Scarlett's despise and jealousy takes over the narration to become a major character that walks out of the pages to exist in millions of minds. She seems to have cast a spell on everyone around her – short of Scarlett – and enchanted them with her unparalleled unselfishness and generosity of heart. Because she has "the face of a sheltered child who had never known anything but simplicity and kindness, truth and love, a child who had never looked upon harshness or evil and would not recognize them if she saw them" (126), she stands out as an almost heavenly figure of a lady, "an angel in the house". However, this quality sometimes makes her look excessively. This slightly demeaning characteristic – though not to Southern eyes that see no harm in a woman's silliness – is overshadowed by her unshakable strength which never fails her in times of distress. "Beneath the gentle voice and the dove-like eyes of Melanie, there was a thin flashing blade of unbreakable steel (...) there were banners and bugles of courage in Melanie's quiet blood." (366). And it is that courage which allows her to stand shoulder to shoulder with Scarlett when the latter kills a Yankee soldier. Yet, Scarlett's selfish-to-the-bone nature prevents her from fully appreciating Melanie's worth until she stood by her at her last moments when "the truth surged in, down to the deepest recesses of her soul" (857). So, "small plain Melanie" with her serene demeanor and poised little self is "a tower of strength" (862), another great lady from the South. Mitchell suggests that because women were part of:

> [a] happy feminine conspiracy which made Southern society so pleasant. Women knew that a land where men were contented, uncontradicted and safe in possession of unpunctured vanity was likely to be a very pleasant place for women to live. So, from the cradle to the grave, women strove to make men pleased with themselves, and the satisfied men repaid lavishly with gallantry and adoration. (126)

Southern ladies, even if they had little to say and were confined by some restraints of ladyhood, possessed a subtle strength with which they were bestowed yet mostly unaware of or unwilling to reveal.

1.2 The Southern Manhood: Knights in Casual Disguise

The ideal of the "Southern chivalry" is part and parcel of the Plantation Legend. Chivalry, in broad terms, may be defined as the possession of medieval knightly qualities such as courage, honor, and courtesy (Concise Oxford Dictionary 11th ed). Presumably, Southerners are chivalrous gentlemen at large. In *Gone With the Wind,* some male characters fully embody the notions attributed to the Southern gentleman just as some female characters appear to personify the traits of Southern ladyhood. Since the vitality of the Southern system lies in the plantation, the planter or "plantation owner" belongs to upper-class aristocracy and so a gentleman by rights. The novel provides numerous examples of Aristocrat planters – being set in a County – yet it places Gerald O'Hara under the limelight. He is Ellen's husband, Scarlett's father and Tara's devoted owner. His Irish roots combined to his acquired Georgian manners render him a truly typical "Southern gentleman". "There was something vital and earthy and coarse about him" that appeals to Scarlett and Southerners as well (25). "He adopted its ideas and customs (...) poker and horse racing, red-hot politics and the code duello, States' Rights and damnation to all Yankees, slavery and King Cotton, contempt for white trash and exaggerated courtesy to women." (36). His being a self-made man with "nothing of family and wealth to recommend him" (34) brings him no shame since he is "smart" in "raising good cotton, riding well, shooting straight, dancing lightly, squiring the ladies with elegance and carrying one's liquor like a gentleman" and these "were the things that mattered" (2). As a master, he is portrayed as having the "tenderest of hearts" (24). He cannot bear seeing a slave suffering nor a child crying that is why he buys Prissy to keep her mother Dilcey from grieving. So, Gerald, though not Georgian by birth, stands for the celebrated attributes of Southern gentlemanliness.

Besides portraying the older agents of chivalry, Mitchell describes the juvenile ones. Not surprisingly, in a society where girls are "belles", young men are idly "beaux". With his "drowsy gray eyes," his "blond hair" and "drawling, resonant, musical" voice Ashley Wilkes bewitches Scarlett unwittingly (2). He is portrayed as a romantic youth who is ideally Aristocratic in manners and Cavalier at heart: in other words well-bred, elegant, proud, noble and unfailingly gallant. Clearly, the "Southern Beau" in Scarlett's (may be Mitchell's) conception is a charming hero no less. Yet, by the end of the novel, much of these qualities are belittled next to his sheepish and feeble personality. Scarlett realizes in an epiphanic moment that she "loved something [she] made up... made a pretty suit of clothes and fell in love with it" (866).

However, one of Mitchell's despicable - and thus believable - characters is a "no gentleman" at all (99). Rhett Butler seems to negate all of the ideals of chivalry with his outright contempt and criticism of the Southern society. He repudiates the "gentlemanly" attitudes asserting that they are

"hypocrisies". Unlike gentlemen who "always obeyed the rules and said the correct things and made life easier for a lady", Rhett takes pleasure in enraging others, females included (148). Yet for all his pouring scorn over the Southern code of living, he is jailed for killing a "nigger" who "was uppity to a lady, and what else could a Southern gentleman do?" (524). In such incident, the adherence of Rhett – the non-conformist – to the exigencies of Southern gentlemanliness indicates, in the author's opinion, that the quintessence of chivalry is the protectiveness of Southern ladies and courteousness towards them. So, "how could disaster ever come to women such as they" protected by stalwart gentlemen, "had there ever been such men as these since the first dawn of the world, so heroic, so reckless, so gallant, so tender?" (137). The overall image of the Southern gentleman in *Gone With the Wind* – despite variation and difference – remains one of gracefulness, gallantry, and bravery that shines over sunburned features.

1.3 The Institution of Slavery: A Simple Loyalty-and-Innocence Bond

The institution of slavery was the cornerstone of the Southern community. Essentially, "Negros"[1] belonged to the lowest stratum in the Antebellum South, yet they were an indispensable part of the economic and social system. *Gone With the Wind* depicts the master-slave relationship creating a vivid presence of black characters in a literary work. To begin with, as Mitchell explains, slaves have a hierarchy of their own: the house servants on the top, and field-hands at a lower level. Mammy belongs to the former one, along with Uncle Peter, Pork and Dilcey. They are loyal servants, devoted to their masters and, interestingly enough, look down upon field-hands and even "White trash (...) and small farmers" (23).

Mammy is "devoted to her last drop of blood to the O'Haras (...) black, but her code of conduct and her sense of pride were as high as or higher than those of her owners" (18). In her desperation and bewilderment, Scarlett – time and again – seeks Mammy's "black hands" because they are "dear and comforting (...) unerringly they knew how to soothe, to pat, to fondle" (564). Just as Mammy is the mainstay of the O'Haras, Uncle Peter is "the smartest old darky" who owns the Hamiltons "body and soul" (116). This "highest caste in the slave population (...) remained with their white folks, doing manual labor which had been beneath them in the old days" and "suffering as severely as their white masters" (550). That is why they are deemed as worth their "weight in gold" (379).

However, the field-hands who "in the opinion of the negroes, they had lost their claim to any social standing at all" (47) because they are the "least willing or able to learn, the least energetic, the least honest and trustworthy, the most vicious and brutish" (550), have a different relationship with their masters. Notwithstanding that some of them remain loyal refusing "to avail themselves of the new freedom" (550) because they are satisfied with their lives under the shelter of the Whites, the majority run away as the war erupts. And it is these hordes of "trashy free issue niggers" that is "making life a misery for the South" (550). So, the novel casts the slaves into different categories,

according to their conduct towards their masters. Loyal, worthy ones are just as furious against "abolitionists" as whites are, whereas the disloyal troublesome ones are on "the enemy's camp".

Basically, this is the image of "Negros" in *Gone With the Wind*. Mitchell, through her narrative, asserts that the master-slave relationship in the Antebellum South is certainly one that cannot be deciphered due to its intricacy and entanglement through many long years. A claim demonstrated in her skepticism towards the "Yankees" understanding and appreciation of slaves though it is the Northerners "who freed them" (564).

1.4 The Civil War: A Lost Cause

It was the Civil War (1861-1865) that cut Southerners' lives into two. It most probably ruptured the whole nation into two poles, yet the south seems to have undergone a deeper rupture. That is why its presence in southern literature is more dominant. Accordingly, different opinions and feelings about the war are exposed in Mitchell's narrative. In the latter, the war, however, is not cast within any particular category: neither devilish nor saintly.

At the beginning of the novel, the day of the Wilkes barbecue, many voices rise in shouts to go for the war: "Of course we'll fight", "We could lick them in a month", "Why, one Southerner can lick twenty Yankees", "Teach them a lesson they won't soon forget", "They want war; we'll make them sick of war" (87). In the midst of the uproar raise, Ashley Wilkes's drowsy voice talking wisdom and Rhett Butler's arrogant accent talking sense about the war. These three mainstreams are essentially the fundamental views the novel explores. The first, which is largely shared by the crowd, is that of going for war, fighting the Yankees and bringing glory upon the South. "The South was intoxicated with enthusiasm and excitement (...) wild with excitement and shouting as though en route to a picnic" (107). When Scarlett moves to Atlanta, she witnesses the privation, hardships, death, and sickness of her fellow-people and she wonders how they can be so devoted to their troops and cherishing unshakable faith in their victory.

> How could anything but overwhelming victory come to a Cause as just and right as theirs? A Cause they loved as much as they loved their men... a Cause to which they would sacrifice these men if need be, and bear their loss as proudly as the men bore their battle flags. It was high tide of devotion and pride in their hearts, high tide of the Confederacy. (137)

No one talks about losing the war; the mere thought is considered as a sinful betrayal if not blasphemy. The overwhelming majority of Southerners share this fanatic view and, to some, that is the reason behind their defeat.

Rhett is one of those non-conformist cynics who believe that all they "have is cotton and slaves and arrogance" they'd be "licked in a month." (91) Yet no one pays heed to the words of an outcast even if he argues logically: "There's good money in empire building. But, there's more in empire wrecking. This empire we're living in – the South – the Confederacy – the Cotton Kingdom – it's breaking up right under our feet. Only most fools won't see it" (157), "all wars are sacred to

those who have to fight them. If the people who started wars didn't make them sacred, who would be foolish enough to fight? (...) All wars are in reality money squabbles." (189). This view is held by a tiny minority that is not even "received" by the Southern respectable society. Rhett opposes the war because he does not want to "fight to uphold the system that cast [him] out (...) [he] shall take pleasure in seeing it smashed." (196). He keeps poking fun at "the noble Cause" and "the heroes in gray" during the war, and that makes of him a dashing figure of a "rascal" among his people. Yet, when the Confederate troops retreat leaving Atlanta to its burns, he joins the thinning ranks in an already lost war. He avows that "the betraying sentimentality lurks in all of Southerners... so much quixoticism still lingers in [him]" (321).

The "betraying sentimentality" catches many Southerners in between the two aforementioned standpoints; some are against the war but they go for it just the same. They stand for the third category. A good case in point is that of Ashley, who goes to the war, fights, and suffers in prison for a cause he does not believe in. Though he knows from the early beginning that the war is unwise because "most of the misery of the world has been caused by wars and when the wars were over, no one ever knew what they were all about", he goes for it just the same (90). His introspective meditations bring him the knowledge that they 'have been betrayed, betrayed by [their] arrogant Southern selves, believing that one of [them] could whip a dozen Yankees, believing that King Cotton could rule the world. Betrayed, too, by words and catchphrases, prejudices and hatreds" (173). He sees the whole war as a matter of foolishness that would only rob Southerners of their peace and tranquility:

> I am fighting for the old days, the old ways I love so much but which, I fear, are now gone forever, no matter how the die may fall. For, win or lose, we lose just the same (...) they are fighting for a Cause that was lost the minute the first shot was fired, for our Cause is really our own way of living and that is gone already (174).

Ashley's meditations are considered as wise and deep yet not exactly practical because he lacks "gumption" to move on after the war that reduces his old beautiful world into ashes. He is one of the incurable romantics whose "accursed shrinking from realities" makes it impossible for them to come through (441). To make a long story short, war in *Gone With the Wind* is seen in hazy blurred outlines: a zealous irrational romantic battle that is fought and lost. Nothing is made certain except that the antebellum world is gone with the wind.

2. *Absalom, Absalom!'s* Demonized History

William Faulkner's fiction appointed him a devoted prodigy who took on himself the responsibility of telling the story of the Old South, telling it whole. Most of his works are set in Yoknapatawpha County: a fictional region that he creates to portray the Antebellum South in miniature. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, he explores the interweaving perspectives of several narrators. Beneath the ostensibly domestic tale, lays a genuine attempt to disclose the underlying

infrastructures upon which the Old South was constructed. Its attempt to detect truth and morality in history is an arduous task given the fact that it tries to glue together fragmented pieces of an "elapsed and yet-elapsing" way of life. By the turn-of-the-last-page it remains as puzzling a case for detection as any of Hercule Poirot's or Holmes', for the narrative does not lend itself to easy deciphering and comprehension.

2.1 The Southern Ladyhood: Flowers in a Shrub's Pot

Rosa Coldfield's gothic voice which "would not cease, it would just vanish" is the most prominent female voice "heard" in the novel (Faulkner 2005, 8). She is portrayed as a ghostlike hysteric old maid, who is repressed in her family and marginalized by her society. Wearing her "eternal black" and confined to a "vampiric" existence, she spends her haunted life "in the little grim house's impregnable solitude" (44). Since she is "born too late" into her parents' lives, she is deprived of all warmth and support and so she falls prey to obsession (21). She is obsessed with revenging Thomas Sutpen, who presumably destroys her family and ruins her life. "The lonely thwarted old female flesh embattled for forty-three years" (14) is doomed since childhood "to contemplate all human behavior through the complex and needless follies of adults (...) a child who had never been young" (21), yet who is seen as an elfish figure that is unable to get out of elders' custodianship; she resembles "a crucified child" (8). Not surprisingly, she is taken for granted; "to them, Miss Rosa must not have been anything at all" (34). Though she witnesses her family's downfall inertly and wordlessly, she is the one who brings it back to life. After forty three years of silence, she decides to disclose the unrevealed because "she wants it told" (11) to others, so that they will "know at last why God let us lose the War: that only through the blood of our men and the tears of our women could He stay this demon and efface his name and lineage from the earth" (11). While she relates her tale, she muses over the South and its demise demonstrating an acute awareness of social and historical dynamics. Her being the only narrator who provides first-hand information gives her account more credibility. That is why Quentin Compson is moved to credulity by her tale. So, "from a little after two o'clock until almost sundown of the long still hot weary dead September afternoon" (7), he sits "listening, having to listen, to one of the ghosts which had refused to lie still even longer than most had, telling him about old ghost-times" (9). However, for all her importance as a narrator, Rosa does not rise above the ghostly presence as a character. As Mr. Compson notes, "years ago we in the South made our women into ladies then the War came and made the ladies into ghosts" (12). Miss Rosa is one "Southern gentlewoman" whose voice is the closer a female character would come to self-expression; other females were silent (or yet silenced).

Ellen, her older sister, whom she considers as "a blind romantic fool" (14) is the mistress of Sutpen's Hundred. Entrapped in a Beauty-and-the-Beast sort of a marriage, she "had vanished not only out of the family and the house but out of life too, into an edifice like Bluebeard's and there transmogrified into a mask looking back with passive and hopeless grief upon the irrevocable world, held there not in durance but in a kind of jeering suspension by a man" (60). This "occurred before

it became fashionable to repair your mistakes by turning your back on them and running" (27). Hence, she tries to understand and even reconcile to his deeds. Albeit her endeavors, she cannot endure it anymore when she sees that her husband himself takes part in fighting with negros; a scene that is unfit for lady's eyes. When she realizes that she is completely unable to protect her children or save herself, she retires to a semi-invalid existence: "a butterfly" escaping "reality into a bland region peopled by dolls" (70). After few years of "bewildered and uncomprehending amazement", the moth "caught in a gale and blown against a wall and clinging there beating feebly" dies (85). She dies as a "substanceless shell (...) no body to be buried: just the shape, the recollection, translated on some peaceful afternoon without bell or catafalque into that cedar grove" (126). And thus ends the weightless life of a plantation mistress.

The daughter Judith offers an enigmatic exemplar of a Southern young lady. She sees "her marriage forbidden without rhyme or reason or shadow of excuse" (18), yet she does not lift a finger to change the course of matters. She submits unquestionably; waiting "in that abeyance, that durance, waiting, hoping" (119) "not knowing for what (...) not even knowing for why" (126). Throughout the narrative, she is frequently referred to as "doomed to be a widow before she had even been a bride" (22). As though her very being as female places her under an inescapable fatality to which she has to yield willingly. Faulkner's characterization of Judith seems to cast her as an archaic motionless object in an attic; "just being, just existing and breathing" (329). The war, her brother's murdering her "not-husband", and her mother's death are all faced with "a ruthless will" (78). Her character is created "by circumstance (...) a hundred years of careful nurturing (...) then ten generations of iron prohibition" and so she passes through "insulated and unscathed cocoon stages: bud, served prolific queen, then potent and soft-handed matriarch" (156). Judith's life closes to an end with no joy uplifting her spirits, no juvenile whim stirring her conduct, and no grief casting a shadow over her features as if deprived of all emotions. Her gaunt face, "which had long since forgotten how to be young and yet absolutely impenetrable, absolutely serene", retains its vigor at the fall of a curtain upon her deathlike life (127). The continuous metamorphosing of female characters in *Absalom, Absalom!* suggests that the feminine presence in the Antebellum South, though it took many shapes, it could not defy the "soulless rich surrender anywhere between sun and earth" (196). This, of course, is the conception of women "in the skirts of the time when ladies did not walk but floated" (31).

2.2 The Southern Maleness: Gentlemen Rotten at the Roots

The masculine figures in Faulkner's fiction seem to be surrounded with a mystic aura and so are the three main male characters: Thomas Sutpen, Henry Sutpen, and Charles Bon. "The long-dead object of her impotent yet indomitable frustration would appear, as though by outraged recapitulation evoked, quiet inattentive and harmless, out of the biding and dreamy and victorious dust" that is how "the man-horse-demon" appears to "a scene peaceful and decorous" (Faulkner 2005, 8). He - Thomas Sutpen – "dragged house and gardens out of virgin swamp, and plowed and

planted his land" (Faulkner 2005, 40), in addition to "the shield of a virtuous woman, to make his position impregnable" (15), he seems to be in possession of everything. However, after attaining all what he seeks, his "design" fails. Born in West Virginia mountains, away from the Deep South, he is blissfully ignorant and "innocent". Ironically, "innocence" is "his impediment" (233). So aghast he is to see that "this world where niggers, that the Bible said had been created and cursed by God to be brute and vassal to all men of white skin, were better found and housed and even clothed"; in his bitter deprivation surges a desire to grow rich and powerful (282). The last of which, he discovers in the social codes of the Old South. The slave-owning principle grants the whites social and economic supremacy over other races; so, he rushes wildly to achieve his design of establishing a dynasty. Midway, he departs to the war embodying the condensed notions of the Old South, he fights and then falls as the system which holds him up falls apart. So, "this Faustus, this demon, this Beelzebub" (178), is "the light blinded batlike image of his own torment cast" (171). He is blinded – his innocence corrupted – by "the fierce demoniac lantern"; in pursuit of his design, he is "descending (...) ellipsis, clinging, trying to cling with vain unsubstantial hands to what he hoped would hold him, save him" (171). Essentially, the Southern plantation-owner in *Absalom, Absalom!* is represented as an "ogre, some beast out of a tale to frighten children with" (158). Moreover, "retribution and fatality which (...) Sutpen had started and had doomed all his blood too, black and white both" destroys his own line (269).

Sutpen's legitimate heir is Henry. He is reared in the monotonous traditions of the Southern society that is why his first encounter with Charles Bon "corrupts" him to ape "his clothing and manner and (...) his very manner of living" (96). Henry "the countryman, the bewildered" faces a moral dilemma; in fact, he personifies the way some Southern creeds torment the conscience (114). Because he – of all others – has "cluttering of morality and rules of right and wrong" (120), he has either to "betray himself and his entire upbringing and thinking" or "deny the friend for whom he had already repudiated home and kin and all" (114). At an age where young men are likely to spend their time in leisure and idleness without much ado about morality and righteousness, "the country boy with his simple and erstwhile untroubled code" finds himself in a place where "all of morality was upside down and all of honor perished" (114). He is caught up in between the teachings of the Old South which he repudiates "in order to champion his defiance" and what "all his heredity and training had to rebel against on principle" (173). After a long breathless struggle, Henry returns to "practically fling the bloody corpse of his sister's sweetheart at the hem of her wedding gown" (18). So, he proves Charles Bon's prophecy and words by murdering him. "It's the miscegenation, not the incest" which the South taught him not to bear (356). The son, like the father, also suffers a tattered morality as if the author alludes to the fact that men in the South were made into gentlemen and then corrupted in turn.

Charles Bon, the "handsome and wealthy New Orleansian" is Sutpen's deserted son (78). Though he is "a young man of a worldy elegance and assurance beyond his years, handsome, apparently wealthy and in the remote Mississippi of that time must have appeared almost phoenix-

like" (74), he is doomed by the drops of black blood which run in his veins. His portrayal, "as though he were a hero out of some adolescent Arabian Nights" (96), casts him very close to the image of "the Southern Beau", if not for his fatalism. Throughout the whole of Henry's struggle to find a way out to their dilemma, he remains a "mere spectator, passive, a little sardonic, and completely enigmatic" (93). Notwithstanding that his ironic appearance in Sutpen's life is the beginning of the family's downfall, "he seems to hover, shadowy, almost substanceless, a little behind and above all the other (...) ultimatums and affirmations and defiances and challenges and repudiations" (93). His "half negro" blood, in a society excessively obsessed with racial discrimination, reduces him to mere shadowy existence. Furthermore, he loses all interest in the happenings around him though he is the centre of attention because he becomes like "a myth, a phantom: something which they engendered and created whole themselves; some effluvium of Sutpen blood and character, as though as a man he did not exist at all" (104). His gentlemanly aura is clouded "with an air of sardonic and indolent detachment like that of a youthful Roman consul making the Grand Tour of his day among the barbarian hordes" (93). Consequently, his portrayal engraves even further the representation of male Southern characters as doomed to an irrevocably-deviant gentlemanliness.

2.3 The Institution of Slavery: A Beastly Estate

All through the narration of *Absalom, Absalom!*, the term "nigger" is associated with "wild". Thomas Sutpen first appears in Jefferson, "grouped behind him his band of wild niggers like beasts half-tamed to walk upright like men" (8). His niggers are different from "any tame ones" (72); that is why he relies on them in tracking the fleeing architect. Employed instead of "dogs", the niggers believe that the architect "had voluntarily surrendered his status as interdict meat (...) and that now they would be allowed to cook and eat him" (256). They are portrayed as savage "black beasts" that are a means in Sutpen's design; in "a bloodless paradox" they are seen as "the shovels and picks and axes of peaceful conquest" (8). Besides the total silence of black characters in the novel, they do not seem to have any consequential emotional or social life. There is not even a black character who is named. This seems to reflect the concept of "looking at niggers, not with fear or dread but with a kind of speculative antagonism, not because of any known fact or reason but inherited, by both white and black, the sense, effluvium..." (230). Though Sutpen's Hundred is a dream-made-true thanks to the restless efforts of niggers, they are scarcely seen as creatures much above the status of animals. Sutpen allows – and even encourages – them to engage in ruleless fights where they "fight to hurt one another quick and bad" (29). Faulkner's narrative rests at a stone's throw from totally dehumanizing the blacks. Its constant allusion to their "whooping and hollering" (257) leaves no room for a moderate picturing of their standing in the Southern community. To engrave the idea even further, "as a grand finale", Sutpen enters "the ring with one of the Negroes himself" (29). In doing so, these two antagonist races "should not only have been the same color but should have been covered with fur too" (29). However, for Sutpen – and maybe spectators too – it is "matter of sheer deadly forethought toward the retention of supremacy, domination" (29).

Faulkner offers no apology or justification nor even attempts to apply some anesthesia before blurting out all the afore-mentioned. With concepts such as these, the Old South "was drifting closer and closer to a doomed and fatal war (…) it was now paying the price for having erected its economic edifice not on the rock of stern morality but on the shifting sands of opportunism and moral brigandage'" (260). Faulkner's portrayal of the master-slave relationship suggests a condemnation to the whole South for having allowed such an opportunistic beastly segregation of blacks to last so long. And it eventually fell bringing down vile and virtue.

2.4 The Civil War: The Fever that Cured the Sickness

In *Absalom, Absalom!*, the Civil War (1861-1865) takes three main conceptions. The first and prominent one is closely associated with Thomas Sutpen. In spite of his villainous conducts before the war which make him – in Rosa's estimation – an ogre no less, he possesses "the stature and shape of a hero" by mere association with other heroes because he too "fought for four honorable years for the soil and traditions of the land where she had been born" (Faulkner 2005,19). Watching "the gallant mimic marching and countermarching", that draw all of them "rich and poor, aristocrat and redneck" (122) to fight carrying "the flags" and die "not for honor's empty sake, nor pride nor even peace, but for that love and faith they left behind" (150), one can efface all the wrongdoings of a person once he "rode away beneath a flag and (demon or no) courageously suffered" (167). Rosa is unable to gainsay that he was brave in defending their cause. However, she regrets that the Southern "very life and future hopes and past pride, should have been thrown into the balance with men like that to buttress it – men with valor and strength but without pity or honor" (20).

The second conception is that of Mr. Coldfield. Though he "had never been an irascible man (…) and his speeches of protest had been not only calm but logical and quite sensible", he drifts to extremities in his opposition to the war (81). He is "a man with a name for absolute and undeviating and even Puritan uprightness in a country and time of lawless opportunity, who neither drank nor gambled nor even hunted" and so he is among the very few Southerners who are against the war (43). His opposition springs from a deep moral consciousness of the evils of such war; this makes him even hate his "country so much that (…) he would have joined the Yankee army" (260). There are other individuals – a minority in the communal scramble-to-the-war – who "embalmed the War and its heritage of suffering and injustice and sorrow" because it blots "from the breathable air the poisonous secret effluvium of lusting and hating and killing" (126).

The third conception is the one that is shared by Henry and Charles Bon. They both join the war not out of patriotism and devotion to the Old South but as a means of escape. They hope "that the War would settle the matter, leave free one of the two irreconcilables since it would not be the first time that youth has taken catastrophe as a direct act of Providence for the sole purpose of solving a personal problem which youth itself could not solve." (120). Because they are incapable – or unwilling – to make decisions they leave it for the war to settle matters. Yet this is seen as a mere

"attenuation and prolongation of a conclusion already ripe to happen"; they foolishly try to solve personal matters "by a stupid and bloody aberration in the high (and impossible) destiny of the United States" (118). The different views towards the war vary greatly but they meet at one end: the aftermath is the same. "Men who had risked and lost everything, suffered beyond endurance and had returned now to a ruined land, not the same men who had marched away but transformed" (157); Southerners emerge "from a holocaust (8) to go through "that natural period during which bitter though unmaimed defeat might have exhausted itself to something like peace" (161).

The suffering, the memory and the impacts of that "holocaust" linger even further in the following generations. Quentin Compson who is "a barracks filled with stubborn back looking ghosts still recovering" is one Southern descendant whose childhood "was full of them; his very body was an empty hall echoing with sonorous defeated names; he was not a being, an entity, he was a commonwealth" (12). Because of living "among defeated grandfathers and freed slaves (...) and bullets in the dining-room table and such" they are always reminded of the past (361). The past which dominates their present and haunts their future becomes "a kind of vacuum filled with wraithlike and indomitable anger and pride and glory at and in happenings that occurred and ceased fifty years ago" (361). In *Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner suggests – using a compelling allegory – a profound anatomy of the Civil War:

> even forty-three years afterward, from the fever which had cured the disease, waking from the fever without even knowing that it had been the fever itself which they had fought against and not the sickness, looking with stubborn recalcitrance backward beyond the fever and into the disease with actual regret, weak from the fever yet free of the disease and not even aware that the freedom was that of impotence. (12)

These surgical words analyze the Antebellum South in exceptional detail: the disease of wish southerners are unaware – and maybe at the time the novel was written did not yet spring to awareness – is slavery. The war, despicable furious and bloody as it is, is no more than a fever which is a symptom of cure. Yet, southerners yearn back to the sickness ungrateful and unaware of the healing.

3. Conceptualizations or Polarizations?

So far, it takes no expert to point out the glaring difference between *Gone With the Wind* and *Absalom, Absalom!* The stark contrast between the two narratives is no more apparent than in their visions of the Old South. Mitchell, as no exception to the plantation tradition, portrays the American south as it was already stereotyped in the popular mind by ninetieth century novels (Suponitskaya 1992, 878). Faulkner, on the other hand, seems intent upon questioning and negating all that is familiar about the south: the plantation system, its code of conduct and its social mores. He simply "challenges the plantation legend by creating a different sort of planter archetype" (Mitchell D 2008,140). So, it is no surprise at all that Michell's novel was selling in millions when

Faulkner's was barely selling over a few thousand copies. Yet, their conceptualizations are reflective of further differences other than commercial success. Their critical receptions were different for a number of reasons.

In "The Civil War of 1936: *Gone with the Wind* and *Absalom! Absalom!*", James W. Mathews comments on the most important reviews that were written about the two novels. He notes that "romances treating the Old South- especially the legendary South-have always been popular. *Gone With the Wind* merely continued a formula that could hardly fail, but added enough sound history and narrative originality to set itself above its peers" (Mathews 1967, 467). William Faulkner's aim, however, was different. He wanted "to bring us in the end to a deeper and a fuller truth about his people than we could get otherwise," (DeVoto 1936, 14). Though, as author Tony Horwitz puts it, Mitchell's novel has "done more to keep the Civil War alive, and to mould its memory, than any history book or event since Appomattox", its popularity could not bring it to serious critical studies where it received slight attention (Horwitz 1999, 296). In contrast, Faulkner's novel received far larger, despite not always favourable, criticism. With its intensity, terror and obscurity, it—as *The Atlanta Journal* reviewer puts it—is "a ringing pulpit-call destined to enrage the old brand of southerner and frighten the new "(as cited in Mathews 1967, 467). The ramifications of such distinct, even contradictory, conceptualizations of the Old South is mostly seen through the devision that the two narratives created. Each novel seems to occupy an exclusive sphere of influence. Mitchell's work is more affiliated with all that is popular, ahistorical and somehow 'conventional'. Faulkner, however, allinates himself – perhaps unintendedly – with a group of historians and literatti, whose version of the south is provoking and equivocal, to say the least.

The split in attitude and response towards the two novels – or the two literary stances at large – is but reflective of a broader social phenomenon. Collective memory (a sociological concept developed through the works of Emile Durkheim, Carl Jung and Maurice Halbwachs) encompasses the shared beliefs and experiences that a group of people or community goes through. This sense of collectiveness – whether conscious or unconscious – accumulates through historical events, crises, traditions, memories, popular songs, and movies etc. Though they are preserved in the brain or "in some nook of mind", they are recalled externally through a community or a group that—even if only momentarily—conditions one's reconstruction of those memories in accordance with the group's. Halbwachs explains:

> It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection (Halbwachs 1992, 38)

Hence, when facing a judgment-making situation, individuals—willingly or unwillingly—resort to a kind of systemic response that is already prefigured by a collective consciousness. *A Tough Little Patch of History: Gone With the Wind and the Politics of Memory* is a book by De Jennifer W.

Dickey which she devotes to the "unsurpassed cultural phenomenon" called *Gone With the Wind.* She writes:

> Its popularity ebbs and flows, nut its characters and settings are so ingrained in our national consciousness, such a part of our collective memory, that, love it or hate, gone with the wind is part of our national story that seems likely to carry forwards well into the twenty-first century, whether or not people read the book or see the film (Dickey 2014, 4)

Absalom, Absalom! , on the other hand, touched upon a sensitive nerve in southerner's collective consciousness. It was a "bold accusation against the South for its sins of greed and pride, a charge hard to bear in the depression-ridden, dust bowl days of 1936" (Mathews 1967, 468). However, any literary historian can see that the reception of Faulkner's work changed over time. Decades after its publication, not only its sales improved but its recognition as a literary masterpiece was more apparent. Authors like Richard H. King (1980) and Wilbur. J. Cash (1956) have notably demonstrated the resentment and denial with which writers such as Faulkner were greeted due to the image of the South presented in their fiction.

This explains one of the reasons behind one novel striking a chord with readers while the other was looked at with skepticism. Stanley Fish's concept of "interpretive community" may demystify another aspect their particular reception. He argues that interpretation is 'a communal affair' and no response happens in a vacuum. In his *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (1980), he contends that shared assumptions, cultural attitudes, concepts prevailing through schools, churches, and media etc. institutionalize the way a group of people deals with and reacts to texts. Since the content of the two novels is predominantly a cultural and historical one, it can be regarded as the focal point which marked the distinction in the two novels' reception. It was not the style, the structure or even themes as much as it was the consistency of the narrative with what is collectively 'remembered' as a past. Even memory—and a literary judgment that is bound to it—being "our most personal, immediate, mental operation, has no substance outside its social context" (Gedi and Elam 1996, 36). Therefore, *Gone With the Wind* and *Absalom, Absalom!*, through their conceptualizations of the Old South, they invoked the distinct 'poles' in American southern society. Their subsequent responses, in effect, stand for two distinguished stances which are a popular romanticized belief in a mythical era and an intellectual revisionist stance which by the 1936 was yet in a premature stage.

Conclusion

In short, set against the background of a long and almost unshaken tradition in Southern literature, Margret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* and William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* do not deviate from the norm in their preoccupation with the Antebellum South. Yet, while Mitchell's account is more romantic and rife with pleasant images of beauty, struggle, a love of the land and a cherishing of ancestral heritage, Faulkner's scrutiny almost refutes such images, condemns their

falsehood and unflinchingly seeks to expose their appalling reality. The reception of the two novels, which depended heavily on their conceptualizations of the Old South, indicates the polarizing impact of such literary narratives. They highlight an already existing rupture between readers and critics, intellectuals and laymen, father, and sons.

Endnotes:

1. The word "nigger" is consistent with the lexis of *Gone With the Wind* and *Absalom, Absalom!* which is in turn consistent with the historical period they portray. So, it carries only the original meaning (from Latin "negro") denoting individuals of black appearance. (Concise Oxford Dictionary 11th ed)

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Suicide and Social Freedom: Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*

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Abstract:

This article investigates the protagonist's somewhat ambiguous suicide in Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1890). In this play, suicide is used a device for achieving freedom from social restrictions. Ibsen depicts the eponymous character as out of synch with the mindless strictures of her social situation and who uses suicide as a device to break through the frozen surface of her world. Hedda's suicide foregrounds a significant tension between individual freedom and social responsibility.

Keywords: suicide, *Hedda Gabler*, Ibsen, freedom

From its earliest reviews, many critical appraisals of *Hedda Gabler* failed to come to terms with the protagonist. Approaching the play as a pinnacle of Realism (as most still do), they were unable to make sense of how a character like Hedda could exist. As a result, her character was almost unanimously rejected. For example, Oswald Crawford, in England's *Fortnightly Review* regarded Hedda as an "impossible" woman (Crawford 1891, 737-738). The *New York Times* reviewer of the first American production believed that Ibsen must have intended Hedda as a pathological case like those "in the pages of the *Journal of Mental Science*."[1] John Lahr reports that "August Strindberg, who saw himself as the model for Eilert Løvborg... spat spiders at the play and its author, whom he called 'a decrepit old troll" and that, after attending a rehearsal of the play at the Moscow Art Theater in 1899, Anton Chekhov exclaimed, "Look here, Ibsen is not a playwright." (Lahr 2009, 110-112)

Recent critics have taken similar attitudes. Jens Arup writes that "every utterance and every action is packed with meaning in its application to the situation of the play itself", but that Ibsen did not provide a "set of categories" with which to judge Hedda as a character. Perhaps, most notable of all, Arup saw the play as "too realistic to have any meaning whatsoever" (Arup 1957, 7). Muriel Bradbrook makes a similar point: Hedda is "a study in a vacuum" and the spectator is given "no frame, no comment" to judge her (Bradbrook 1966, 117). Finally, Weigand comments that this "coldest, most impersonal" drama is, in the end, "simply a spectacle of life from which we retire with shock" (Weigand 1925, 242; 244).

These comments illustrate a fundamental misunderstanding of Ibsen and the whole of his dramatic project, *Hedda Gabler* in particular. To approach *Hedda Gabler* simply as an exemplar of Realism is to overlook one of the most significant aspects of the play. In fact, Ibsen is not concerned with realism at all; rather, he creates in *Hedda Gabler* – its setting and even its character – a larger than life, even grotesque quality which acts as a projection of his own inner violent energy. Hedda Gabler herself is not a realistic character but a tool through which Ibsen expresses the violent energy percolating below and irrupting through a staid, repressive, social surface. As Ibsen writes in his commentary to the play, it is "about the 'insuperable', the aspiration to and striving after something which goes against convention..." (*The Oxford Ibsen* 1966, 481). Hedda is the device through which this aspiration and striving occurs.

Rilke, in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, has a most remarkable insight about Ibsen's *oeuvre* – one that can be applied directly to *Hedda Gabler*. Rilke writes that Ibsen "struggled with the unparalleled violence of [his] work" and sought dramatic means for the outward expression of this violence. In *Hedda Gabler* Ibsen utilizes at least two significant devices to express this phenomenon: the grotesquely exaggerated stage setting and Hedda Gabler herself – a social misfit who maintains a peculiar distance from her tightly restricted environment but whose underlying violent energy frequently irrupts through its staid surface. Errol Durbach writes:

> Her desparate need to break free of her repressions finds expression in acts of violence and fantasies of destruction: the threat of setting fire to the hair of her rival for Lovborg's soul, her demonic ripping and burning of their 'child', her firing of pistols at moments of terrible tension, her bursts of wild dance music on the piano. (Durbach 1982, 41)

Noticeably absent from Durbach's list is Hedda's suicide – the play's most extreme and most significant irruption of violence. Like all Hedda's irrational, impulsive behavior, her suicide occurs without introspection, and Ibsen's presentation of the act is fraught with ambiguity. While Hedda undoubtedly achieves release from the repressive world of convention, Ibsen ultimately suggests that the cost of this freedom is far too great.

Rilke's insight into Ibsen's construction of a grotesque, larger than life drama is notable since it provides a counterpoint to the conventional view of Ibsen as a dramatist steeped in nineteenth-century realism. Moreover, it allows one to appreciate the ways in which Ibsen's violent interior state is projected on to the outer world. In the following, Rilke comments on Ibsen's other plays, but *Hedda Gabler* fits the pattern perfectly:

> There was a rabbit, an attic, a hall in which someone passes up and down. There was the tinkle of glasses in the adjoining room, a fire outside the windows, there was the sun. There was a church and a rocky valley that was like a church. But that wasn't enough; finally towers had to be brought in and whole mountain ranges, and avalanches that bury landscapes: inundated stages overloaded with graspable things for the sake of the ungraspable. (Rilke 2008, 61)

It might be understandable why critics have treated the play as a realistic case study. Playwrights who are commonly regarded to have favored realism (and Ibsen is virtually always cited as a key figure) rejected the concept of the well-made play with its mechanical artifices and strict plotting. While this is also true of Ibsen, it must be pointed out that he did not conform to another important criterion of realist drama – the rejection of exaggerated theatrics. Ibsen's stage directions in *Hedda Gabler* are as exaggerated as they are precise; they dictate the placement and appearance of each object in exhaustive, larger-than-life detail. The stage directions for Act One are a case in point. The profusion of objects conveys a monstrous overabundance: "All around the reception room there are numerous branches of flowers arranged in cases and glasses. More lie on the tables. The floors of both rooms are covered with thick carpets." (167)[2] A sense of heaviness and profusion pulsates against the calm, cold surface. This is even carried into Ibsen's exaggerated character descriptions, such as that of Judge Brack who, as a personification of social convention, is described as "stocky, but-well built and elastic in his movements... his face roundish, with a good profile" (192). Thea Elvsted with her "large, round, and somewhat protruding eyes" (181) conveys a similar sense of the grotesque. These visible details connect to the inwardly ungraspable, an energy whose power can only be detected through its subtle (and not so subtle) outward manifestations.

Indeed, Hedda Gabler herself is Ibsen's primary device for the outward manifestation of this violence. Joan Templeton points out that Hedda's volatile character may be the zenith of two Ibsen patterns, the strong-minded "unwomanly" woman whose prototype is Furia in *Cataline*, and the frustrated wife in a marriage of convenience, whose prototype is Margit of *The Feast at Solhoug*. According to Templeton, the two patterns merge in *The Viking of Helgeland*'s protagonist Hjørdis – "an eagle in a cage... a Brynhild shut up in a parlor" – with whom Hedda is often compared (Templeton 1997, 224).

Ibsen creates in Hedda an otherworldly creature with a dangerous force brewing inside her. Indeed, the use of "creature" to describe Hedda is not an overstatement: she is a social misfit, completely out of touch with the world around her. Ibsen emphasizes this by presenting two of the most incompatible characters in Ibsen's entire *oeuvre.* It takes only a few minutes for the extent of that incompatibility to become clear. At first, there is the sense of pleasant satisfaction: Jörgen Tesman has every prospect of becoming a university professor; he has apparently triumphed over his previous rival Eilert Lövborg, has bought his dream house, and has recently returned with his bride from their honeymoon. However, from the very beginning of the scene there are clear indications marking the tension between Hedda and the world she inhabits: Berthe worries that she won't suit her "ever so particular" new mistress (168), and there is unease about money due to the extravagance of the honeymoon and the expense of appeasing a lady of aristocratic background.

Ibsen's stage directions also emphasize the physical distance between Hedda and her surroundings. The first impression of the drawing room itself is one of contrast between a dark, artificial interior, and a bright (though autumnal) exterior. Hedda's complexion is described in terms

similar to those used for the lampshade in the inner room: the lamp is "mat, mælkefarvet", "dull, milk-colored" and Hedda's complexion is of a "mat bleghed", a "dull pallor" (175). Even before she appears, she is assigned a distinct place in relation to the interior: in the centre of the wall of the inner room hangs the portrait of General Gabler, one of the only three objects Hedda inherits and brings to the Tesman home.[3] The portrait suggests Hedda's misplacement – an indication of her past affiliation with the aristocracy that points toward her incompatibility with her new environment. Moreover, the entire house is a relic of the past. Hedda points out that the house has an old maids' aroma of lavender and potpourri, which Judge Brack says is the scent of its previous owner, Lady Falk, the widow of a cabinet minister now consigned to history. Hedda's disgust at the household is palpable. One senses that it is only a matter of time before she is no longer able to endure its claustrophobic dustiness.

Hedda's physical appearance suggests aloofness.[4] Her eyes are described as "steel grey, and cold, clear, and dispassionate" (175). Miss Tesman remembers her riding along with the General in a long black habit with a feather in her hat. Her distinction is reinforced further by her refusal to bring herself to use the familiar form of address ("du") to Miss Tesman (Jörgen Tesman's aunt). She addresses her husband by his surname (except when she needs to appeal to his affection in order to manipulate him). Moreover, while Hedda is linked to the interior of the Tesman home by means of her cold detachment, the first three characters to appear – Jörgen Tesman, Miss Tesman, and Berthe – are together connected to the exterior. In fact, in a letter written on January 14, 1891, Ibsen remarks:

> Jörgen Tesman, his old aunts and their faithful servant Berte, together form a picture of complete and indissoluble unity. They have a common mode of thought, common memories, a common outlook on life. For Hedda, they represent a power hostile and contrary to her fundamental nature. And so they must represent a mutual harmony in presentation. (505)

Hedda's third statement in the play reinforces her connection to the interior: "Ugh... the maid's been and opened the veranda door. The place is flooded with sunlight" (176). The aversion to the sun sums up the division between the two parties. Hedda dislikes the direct impact of the outer world and does whatever she can to separate herself from it in order to move closer to an interior world distinctly her own. In addition, Hedda's reaction to Miss Tesman's hat illustrates her shameless demand to be set apart: she acts as if she thinks the aunt's hat belongs to Berte, although both women know that this is impossible.

While Hedda remains aloof, her violent energy frequently breaks through the surface. For example, when Judge Brack presses her to explain why she behaved so rudely to Aunt Juliane, Hedda flings herself down in a chair near the stove and openly admits that she is unable to control or even to understand her own actions: "these things just suddenly come over me. And then I can't resist

them. Oh, I don't know myself how to explain it" (206). One is also reminded that right after Hedda had insulted Aunt Juliane she "walks about the room, raises her arms and clenches her fists as though in a frenzy" (179). She flings back the curtains and stares through the glass doors of her prison. "Calm and collected", she insinuates her misery to Tesman: "I'm just looking at the leaves on the trees. They're so yellow. And so withered" (179). Hedda's hesitancy about stating that the actual month reveals her dread of those months to come. Templeton remarks that Hedda is "trapped for life in the stultifying world of the Tesmans, pregnant by a boy/man [who is] entranced by his slippers" (Templeton 214).

In another example, during Hedda's conversation with Mrs. Elvsted, the latter reveals that Hedda used to pull her hair and that she once threatened to burn it off. While some might see Thea Elvsted's hair as a manifestation of her femininity and a symbol of those female instincts which Hedda either does not possess or refuses to acknowledge, it is more likely that the image of Thea's hair on fire is attractive to Hedda because it is the most violent one she can imagine. Hedda's preoccupation with fire and burning is yet another outward manifestation of her inner volcanism. Ibsen reinforces this through stage directions that often place her in close proximity to the stove in the drawing room of the Tesman home. There is the suggestion of pyromania triggered whenever Hedda is confronted with reminders that her life is circumscribed by convention, and it is not long before Hedda's violent energy becomes much more dangerous. At the end of Act One, for example, when she learns that Tesman is unable to provide her with the social life she was promised, Hedda replies that she has only one thing left she can use to pass the time:

> TESMAN [*ecstatic*]. Oh, thank the good Lord for that!
> And what might that be, Hedda, Eh?
> HEDDA [*at the centre doorway, looking at him with concealed contempt*]. My pistols . . . Jörgen.
> TESMAN [*alarmed*]. Pistols!
> HEDDA [*with cold eyes*]. General Gabler's pistols. (198)

Clearly, her husband does not understand this violent energy. From his perspective – as from the perspective of virtually all Ibsen's characters (including Hedda herself) – it arises mysteriously and unpredictably. Eilert Lövborg, however, has had some previous experience with it and is, therefore, at least aware of its existence. When Hedda and Lovborg sit in the drawing room while Tesman and Judge Brack chat, drink, and smoke in the inner room, she and Lövborg discuss past conversations that had taken place at General Gabler's home, in which – responding to Hedda's "indirect" questioning – Lovborg came clean about his licentious behavior:

> LÖVBORG. Yes, Hedda. . . and then when I used to confess to you... Told you things about myself that none of the others knew at that time. Sat there and admired that I'd been out on the razzle for whole days and nights. For days on end. Oh, Hedda... what power was it in you that forced me to reveal all those things?

HEDDA. Do you think it was a power in me?
LÖVBORG. Well, how else can I explain it? And all those...
those roundabout questions you put to me...
HEDDA. And which you were so quick to understand...
LÖVBORG. That you could sit and ask like that! Quite confidently!
HEDDA. Roundabout questions, if you please...
LÖVBORG. Yes, but confidently all the same. Cross-examine me... about all those things!
HEDDA. And that you could answer, Mr. Lövborg.

There are at least two points worth noting here: first, Lövborg was susceptible to Hedda's "power" to pose "roundabout" questions, even if neither character was able to explain the nature or source of this energy. However, Hedda's use of circumlocutory speech suggests that she circumvented the potentially devastating force of her violent energy by avoiding direct contact with it. Perhaps this may be because Hedda herself – to the extent that she has *any* awareness of what lies within her – somehow sensed the power of her own interior state. Second, and more importantly, her interest in him was seemingly motivated by her desire to act as Lovborg did at the time – unscrupulously, irrationally, and excessively – in a world "that she isn't supposed to know anything about" wherein one is "out on the razzle for whole days and nights" (218-219). Hedda is caught in conventional limitations on her liberty, and sought the release of her violent energy by indulging vicariously in this world, but, ultimately lacking the confidence to do so, became fearful that "the game would become a reality" (219). As Ibsen writes in his commentary to the play, "Lövborg leans over towards 'Bohemianism.' Hedda is drawn in the same direction, but doesn't take the plunge." (*The Oxford Ibsen* 1966, 482). Once again Hedda demonstrates her erratic, unpredictable conduct motivated by the shifting volcanic magma within her. John Lahr notes that "Hedda's contradictory desires both compel and her concealed from her... foreshadowing Freud's notion of the unconscious" (110). Indeed, Freud is said to have learned Norwegian in order to read Ibsen's work.

Ultimately, Hedda's impulse not to join Lövborg interceded; the latter eventually sought refuge and a new partner in Thea Elvsted. Lövborg admits that he and Thea now trust each other completely and talk in full confidence, and Hedda begins to see that Mrs. Elvsted has a control over Eilert that she never had. She perceives Lövborg's adoption of Thea's values as a narrow-minded limitation of his engagement in life, a limitation that corrupts her idealized image of what he once was (and of what he might still become). While he once shared a bond with Hedda, Tesman has now been "rehabilitated." Thea's major achievement, then, has been to convert the Bohemian into a respectable academic, stifling his vitality in the process (Durbach 45).[5] Having earned Mrs. Elvsted's confidence in Act One, Hedda now believes she has the confidence to set Lövborg against her, inducing him to relapse into drinking after two years of sobriety.

On the spot and without any warning to Mrs. Elvsted (or the spectator or the reader) Hedda conceives of a fantasy in which Eilert's reintroduction into a world of drunken energy will result in

his returning from Brack's party with "vine leaves in his hair" – ecstatic, unrestrained energy made manifest. Thea reacts with bland affirmation:

> HEDDA. Ten o'clock... and back he'll come. I can just see him. With vine leaves in his hair, Flushed and confident...
> MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, oh I do so hope it's like that.

Understandably, Thea is unable to make sense of Hedda's vision, nor its motivation; all that matters to her is that Lövborg returns sober and at a decent hour. At first, she even construes Hedda's fantasy as consistent with her own wishes. Just a few lines later, however, Hedda's volatility prompts Thea to realize that this is not the case: with no obvious provocation, Hedda "passionately grips" Thea in her arms and states that she "*thinks* she will burn" her hair off [my emphasis]. As always, Hedda acts tentatively, impulsively, without warning or introspection. With regard to Hedda's "condition", Ibsen writes, "Can't understand it. Ridiculous! Ridiculous!" (Archer 483).

Thea Elvsted is not alone in her inability to understand the reference to Eilert returning with vine leaves in his hair. In fact, no one (including Hedda herself) understands it, Judge Brack least of all: ("HEDDA: He didn't have vine leaves in his hair. BRACK: Vine leaves, my lady?" (238)). Ibsen makes Brack's incomprehension more explicit than any other characters: he is the personification of convention, of a legalistic, conformist, repressive world. Nevertheless, the reader recalls that grape leaves are a traditional symbol of rejoicing, of allowing one's desires rather than convention to be the arbiter of behavior.[6] In her irrational fantasy, Hedda invests Eilert with the iconographic attribute of Dionysus and tempts him to a bacchanalian communion through drink, sending him off to Judge Brack's stag party. Although Ibsen treats the image ambiguously, it undoubtedly suggests frenzied, irrational energy. Errol Durbach confirms this, writing that the image conveys "a sensation of ecstatic release like a pistol fired in the soul, a burst of light, an epiphany of beauty" (Durbach 40). She speaks ecstatically of her fantasy of controlling Lövborg and becomes at least momentarily connected to the idea of his becoming a "free man" – a man free from social convention – through an outpouring of violent energy. One might reasonably imagine that Hedda also yearns for something like this freedom, although, rationally speaking, her connection to the fantasy remains unclear. When it fails to actualize, Hedda's violent energy is redirected toward another mysterious goal – the "beautiful" suicide of Eilert Lovborg.

The details of Eilert's suicide are reminiscent of Werther's. Indeed, Charles Lyons points out several inescapable similarities (Lyons 88). There is the ritualized, ceremonial aspect, the return to the town, and the use of the pistols borrowed from his love-interest. According to Lyons, all this suggests that Ibsen uses details from Werther "to shape Hedda's sense of the potentially aesthetic nature of Eilert's act (89)." Undoubtedly, both suicides share an aesthetic dimension, yet Hedda's constantly shifting fantasy life makes it impossible to capture its precise significance – assuming there is any significance at all:

> LÖVBORG: Just put an end to it all. The sooner the better.
> HEDDA: (*takes a step closer to him*) Eilert Lövborg… listen to me… Could you let it happen… beautifully?
> LÖVBORG: Beautifully? [*Smiles*.] Crowned with vine leaves, as you used to imagine?
> HEDDA: Oh no. I don't believe in those vine leaves anymore. But beautifully all the same! Just for this once!… Goodbye.
> You must go now. And never come home again. (246)

Perhaps one might recognize something like an Apollonian impulse emerging. The Apollonian has manifested itself in various restrictive forms throughout the play so far (most conspicuously through an environment of restrictive morality and gender differentiation, the latter of which is made clear by General Gabler's brooding presence). Inexplicably, this seems to have become the means through which Hedda imagines the successful expression of violent energy after the failure of her Dionysian fantasy. Like the latter fantasy, however, the dream of the Apollonian is irrational. It makes no real sense why Hedda has shifted her focus from Dionysian frenzy to Apollonian noble order embodied by Eilert's "beautiful" death – a self-inflicted bullet to the head.

By Act Four, the violent tension has grown to such a degree that it can hardly be contained. Hedda paces in a near-frenzied state, intermittently playing piano chords heard from the background. When Brack returns to report the news of Lövborg's fatal wound, Hedda, believing that his suicide was successful, announces: "At last… a really courageous act!… Eilert Lövborg… Eilert Lövborg has settled accounts with himself. He must have done what he did in a fit of madness." (256) Furthermore, because Eilert used her pistol, Hedda feels that she has participated in his death and that she has managed to bring about an irruption of irrational energy – one that results incontrovertibly in a "release":

> HEDDA [*softly*]. Ah, Mr. Brack… what a sense of release it gives, this affair of Eilert Lövborg.
> BRACK. Release, my lady? Well, of course, for him it's a release.
> HEDDA. I mean, for me. It's a liberation to know that an act of spontaneous courage is yet possible in this world. An act that has something of an unconditional beauty. (258)

Judge Brack's description of the true circumstances of the shooting disabuses Hedda of any "beauty" related to his death. It quickly surfaces that Eilert was shot neither in the head nor in the heart, but in the abdomen, accidentally rather than intentionally.[7] Although one can never be sure of Hedda's thinking, it seems that she regards suicide (especially through a gunshot to the head) as the most violent irruption – one that results in the absolute freedom of the individual from social repression. However, Ibsen, via Judge Brack, suggests that this is an illusion:

> BRACK. It pains me, my lady… but I am compelled to disabuse you of a beautiful illusion.
> HEDDA. Illusion?

BRACK. Which you would, in any case, have been deprived of fairly soon.
HEDDA. And what that might be?
BRACK. He didn't shoot himself... intentionally.
HEDDA. Not intentionally... Everything I touch seems to turn into something mean and farcical. (258-259)

Of course, Hedda's "illusion" is irrational, thus incomprehensible. Judge Brack at least realizes that its failure to materialize is a blow to Hedda's dream of breaking out of the world he symbolizes. As the embodiment of law and social propriety, his eagerness to assist in Hedda's downfall is significant: Hedda's energy is in a state of constant confrontation with the opposing, oppressive forces of the world around her; one senses the inevitability and imminence of a major irruption.

Before long, Hedda confronts Brack's blackmail; Hedda, after all, had provided Lövborg with the pistols used to end his life, and Brack insists on a "triangular arrangement" in order to keep quiet, further entrapping and oppressing Hedda: "Well, fortunately, there is nothing to fear as long as I keep quiet" (262). For Hedda, the offer to be subject to his will is too horrible to contemplate; indeed, it is the final confirmation that freedom is, for her, out of the question. This realization, combined with her husband and Thea's reconstruction of Eilert's manuscript, incites her seething energy to rise to the surface for her final, and most extreme, act of violence: "No longer free! [*She gets up violently.*] No! That's a thought that I'll never endure!" (262). Spontaneously, and with no warning whatsoever, Hedda prepares for the only act drastic enough to free herself from her insufferable life. Retiring to the inner chamber, her wild energy erupts as a frenzied dance tune on her piano, and Hedda is chastised by her husband for disrupting the propriety of preserving a calm, mournful atmosphere following the deaths of Aunt Rina and Eilert. Sticking her head out between the curtains after his protests that she be quiet, Hedda announces with a sense of finality that she will indeed be quiet: "And Aunt Julie. And of all the rest of them... I shall be silent in future" (263). Drawing the curtains together again, Hedda once again retires to her inner chamber, a micro-parlor that houses her only belongings – the portrait of her father and her old piano. On the latter, she plays the overture to her suicide – a wild dance melody. Seconds later, with no warning, she shoots herself in the temple, channeling all of her repressed energy into a single, momentous irruption.

Ibsen presents Hedda's suicide with great ambiguity. It occurs with an almost unnatural speed, with less preparation and less introspection than all of her other irruptions thus far.[8] Moreover, Ibsen keeps the act offstage: a shot is heard and we witness the personifications of convention (Tesman, Mrs. Elvsted, and Brack) rise to their feet as if they have finally been awakened. Hedda kills herself in exactly the same way as she had dreamed Eilert would. The ambiguity of that fantasy carries over into the reality of this one: it is a shocking, unexpected, radically transgressive act, incomprehensible to those who witness it.[9] Tesman and Brack are shocked, not at the loss of Hedda herself, but at her violation of social decorum:

> TESMAN [*yelling at Brack*]. Shot herself! Shot herself in the temple! Think of that!
> BRACK [*half prostrate in the armchair*]. But, good God almighty... people don't do such things! (264)

Like all of Hedda's violent acts, Ibsen portrays Hedda's suicide as excessive and irrational. John Lahr notes that "Hedda's own suicide, when it comes, is not an act of contrition but an act of will, the only gesture of freedom left to her. It is intended as a perverse transcendence, a form of negative creation" (111).

Undoubtedly, Hedda achieves "release", but Ibsen's attitude towards Hedda's release for the sake of social freedom (like Goethe's attitude towards Werther's suicide done for the sake of moral freedom) remains inconclusive. Indeed, the aftermath of each suicide raises more questions than answers. Although Hedda's suicide is not botched in the way of Werther's, the received effect is surely not what either one had envisioned. One concludes that if Ibsen meant Hedda's suicide to be received as an absolute triumph over social convention – a conclusive break with what restricted her – he might not have ended the scene (and the play) with Brack's shocked response, "people don't do such things!" Indeed, perhaps people *don't* do such things, but Hedda has, and Ibsen resists definitive judgment on her act.

Rilke's words about Ibsen might once again apply, now specifically to Hedda's suicide: "The two ends that you had bent together sprang apart; your insane energy escaped from the elastic rod, and your work was undone." Ibsen presents Hedda's suicide – her quest for social freedom – as, more than anything else, this "undoing".

Endnotes:

1. *New York Times* April 21, 1891.
2. All page citations from *Hedda Gabler* are from Henrik Ibsen's *Four Major Plays*, Trans. James McFarlane and Jens Arup. Oxford University Press, 1966.
3. The other two objects are her piano and General Gabler's pistols, both tools for the expression of her violent energy that none of the other characters are able understand and for which Hedda has no rational explanation.
4. Rilke's insight into Ibsen's aloofness and standoffishness might be applied to Hedda as a character: "Who could understand that at the end you did not want to leave the window...You wanted to see the passerby; for the thought came to you that perhaps one day you could make something of them..." (Rilke 2008, 62).
5. The violent burning of Eilert and Mrs. Tesman's manuscript – their "child" – draws attention to Hedda's invincible impulse to seek revenge and to reestablish an unmediated connection to Eilert, a connection she hopes to use to control Eilert. It also illustrates the extent to which Hedda will go to get what she wants. It is a relatively innocuous "killing" – one that leads to a progressive increase in violence culminating in Hedda's suicide.
6. The fact that in Classical iconography grape leaves also represent a ripe maturity with a sense that decay will soon follow foreshadows Lövborg's (and, by extension, Hedda's) end.
7. In a note on his translation, Michael Meyer writes: "When Judge Brack tells Hedda where Lovborg has shot himself, he must make it clear to her that the bullet has destroyed his sexual organs, otherwise

Hedda's reaction makes no sense." Hedda's reactions, however, never "make sense" (*Hedda Gabler*, trans. Michael Meyer, London, 1962, p. 117).

8. The speed with which Hedda's commits suicide stands out within Ibsen's dramaturgy. There is not even the brief discussion as there is in *The Wild Duck* where Relling predicts that Hedvig's suicide will be transformed into the emphatic story that Hjalmar will tell.
9. Charles Lyons, like many critics, misses a crucial point with regard to Hedda's suicide: it is an irrational irruption – it makes "no sense" rationally. Lyons, however, attempts to explain it in various rational ways: as an alternative to a loss of control, as one demanded by Ibsen's sexual paradigm, as an erotic "marriage", as an aesthetic object, as a renunciation of the erotic female, as a romanticized version of reality, and so on. The multiplicity of explanations alone suggest that there is no explanation for her act.

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Writing as a Humanities Ph.D. Student: Discovering the Writer in You, Exploring New Venues, and Rebuffing Criticisms

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Abstract:

Humanities graduate students often receive conflicting information about what, where, and how to publish. While publishing can be a stressful process, there are many opportunities for humanities graduate students to succeed. To be successful as a writer, though, graduate students must develop confidence, explore new avenues for publishing, and steel themselves against the inevitable deluge of criticism from reviewers, graduate colleagues, and even faculty in one's department. To do that, I present several ways graduate students can become professional, scholarly writers, different avenues in which to publish, ways to develop one's writing style and experience, and some advice on enduring criticism, which is unavoidable in scholarly life. This article argues that graduate students should publish and that with enough time and patience, the process can be rewarding and enjoyable.

Keywords: Graduate writing, Humanities Ph.D., anxiety, professionalization, graduate student

Writing as a graduate student can be a daunting task (Bloom, 1981). Graduate students may be seeking research jobs, teaching jobs, or work in the private or non-profit sector, all of which will require writing in graduate school, and much of which will require attempting to publish that work. Even well-trained Ph.D. students from great masters programs might have relied on advisers, the proverbial riding on the coattails, for sound writing. Some masters programs have relatively little writing instruction and others have non-thesis options. And while it may be easy to assume that all "legitimate" Ph.D. students, of course, had ample instruction in writing and that no "real" Ph.D. student would ever be admitted to an above average Ph.D. program without having completed a thesis, scholars across the humanities and social sciences know that entering Ph.D. students have diverse experiences in writing, and some of those experiences are either pedagogically lacking or non-existent (see Bloom, 1981). Furthermore, writing may be particularly difficult for those students who come from the professional world or have taken several years off between school. These barriers are of course the tip of the iceberg as there are a host of anxiety-provoking issues related to graduate study (Daly and Miller, 1975; Daly, 1985; Woodrow, 2011).

Sometimes the problem is advisors and professors more than students or previous programs (Bloom, 1981). Ph.D. students might have advisors or mentors that write less now or perhaps publish mostly invited essays that often undergo lower, if any, standards of peer-review. Professors might focus on content and not form in seminar classes. Some students may be taught writing by professors who are themselves bad or reluctant writers. And, yet other times, professors may be so slow in getting revisions back, or fail to get them back to students, that students do not know what to fix in their writing. All of these situations make writing difficult in graduate school. As a result, graduate students may not be able to write at the appropriate level, in style and substance, to produce work sufficiently robust to publish in peer-reviewed publications (Gray and Drew, 2008). And, that can be discouraging, creating a self-doubt cycle that hurts a graduate student's ability to ever be published.

I offer several suggestions for developing as a professional writer (attending university workshops, reading about writing, forming writing groups), time management (identifying where seminar papers might fit in disciplinary journals, spending time on citations on the front end, and reducing fear of rejection), trying new publishing avenues (op-ed writing, book reviews, department or disciplinary newsletters, and blogging) to improve writing and editing and get acclimated to the publishing world. These practices can foster an ethic of writing among graduate students that they will need no matter where they seek employment.

I also respond to common criticisms to my suggestions (graduate students don't know enough to write book reviews, there's no time to write or read outside of a Ph.D. program, graduate school is too competitive to work with fellow graduate students, etc.). While academia trades in pessimism (there are no jobs, there's no time to write, teaching prevents me from writing), enabling students to succeed in writing and publishing can help build their self-esteem through the job search process and during the rigorous later stages of graduate programs, as well as prepare them for successful academic careers.

Work on writing

It is difficult to be excited about writing, let alone good at it, if graduate students don't work on writing. Working on writing can be difficult because graduate students are often expected to teach, help with a professor's research, participate in light service activities, attend class, and have time for self-care. It is often hard to fit writing in, but one of the best ways to do it is to work on writing even if it does not produce tangible graduate student writing.

Graduate students should study good writing. This means reading about authors who write and who write about writing. In an area of self-help books, many with little evidence to support their claims, graduate students may bristle at this idea. After all, all one needs to do is take the time to write. But, writing is rarely that easy, days are busy, and try as they might, graduate students are not always disciplined. Writing is not a natural talent that one either has or does not. The best writers work on their craft. Read the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* and interviews with authors and

thinkers you enjoy. Sometimes learning that other writers struggle with writer's block or family distractions can help position graduate student writers in a more thoughtful, realistic writing milieu. Learn what motivated writers and what writers do. This process helps the graduate student locate themselves in the subject position of writer.

Talk with people in your department about writing. Ask: Who do you think writes well in this discipline? What fiction do you read? What was the hardest thing for you to overcome as a scholarly writer? How have you improved as a writer? These questions will encourage graduate students to think about becoming not just writers, but better writers.

Graduate students should also take advantage of on-campus and off-campus resources. Mullen (2006) described the process of becoming an academic writer as one of joining a culture, and that can be difficult to do without the training and tools. If there is a graduate student writing center or center for research and learning, then visiting these places might very well connect the graduate student with better writing resources. Graduate students might attend job talks or form writing groups to get a better sense of how others convey ideas. Writing for class and attending pro-seminars might not be enough. Think about reaching out to someone not in one's own department as a writing partner or for help editing. This kind of experience can not only improve writing and confidence in one's own department but also help graduate students understand that other students in other disciplines are going through the same difficulties.

One might also work with other writers at other schools or in the community, utilizing websites like MeetUp and Facebook to connect with people who care about writing. Often times graduate students have a poor understanding of what their college or university offers because of the demands of being in a specific department. That should not prevent the thoughtful graduate student from reaching out to others on- and off-campus for support.

The point is simple: get better at writing by studying and practicing writing. Just as one wouldn't assume they'd get better at free throw shooting by playing in a basketball game or better at knitting by visiting craft stores, one shouldn't assume they'll get better at writing by being in graduate school or by simply drudging through class writing. There's no shame in skill or process development, particularly if it empowers struggling writers to be less worried about writing and quicker to approach writing projects with vigor and passion (see Harris, 2006).

Time management

Time management isn't simply about finding time to write. Many writing manuals will urge writers to set aside time each day to write, and that's certainly not bad advice, but there are so many other time-saving ideas in the writing process that can help make graduate students become better writers.

These ideas include identifying where seminar papers might fit in disciplinary journals early in the writing process, spending time on citations on the front end of the writing process, and

reducing fear of rejection. These rarely discussed ideas, or rarely fostered ideas, promise to make graduate students better, more confident writers, no matter when they write.

The first idea requires work but promises big rewards. Aim high for journals, but don't send every article to the top journal in one's field or to journals for which one's work is a bad fit. Every paper scholars produce is not of the same quality. That is okay! Many of us can point to scholars who have produced magisterial work in our respective fields but also delivered some less than stellar entries into our academic communities. Scholars have fine careers working in second-tier journals. Graduate students who are realistic about their work can be more positive about their writing if they decrease chances for rejection. Of course, one's employability is often improved by top journal placements, but if graduate students want to work with heavier teaching loads or at less prestigious schools for any number of reasons, then publishing in the top journals might not matter. If one's career goals are centered on teaching, then one should not worry about writing and placement as much because that writing is less important to one's career. In the current academic environment, quantity should not be discounted for quality. Many scholars will be better served by producing more work even if it is in lesser tier journals. No matter what one's scholarly goals, one can save much time by aiming for likely placements as opposed to going through several months or years of the peer review process in multiple journals all the while experiencing self-doubt. Put in the work necessary to understand the complexities of journal publishing to best help your confidence and career (Stoilescu and McDougall, 2010).

Citations are one of the main reasons the writing process can bog down. In a footnote-heavy discipline like law or history, footnotes might take longer than the article proper. But, a wise graduate student works on citations early so the writing process does not end in a grinding confusion of minutia and computer file- and note-checking. Of course, some scholars love citations. But, the most efficient way to finish an article is to not end a writing session without putting in the proper citations. This also gives the writer something that looks more like the finished product and, as a result, may provide a confidence boost at the end of a session. Do not save the worst stuff for the end because one may risk disincentivizing writing.

Start thinking about rejection early. It happens to everyone. Rather than always thinking positively, start thinking about the likelihood of rejection. Become comfortable with it. Scholars are rejected regularly. Novelists too. John Grisham and Steven King had trouble at the beginning and now they sell every idea they put to paper. Most graduate students have been rejected by other graduate programs, undergraduate sororities or teams, and potential significant others. And, they survived. Those rejections might sting, they might hurt an awful lot, but graduate students can build on their experiences to gain a little perspective on life. A rejected article will happen, and graduate students will survive. Timothy S. Rich (2013, 379) puts it this way: "With a thick skin and an appreciation for the standards of publication, graduate students can certainly find outlets for their work". Rather than having one's positive thinking dashed, develop the wherewithal to deal with negative news. A strong commitment to persevering will be a much more enabling force than

constant feel-good-ery. Use previous rejections as evidence that these rejections will be tolerable and that one can come out the other end stronger and smarter than before. It might seem hard, but it will make graduate students more resilient writers less likely to be thrown off course during the latter half of the writing process. It will also save valuable time by allowing graduate students to not wallow in despair upon rejection.

These time-saving techniques can reduce the psychic jolts common to many writers who have not thought critically about writing and time. Smarter writers plan thoroughly and use their time wisely because well-used time is success enabling. Rather than fearing rejection, become comfortable with it even while you try to reduce its likelihood. The more graduate students can accept rejection, the more they'll free themselves to write better.

Trying new publishing avenues

Increasingly academics are asked to make their work intelligible to the public. Rather than debating the merit of this idea, it makes more sense to acknowledge that scholars and students alike may be asked to communicate their ideas to a wider audience. But Ph.D. students may feel pressure to only work in one media or to only contribute to peer-reviewed journals. Narrowing one's focus neither builds confidence nor helps Ph.D. students express themselves confidently to the public. There are, however, options for Ph.D. students to get their feet wet by publishing in non-traditional venues.

First, publishing is as much about confidence as it is about skill and knowledge. The best-published authors are not necessarily the smartest, the hardest working, or the most novel. Most scholars know of a workhorse who publishes time and time again but never seems to publish anything particularly significant. Likewise, many of us know someone who can barely communicate over email or interpersonally, but seems to produce strong academic writing. The reason authors succeed is that they have confidence. They are confident that their work will find a home, that rejection is not a personal condemnation, and that writing makes them better thinkers, teachers, and members of academic communities.

Yet, how can graduate students develop confidence in the competitive and arguably high-stakes world of academia? One simple approach beyond the idealistic "write X words every day" advice that graduate students receive is to write smaller projects that one can place so that one develops a style and the production habits necessary to bolster one's confidence for bigger projects. If one's going to write 500 words per day, why not make them publishable as a book review or an op-ed? Seeing one's name in print always provides a boost, so graduate students would be advised to not discount the importance of smaller publishable projects in bolstering their confidence.

Second, pay (almost) no mind to the critics. Of course, everyone has a writing strategy and an idea about the best publishing venues. Not every scholar's strategy or preferred journal is another scholar's preference. Graduate students risk criticism blocking their writing altogether rather than shaping it positively. Do not write book reviews at the expense of turning your prospectus in on

time, but do write an op-ed after accomplishing a thorough literature review or editing a class paper to give you the boost necessary to commit, re-commit, and finish other projects.

Third, seriously consider book reviews as important graduate student work. The book review is ubiquitous in scholarly publishing. Book reviews in a discipline's top journal can be as significant, if not more so, as a lower placed peer-review article. But, graduate students often receive two criticisms from professors and graduate student mentors: 1) there's no benefit to reviewing books, and 2) you don't know enough to review books. Both of these criticisms miss the mark and deny the many benefits of publishing book reviews.

Some critics argue that book reviews do not matter in the scholarly enterprise. That is wrong for a number of reasons. Book reviews convey knowledge about advances in disciplines with which no one has time to keep up. It is impossible to read every new monograph, textbook, or popular press option. Book reviews help direct scholars' attention to the worthwhile, well-argued, and interesting (Gibbs, 2013; Lee et al., 2010). Book reviews also help connect reviewers to scholars, authors, and journal editors. A Ph.D. student might have little reason or chance to contact Professor X from Top University, but a query to that professor who also happens to serve as the book review editor for Second Tier Journal may open up networking opportunities. Furthermore, a good book review gets noticed. A graduate student who writes an engaging review or perhaps even a review essay might very well get more reads than someone who published a highly-specialized article even in the best journal. A good book review demonstrates critical reading and thinking, and a dedication to help other scholars do their hard work of scholarship.

Other critics argue that graduate students don't know enough about a discipline to write book reviews. This criticism seems reductive, essentializing, and to throw serious doubt on the early years of graduate study. Graduate students may be new to disciplines, but they also might have years of experience in the discipline from undergraduate and earlier graduate study along with professional experience in the subject matter. That experience matters and putting that to bear on a book review is valuable. Graduate students also learn how to construct sound arguments early on in the graduate school process. Even if a graduate student does not know the entire discipline in year one or two, they likely possess the skills necessary to weigh competing evidence, assess writing styles, and think through plot, narrative arc, and timing. A firm knowledge of how to make arguments can be just as helpful as subject level mastery in assessing a text. A poorly argued or written text is unlikely to make a good monograph even if the author has an encyclopedic knowledge of the subject matter. Graduate students should be comfortable engaging a text particularly as they hone their critical mind on grading student papers and tests.

The benefits of reviewing books are many (Stoilescu and McDougall, 2010). One important benefit is that reviewers often receive the book free. Graduate student travel and professional development budgets are often low and graduate school even with a stipend or fellowship can be expensive. While full-time faculty may scoff at the idea, free books are helpful for students who might not otherwise be able to afford them. Book reviewers often have the option of selecting an

electronic or print copy, which accommodates research and reading preferences. Book reviewers also learn about new ideas in their field. Because book review editors prefer books published in the last two years, reviewing books can be an excellent way to stay abreast of new developments in one's field. Because journals often have relationships with publishers, a book reviewer may be able to get a copy quicker than if they asked for one themselves or if they waited for an examination or desk copy (and one can avoid the calls and emails from publisher representatives seeking information). Book reviews also help acquaint reviewers with a journal's style and scope. Graduate students may struggle deciphering themes from a journal's last few issues or the "Aim & Scope" description. Familiarizing oneself with style requirements, editors' correspondence standards, and production time when completing a book review can provide valuable insight for later work with that journal.

Book reviews are not the only shorter publishable work available for graduate students. Op-eds and blog posts also represent opportunities for graduate students to build confidence as well as connect them with exciting opportunities. Years ago, it might have been easy to laugh at someone claiming a blog post was scholarly work or that anyone read it, but those years are long gone. Blogs often have higher readerships than traditional print media and are increasingly well-regarded in scholarship. Blog posts vary from multi-mediated presentations to the heavily footnoted. Some blogs focus on disciplinary news while others are decidedly political. Either way, blogs are engaging forums for scholarly exchange. Beware the trolls, however. Graduate students will need to develop a thick skin as the Internet opens up writers to all sorts of mean-spirited, untruthful, and outlandish criticisms. Prepare for those opposed to your writing style, subject matter, political view, and even you personally to make their presence known. On the other hand, graduate students looking to connect with their supporters and opponents might find blogging engaging even with the occasional dose of vitriol. Op-eds also engage a broader public and may open doors for collaboration with community and opinion leaders. Graduate students interested in working with the local Kiwanis club, Chamber of Commerce, or La Raza organization might find that these organizations become more interested in partnerships once they get a sense of the student's commitment to local issues and the community. Op-eds also help graduate students connect research to the present-day political dramas unfolding. In the same way that the podcast *Backstory* connects history to current news, op-eds help connect writers to matters of local interest and may provide a forum for sharing expertise with the people who need it most. These smaller publishing opportunities offer significant benefits for graduate students and will assuredly boost the confidence of graduate students when their name appears in print or on the fourth screen.

Conclusion

These practices can foster an ethic of writing among graduate students that they will need no matter where they seek employment. Not many people are able to avoid writing. It comes up when writing reports for managers and writing grant proposals for nonprofit organizations. The more comfortable one is with writing, the more prepared one will be for writing success. Stoilescu

and McDougall (2010, 85) write, "Although intellectual and academic abilities are very important, we argue that these are not always enough to sustain writing." These authors are correct, and their claim supports graduate students devoting time to writing and not simply to one's subject matter.

Writing can be hard, but it is not impossible. Rather than holding oneself up to lofty ideals (write every day, publish in the top journals, don't write for the popular press, and never be rejected), graduate students should accept that writing is difficult for even the best scholars and the most productive scholars. Study the craft, find allies, and be comfortable with bumps in the road. One doesn't need to be perfect, lose connection with friends and family, or wait for some mythical blossoming of sublime writing. Rather, work hard and be humble. The best writers are always working on getting better and able to deal with failure. Teaching oneself these ideas early in the graduate school experience can make writing in and after graduate school enjoyable and successful. Things worth doing are worth working at and even your professors, mentors, and colleagues might not be giving you the best advice. Rest assured that many other graduate students struggle with the same issues; seek them out and don't be ashamed to commiserate. While graduate school can be cut-throat, even hostile, many of your colleagues will appreciate your honesty and openness as you work together to deal with the tumult of scholarly writing.

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