the quint

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EDITORIAL

It is June. After snow in May, this issue of *the quint* welcomes the summer sun and war temperatures. We've fnally shed our winter jackets and fur coats. This June, new and returning writers have joined *the quint*. Another eclectic offering of thought provoking articles, stunning poetry, and beautiful photos—this issue is designed for readers who enjoy the abstract and the concrete.

Showcasing articles and art from Canada, the United States, India and Italy, our thirty first *quint* begins with Michael Jasper's interesting (and entertaining) insights into the effect of Charles Darwin's heritage on his evolutionary thinkin in "'Breeding in-and-in': Darwin and the Degenerate Aristocrats". Sarah Jiménez Ferrera Sullivan's examination of Jacques Derrida's ideas in "Deconstructing language in Beckett's *Endgame*" follows, probing the effectiveness of Beckett's words. Following one finds Jennifer Vanderheyden's "The Resilience of Women in the Face of Trauma" is a courageous and sensitive personal and academic meditation on the challenges faced by women dealing with trauma. An important examination of social action combatting social exclusion, John Charlton and John G. Hansen's "Visualizing Indigenous Perspectives of how the Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Program (SCYAP) Addresses Social Exclusion" showcases the importance of positive role models and community support to a healthy cultural fabric. Moriah N. Hampton's "Understanding Descent as Subjection in Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*" offers a thoughtful reading of Barnes' narrative via Continental philosophy and psycology. Then Ann Manov's thought-provoking "Ugly Secretaries: Toward a Minor Literature" asks the reader to examine the relationsips between narrative freedom and restraint, monstrosity and subtlety when secretaries are protagonists. Dean Kritikos' perceptive and nuanced discussion, "Angels of Latent History: A Borgesian Current in Contemporary Fiction" which traces Borges' lineage in contemporary fiction, is a must-read for those interested in this author's influence on recent works of literature. Joseph Hurtgen's reading resistance to top down control in "Archival Resistance in 'Johnny Mnemonic' and *Neuromancer*" also opens a new conversation, one about William Gibson's works. Then Meghna Mudaliar's The Gendered Self and the Invention of the Kashmiri Identity in I,Lalla" offers wonderful insights into the feminine sensibility found in Lal Ded's poetry. This *quint* concludes with Antonio Sanna's "Ukranian Folkloric Legends: from Gogol to Oleg Stepchenko's *Viy / Forbidden Empire*" is a balanced and enlightening discussion about Gogol's original and Stepchenko's remake.

Of course, no *quint* is complete without its creative complement. We are so privileged to be able to again showcase Jefferson's Holdridge's skillfully condensed and incredibly powerful lyrics, and, to present for the first time in *the quint*, Fathima E.V.'s beautifully structured verse. My visual offerings of the magic hours found outside The Pas, MB, invite you to consider the beauty beside our roads. One only needs to stop travelling and step out of the car to be astounded and delighted by the North.

I should not keep you from this issue of *the quint* any longer. Here's to good reading and a long, warm, and wonderful summer vacation! *the quint* will be back in September with more offerings, just in time for students returning to continue their studies.

Sue Matheson
Editor

"Breeding-in-and-in": Darwin and the Degenerate Aristocrats

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Scholars have long begun to examine Charles Darwin's evolutionary writings in order to discover how and to what extent his cultural and social biases slanted his scientific discourse. Dov Ospovat writes in *The Development of Darwin's Theory* (1981) that we must try to view Darwin's evolutionary thought, at least in part, as "a microcosm of the more general development from a philosophy of nature and man appropriate for an agrarian and aristocratic world to one suitable for the age of industrial capitalism" (233). Moore further defines "the general development" of which Ospovat speaks as "the transition from theistic to naturalistic cosmologies in Victorian Britain against the backdrop of the professionalism of science" (439). Moore states further that the professionalism of science is a facet of a larger change in the pattern of social ordination and subordination within Victorian society. In addition, taking advantage of an infusion of previously unpublished material, Desmond and Moore published their biography of Darwin in 1991: their purpose, to progress Darwinian scholarship by grasping "the full enigma of Darwin's life," something not attempted by the "curiously bloodless" previous biographies (xviii). A major component of their thesis is that Darwin's notebooks "make plain that competition, free trade, imperialism, racial extermination, and sexual inequality were written into the equation from the start" (xxi).

The present essay will also explore Darwin's paradoxical roles as both operant and object of Ospovat's "general development" and of Moore's "transition" while illuminating a part of the positive unconscious of Darwin's early evolutionary discussions. Specifically, I will draw upon Desmond and Moore's thesis, but I will train my eye towards a more focused examination of a few particular aspects of Darwin's cultural and social conditioning: that is, the economic conservation of energy by means of close interbreeding in order to preserve family wealth, the negative biological effects of such practices, and the Darwin's attempt to reconcile the two into a unified scientific system.

I will, finally, mention the rhetorical methods which such a conundrum and the attempts to resolve that conundrum demand. I will examine *The Origin of Species* and its precursors, with special attention devoted to those passages which link reproductive practice and economic preservation into a natural model which is most favorable, in Darwin's view, for the operation of natural selection. These passages are found in Chapter Four of *Origin*, which deals with the mechanics of natural selection. I am particularly interested in how his experiences with his own family and within his own economic community insinuate themselves into his portrayal of the natural world.

In *Orign,* Darwin insists that natural selection can act "only when there are places in the natural polity of a district which can be better occupied by the modification of some of its existing inhabitants;" furthermore, that the process of natural selection is "greatly

retarded by free intercrossing" (82). Free intercrossing tends to generate "intermediate forms," that is, sterile hybrids, which blur the boundary that distinguishes one variety from another. However, Darwin does, paradoxically, allow in the same chapter that free intercrossing, which is the invasion of a different or more highly organized energy from one district into another, need not hinder the effects of natural selection in every case, provided the organisms in the invaded district exercise a behavioral prerogative which recognizes the necessity of cultural and reproductive, as well as environmental, self-containment:

> I can bring forth a considerable body of facts showing that within the same area, two varieties of the same animal may long remain distinct, from haunting different stations, from breeding at slightly different seasons, or from the individuals from each variety preferring to pair together. (79)

These passages reflect the cognitive and rhetorical difficulties Darwin encountered when he attempted to create a statistically-based monistic theory of science which tries to quantify and predict the complexities of human social, cultural, and psychic energies according to the same physical and biological principles which govern the energies of the natural world. These difficulties are further complicated by the conflicting nature of the cultural influences and scientific assumptions which inform his early writings. The passages quoted above, for instance, subtly turn natural selection from a random process into a process that is pseudo-Lamarkian and behavior-driven: "the individuals *preferring* to pair together." In these passages, Darwin tries to legitimize his family's propensity for equating economic with reproductive energy, and for thus preserving

family capital—capital, the "stored energy" of a culture, according to Adams (297)—by marrying and reproducing only among themselves. Darwin's own marriage was the fourth first-cousin marriage in his generation of Darwin-Wedgwoods. Such social practices, it seemed to Darwin, were worthy of preservation, even worthy of representation as a positive evolutionary force, to the extent that his assumption was able to color Darwin's acceptance and interpretation of contrary evidence. Darwin's early notebooks show him trying to spin the biological proof of "inbreeding depression" in such a way as to present incest—"breeding in & in"—as a positive evolutionary force.

In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Lady Catherine de Bourgh describes to Elizabeth Bennet the "peculiar" engagement of her daughter to her nephew, Mr. Darcy: "From their infancy, they have been intended for each other" (355). Lady Catherine further gives Elizabeth the bio-economical reasons for the engagement:

> My daughter and nephew are formed for each other. They are descended on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and onthe father's, from respectable, honourable, and ancient, thoughuntitled families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid. (356)

In spite of contemporary pretensions to the contrary, Darwin is more of Lady Catherine's Georgian world than the more progressive mid-Victorian world of Marx and Engels, and of Thomas Huxley. Both Annan and Schweber discuss Darwin's father and grandfather, and their active Whig circle, as liberal-leaning Dissenters who were relegated to the periphery of the British scientific community in the final decades of the eighteenth century. A delegitimizing of liberal ideas and French science had resulted when the

Terror and Robespierre alienated the European middle classes from the materialistic social theories which had sparked the Revolution. In 1791, Joseph Priestley's house and chapel were gutted by a mob. This was part of the middle-class backlash against the radical Dissenters like Priestley, Erasmus Darwin, and the Lunatick Society, whose egalitarian religion was equated with atheism and lambasted as the sort of "demoralizing philosophy" which had originally given birth to the Revolution (Desmond and Moore 11). Although marginalized—Priestley fled to America and Erasmus Darwin gave up his hopes of becoming Poet Laureate—this community remained viable and its descendents formed the nucleus of a dominant, socially-conscious polity of scientists in the 1850s, 60s, and 70s. Charles Darwin inherited from this intellectual sect the culture-science monism of the Enlightenment and the *Naturphilosophie* of the Romantics, both of which alchemized psychic and social forces into physical forces (Richards 369). In his "Old and Useless Notes," Charles Darwin pondered this alchemy:

> Hence there are two great systems of laws the organic & inorganic. --The
> inorganic are probably one principle for connect of electricitychemical
> attraction, heat & gravity is probable.—And the organic laws probably
> have some unknown relation to them.—(34)

Darwin is never quite able to distinguish between the organic and the inorganic, never quite able to excise the social and the cultural from the scientific and the material in his early evolutionary discourse. For example, he writes in his *Beagle* diary his first impression of Sydney, Australia:

> It is a most magnificent testimony to the power of the British nation: here,

in less promising country, scores of years have effectedmany times more than centuries in South America—My first feeling was to congratulate myself that I was born an Englishman. (396)

This encomium of imperialism appears, rhetorically altered from the joyful noise of cultural self-satisfaction into the authoritative language of observation and scientific analysis; the tenor, however, remains, in Chapter Four of *Origin*:

> new forms…which already have been victorious over many competitors,
> will be those that will spread most widely, and will give rise to the greatest
> number of new varieties and species. Theywill thus play a more important
> role in the changing history of the organic world. (80-81)

Initially, Darwin believed that imperialism, itself a largely economic practice, was a catalyst for positive evolutionary change. Primitive societies need Caesars in order to further their development.

In the *Beagle* diary, Darwin inveighs against the "perfect equality" among a tribe of Fuegians and indicates that such an operational model for theoretical communism will inhibit—perhaps even *prohibit*—"their civilization." He further proposes that unless a strong ruler were to arise and improve order and organization, "there must be an end to all hopes of bettering their condition" (141). This is certainly not the Darwin whom Marx adopted as a mentor, and, indeed, much of Darwin's early writings shows a man whose loyalties list noticeably toward the "age of industrial capitalism." These same prejudices, as we will see, will come to inform his thoughts on economics and reproduction.

Darwin's ardor for the city of Sydney was cooled by his contact with the individuals in Sydney "Society." He writes, "Amongst those who from their station in life, ought to rank with the best, many live in such open profligacy, that respectable people cannot associate with them" (*Beagle* 405). Such open profligacy, however, was part of Darwin's own heritage. Because of this fact, I argue, Darwin in his first evolutionary meditations presents a model in which a hermetic inbreeding system, but one in which the inhabitants have not lost their "passion" or their "sexual character," is the near-optimum environment for the generation of new and better species. Many of the preparatory notes for *Origin* concentrate on creating, not always out of whole cloth, the groundwork for this later argument.

Through his contact with the socially-conscious polity of scientists of which I spoke, Darwin absorbed many of the scientific assumptions which would form the foundation for his theory of natural selection. It would be valuable at this point to explore some of those assumptions in order to understand the roots of the cognitive dissonances which are present in both his early notebooks and in *Origin*. Abrams has shown that in the conceptual scheme of the *Naturphilosophen*, a number of psychic energies—love, for example—were "extended beyond the human realm to all modes of cosmic connectivity, including the natural forces" (297). Darwin never shed this Romantic influence, allowing all his life that will and morality arose as a consequence of the natural laws governing the organization of life energy. He wrote in *Origin* that "*all* morality has grown up by evolution" (214).[1] He experienced serious cognitive and rhetorical difficulties when he

1 This ideal, a scientifically quantifiable origin for morality is, of course, the basis for natural theology dating back to before Hume. William Whewell, for instance, wrote in the 1850s that "morality…in order to become a portion of exact truth, must assume, as all sciences must, a technical form." Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England (1852).

attempted to reconcile the biological laws of sexual morality with his desire to posit incest for economic gain as a progressive energy.

Darwin's initial definition of life borrowed heavily from the "cosmic connectivity" between cultural and biological energies and led, after passing through the filters of his own aristocratic assumptions regarding nature, society, and democracy, to a system of evolution that is expressed as a curious amalgam of Cartesian materialism, Greek atomism, static creationism, and progressive Whig liberalism. He first defines the cosmos as a self-contained system of matter in motion. This motion, which acts upon atoms and superinduces their organization, is the physical manifestation of a cosmic "life energy:" this is Bernoulli's *vis via* (Wolf 71) and Haller's *vis insita* (Richards 31-32) in the eighteenth century. Moreover, both Sloan and Desmond and Moore connect Darwin to this tradition via Owen's concept of "life force," which inspired Darwin's early theory of pangenesis (Sloan 405; Desmond and Moore 223).

"Life Energy" is a physical property of existence and is governed by physical laws of equilibrium and the conservation of energy. It is a zero-sum game. Because the total amount of energy must remain in equilibrium, it cannot be added to or subtracted from indiscriminately. The infusion of new energy into one district must be accompanied by its effusion from another. Since the amount of "life energy" is constant, organisms cannot be ranked according to a standard of quantity of energy alone. Instead, "higher" and "lower" creatures—the fact that there is such a hierarchy is simply a given for Darwin and for most Victorian thinkers—are so defined and ranked according to the level of organization of their life energy. Darwin himself recognized that vagaries of such a

hierarchy: "I am aware that it is hardly possible to define clearly what is meant by the organization being higher or lower. But on one will probably dispute that the butterfly is higher than the caterpillar" (Beer 131).

Clearly, since the justifications for classifying the butterfly as "higher" than the caterpillar are the product of a cultural bias which sees metamorphosis as linear and inherently progressive and, perhaps as well, the product of an aesthetic bias which sees the butterfly as more physically attractive, Darwin had adopted the Romantic definition of life and, in spite of his Whig inclination against such an anti-democratic concept, accepted that definition's implied chain of being. "Higher" creatures have a much more highly organized life energy; "lower" creatures, a life energy less so. Levin writes that "'Higher' simply refers to capacity for adaptation, which, for Darwin, usually but not even here inevitably, means more complex organizations" (112). Natural selection, therefore, improves the organization of energy, and that is how it is, in the main, a progressive process. In *Origin*, Darwin states that successful modifications are those which are changes "of the right nature in various parts," of an organism's "organization" (82). Furthermore, late in life, as Darwin penned his *Autobiography*, his rhetoric still upheld, albeit subversively, this hierarchy. He attributes his state of being an "anaesthetic man"[2] to the dissipation over time of his mind's energies:

> My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general
>
> laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the
>
> atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which thehigher tastes depend, I

cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organized…would not

I suppose have thus suffered. (139)

(It is interesting to note that the machine, which was the epitome of efficiency and organization in Josiah Wedgwood's time, had, by the 1870s, become a metaphor for the degenerative effects on humans of urban and industrial existence.)

The principle of conservation of energy posits, as one of its consequences, that there is an inverse relation between reproductive—and in the case of the Darwin-Wedgwoods, its concomitant, economic—energy and the mental and moral energies. Malthus wrote of the reproductive energies of man, and this ratio between mental energy and reproductive energy forms the basis for Herbert Spencer's *Theory of Population* in 1852, seven years before the publication of *Origin* and during the years of its first drafts. Darwin believed it possible based on this ratio that the mental organization of his generation of Darwin-Wedgwoods had been "dissipated"—a word borrowed from Lavoisier and which became a popular Victorian metaphor for a person who lacked the requisite moral energies demanded by the Victorian natural polity—dissipated by the "fashionable" and indiscriminate effusion of reproductive energy by his immediate ancestors, most notably his grandfather, Erasmus. Desmond and Moore speak of the "adulteries and ménages" that "cemented" polite society in Erasmus Darwin's day (10). Charles Darwin wrote, "My biggest bugbear is hereditary weakness" (Burkhardt and Smith 5:14).

Darwin seems to have had cause for apprehension. He had grown up in a family circle hostile to "invasion" from the outside. He wrote late in life that, as a schoolboy, he was "rather below the common standard in intellect" (*Autobiography* 28). He bemoans

2 See Stevens, L. Robert. "Darwin's Humane Reading: The Anaesthetic Man Reconsidered." <u>Victorian Studies</u> 26:1 Autumn '82 51-63.

in that same book a youth wasted in the company of "dissipated, low-minded" young men (60). Darwin trembled for his moral organization. One of his grandfather's wives died inebriate; his uncle, Tom Wedgwood, suffered a nervous breakdown due to his "experimentation" with opium and other chemicals; his uncle Erasmus Darwin drowned himself in the River Derwent in Australia. Charles Darwin was also aware of medical disorders that could have, he believed, been a consequence of the entropic muddle of energy which "breeding in & in" had brought about. Elizabeth Wedgwood, for example, was dwarfish, with a pronounced curvature in her spine. Again, Darwin's marriage to Fanny was the fourth first-cousin marriage in his generation of Darwin-Wedgwoods. All of them had been orchestrated to preserve social and economic *status quo*. Darwin was convinced that his life energy—and energy already weakened before him—was being made progressively weaker in its self-consumptive economic isolation.

He perceived this most strongly in his own children. By 1859 he had already buried two children, Annie and Charles, both of whom had died young from natural causes. The signs were ominous for the rest. Henrietta was an invalid, fearfully obsessed with illness following Annie's death in 1851; Elizabeth was quiet, nervous, and dependent; George was constantly sick. Darwin wrote in *Origin* of the natural loss of vigor, the "inbreeding depression," he observed in nature. Owen's life force hypothesis, which we have seen did influence Darwin's evolutionary thought, suggested that the complexity of a species was inversely related to its life span as a species: that the longer a species existed per se, the less complex that species tended to be, as it had used its allotment of life energy in the process of modification toward formal perfection. Darwin wrote in *Transmutation*

Notebook B that "there does appear some connection shortness of existence or perfect species from many changes" (B29).

Herein rested the dilemma: the Victorian movement towards perfection carried within itself the seeds of its own demise, unless a new energy could be injected into the system. Biologically speaking, however, this new energy could only come about as a result of a better-adapted—a *higher*—form, or from the slow and random modification of existing forms. Both of these options, however, in addition to being contradictory *inter se*, were unthinkable to Darwin, smug in his position at the summit of the great progression of both psychic and cultural energies. This smugness, in spite of the fact that, by the 1850s, the metaphor of new infusion of energy revitalizing families and social institutions—even businesses and buildings—was not uncommon in the literature of the time.[3] Darwin, however, refused to accept the existence of a more organized energy than the one which marked his social circle. While on the *Beagle*, for example, he consistently translated Fuegian cultural practices or economic necessity as racial inferiority, and his distaste in pronounced. Of a Fuegian "criminal" he writes, "We found the place where he slept.—it positively afforded no more protection than the form of a hare.—How every little are the habits of such a being superior to that of an animal" (133). Moreover, of Jemmy Button and York Minster, whom he literally kidnapped from their native land in order to exhibit them in England, Darwin writes that they "must see the vast superiority of civilised over uncivilised habits" (143). I choose these two passages in particular because they illustrate Darwin's assumed hierarchy, and that this ranking is

3 See David Copperfield: the company of Spenlow and Jenkins is "quickened by the infusion of new blood;" David also notices of a derelict building that an attempt has been made to "infuse new blood" into the "dwindling frame." See also Daniel Deronda: "The dwindling energy of England is related directly to the insistence of descent through the male line." See also the "new blood" of the Rouncewells in Bleak House.

both individual—the lower organization of each Fuegian's psychic energies—as well as cultural—the higher organization, collectively, of the British psychic energies into a more highly organized culture.

The Victorian dilemma was that their cultural type, because of the higher organization of which they were most proud, was an agent of both progress and degeneration. Darwin seems to have solved this dilemma, with reservations and with moments of weakness or forgetfulness in his resolve—by positing as well as he could that the reproductive practices of his statistical type, his race, the landed, incomed Whig aristocracy, were those best suited for natural selection and the continued evolution of that race. His species can "remain distinct" by "haunting different stations, from breeding at slightly different seasons, or from the individuals...preferring to pair together" (*Origin* 79). His own family had been making such behavioral decisions for years.

In addition, Darwin early on skews data to fit his economic-behavioral hypothesis, or ignores those data which cannot be made to fit. He notes briefly in *Transmutation Notebook B* that breeding in and in had dissipated the "courage" of some dogs and produced "EFFEMINATE men" (D85). He states further that if breeding in and in were to continue for too long, "the organs would doubtless shrivel up" (D85). Darwin's strongest statement regarding interbreeding is this one:

> Generation being means to propagate & perpetuate differences (of body, mind & constitution) is in the end frustrated, when near relations, & therefore those very close are bred in to each other. (D177)

In the same notebook, however, and later in *Origin*, he also glosses over the effects of inbreeding depression in order to rationalize his family's economic reproductive practices, in spite of their depressive effects. For example, for sexual selection to operate there must first be sexual attraction, the directed and appropriate exercise of sexual passion. On this basis, Darwin can eliminate the immigration of better-adapted forms as an agent of natural selection because that sort of intercrossing leads, he states, to sterility. He notes in *Transmutation Notebook B* the "loss of *passion* in hybrids" (D177). Therefore, the Darwin-Wedgwood practice of *not* marrying outside their family is supported biologically, but Darwin must also more actively support the practice itself of breeding in and in. He must prove that it is, in fact, beneficial. He does this by latching on to an obscure and questionable notion that, for all its depressive effects, inbreeding actually *increases* passion and "sexual character," thereby increasing the number of sexual partners, and it is this respectable profligacy which drives natural selection. In *Transmutation Notebook B* Darwin notes that "*males* bred in and in *never lose passion*" (163), and that it is "odd" that the depressed creatures which are the result of inbreeding "*should have so much sexual character as they have*" (85). (The emphases in these passages are Darwin's own.) Furthermore, in *Transmutation Notebook C* Darwin quotes and responds to John Saunders Seabright, a Whig politician and agriculturalist, who had written,

> it follows that animals must degenerate, by being long bred from the same family, without the intermixture of any other blood, or from what is technically called *bred in and in*. (C133n; emphasis in original)

Seabright's statement is, of course, an expression of Darwin's greatest bugbear, and to

it Darwin responds peevishly in the margin, "does not take into account lose of desire (in hybrids)" (C133n), which statement indicates that Darwin, although he recognizes the phenomenon of inbreeding depression, still must believe that inbreeding is the only alternative as the impetus for his theory of natural selection. It is in these paradoxes that we can see most clearly the conflict between Darwin's science and his family's reproductive practices.

In the tangled bank of Darwin's early rhetoric, such contradictions and paradoxes are, in a sense, ultimately resolved. Krasner tells us that Darwin's rhetorical method utilizes techniques "designed to confuse and disorient the reader's mental vision" (119). Krasner's view is, however, that Darwin's disorienting techniques are verbal manifestations of his delightful "imagistic" perception. Krasner seems to give Darwin's cynical rhetorical manipulation the same tacit approval that Darwin himself gives to inbreeding in his notebooks and in *Origin*. Other "bio-rhetoricians" (See Lyne 35-55) find in Darwin's composition the sincere cognitive dissonance of a man whose perceptions can see and know only the individual, but who, in conforming to the inductive method of logic, must write about the statistical type (MacDonald 39-40). Bergmann, on the other hand, states that in *Origin*, Darwin imples that "what even the most intelligent and eager of men sees…depends as much on what he knows, on what is in his head, as on what is out there in nature" (85). In *Darwin's Plots*, Beer writes that, on the subject of invasion and colonization, Darwin "does not resolve the potential contradictions." Instead, he turns to "the metaphor of selective breeding" and

sets man's handiwork beside that of Nature, denigrating man's procedures in

opposition to "nature's productions" which are far "truer in character," thus demurring at man's exploitative procedures. But the contrary implication that colonization is inevitable (or even"right" in evolutionary terms) also survives, precisely because it is never brought sharply into the focus of attention. (56)

Bergmann and Beer, it seems to me, bespeak more accurately Darwin's rhetorical intent. The contradictions, as well as the confusion they engender and reflect, are real. Moreover, they are precisely the product of what was in Darwin's head—which was a divided consciousness of belonging while not belonging—in contradistinction to what was out there in nature. Nature was telling Darwin that he, his ancestors, and his descendents, were degenerate, even if that degeneration found its very origins in their perfection. This was small comfort indeed to a man who, in the zero-sum game of life energy and Malthusian economic theory, believed he was dissipating at a faster rate than his race was developing. This fact, and the consequent need to exert cultural energy against the inertia of indifferent scientific observation, is the positive unconscious of Origin and its precursors. Darwin attempts to impose a biological validity to an increasingly tenuous cultural identity. His rhetoric reflects this, with its use of socio-political terms such as "polity," "district," and "immigration" in biological contexts, his indifferent and plastic use of the term "race," and with his reference to social and cultural behaviors, "haunting different stations" or "individuals preferring to pair together" in what is supposed to be a random natural system.

It is a dual rhetorical technique which allows his discourse to be equally applicable

to the human or the natural world. Any disorientation a reader feels is not the result of Darwin's fluid way of perceiving nature. It is, rather, a reflection of Darwin's own sense of displacement and loss of community as Victorian culture moved, in Ospovat's words, from "the philosophy of nature and man appropriate for an agrarian and aristocratic world to one suitable for the age of industrial capitalism" (223), to both of which, and to neither of which, did Darwin truly belong.

In conclusion, I would like to devote a few paragraphs to a discussion of the subsequent development of Victorian attitudes towards Darwin's aristocratic community. I have mentioned Moore's examination of the "professionalism of science" and its effect on Victorian society. By 1827, the unlamented loss of one facet of Darwin's psyche was already manifest: Patrick Matthew, a friend of Darwin's wrote bluntly that "degenerate aristocrats" have no place in an evolving world (Desmond and Moore 41). As the century progressed, and the Victorian working classes asserted their own ethos into both the societal and scientific communities, Darwin's "race"—"not quite aristocrats…the landed gentry of Britain" (Browne 6)—was displaced from its position atop the chain of being to a status near the bottom. (It must be said, however, that Patrick Matthew, Thomas Huxley, the socialist Enrico Ferri, Marx, and Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, were all able to overlook Darwin's own status as an example of this degenerate type).[4]

The ties between wealth and reproduction generated class suspicion and, as the professional class of scientist—Huxley, for instance—achieved social primacy, the economic inbreeding of Darwin's circle came to be defined as a cultural evil, and redefined

4 See Gould's Preface to Ever Since Darwin, in which he credits Darwin for expressly challenging "a set of entrenched Western attitudes" (12), and for consciously attacking "Western arrogance" (13). Recent learned opinion tends to dispute Gould's imputation of overt rebellion to Darwin's scientific or rhetorical intent.

as a biological evil as well. This movement was taking place even as Darwin was drafting *Origin*. Dickens's Dedlocks in *Bleak House*, written in 1853, are bought out by the industrialist Rouncewell. Later, William Morris, in *News From Nowhere*, uses Darwin's natural selection to theorize a utopia which has selected against Darwin's own type. The aristocracy have become extinct in Morris' world due to their own excesses, and socialism, with its tenets of shared wealth and free economic intercrossing, has become the positive evolutionary force. Wells' Eloi in *The Time Machine* are the remnants of a race that has "progressed" by means of aristocratic science into lemur-like proto-simians. Finally, in an 1885 lecture entitled *Degeneration Amongst Londoners*, James Cantlie writes

> Every one knows of families who, owing to the sudden ascension of wealth…
> have proved themselves mentally and physically unable to bear the strain,
> and who drift into unwise extremes of eating and drinking, religion or
> revelry, lavishness or effeminacy. (35-36)

The accumulation and preservation of wealth, then, came, by the end of the century, to be seen as a degenerate act, was even so defined in some districts within the scientific community. Eugene S. Talbot relates the story of a family tree stunted purely by economic success and by Darwinian attempts to preserve that success through inbreeding. The family's economic success led ineluctably to degenerate physical disorders and social behaviors (See Talbot's insanely funny genealogy of a "Napolean of Finance" 73-5). The American economist and social critic, Brooks Adams, who lived in London, wrote in 1896 that "the man of capital and greed rises to the top, aided by the natural science he propogates" (133). Although, had he written a few decades earlier, he could easily have

been referring to the Darwin-Wedgwoods, Adams holds up the "family Rothschild" as the "most conspicuous example" in his own time (303). However, Adams continues and asserts that "within a generation, there has been a marked loss of fecundity among the more costly races" (325). Darwin himself wrote in a letter after the death of his daughter, Annie: "My dread is hereditary ill-health. Even death is better for them" (Burkhardt and Smith 5:84).

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ERRANT TONGUE

Days constrict nights off their sleep

as words let loose

in stormy, bitchy waves

break against nonchalant rocks

and roost placid

till

grief moves through it

sharp

slashing wild.

Fathima E.V.
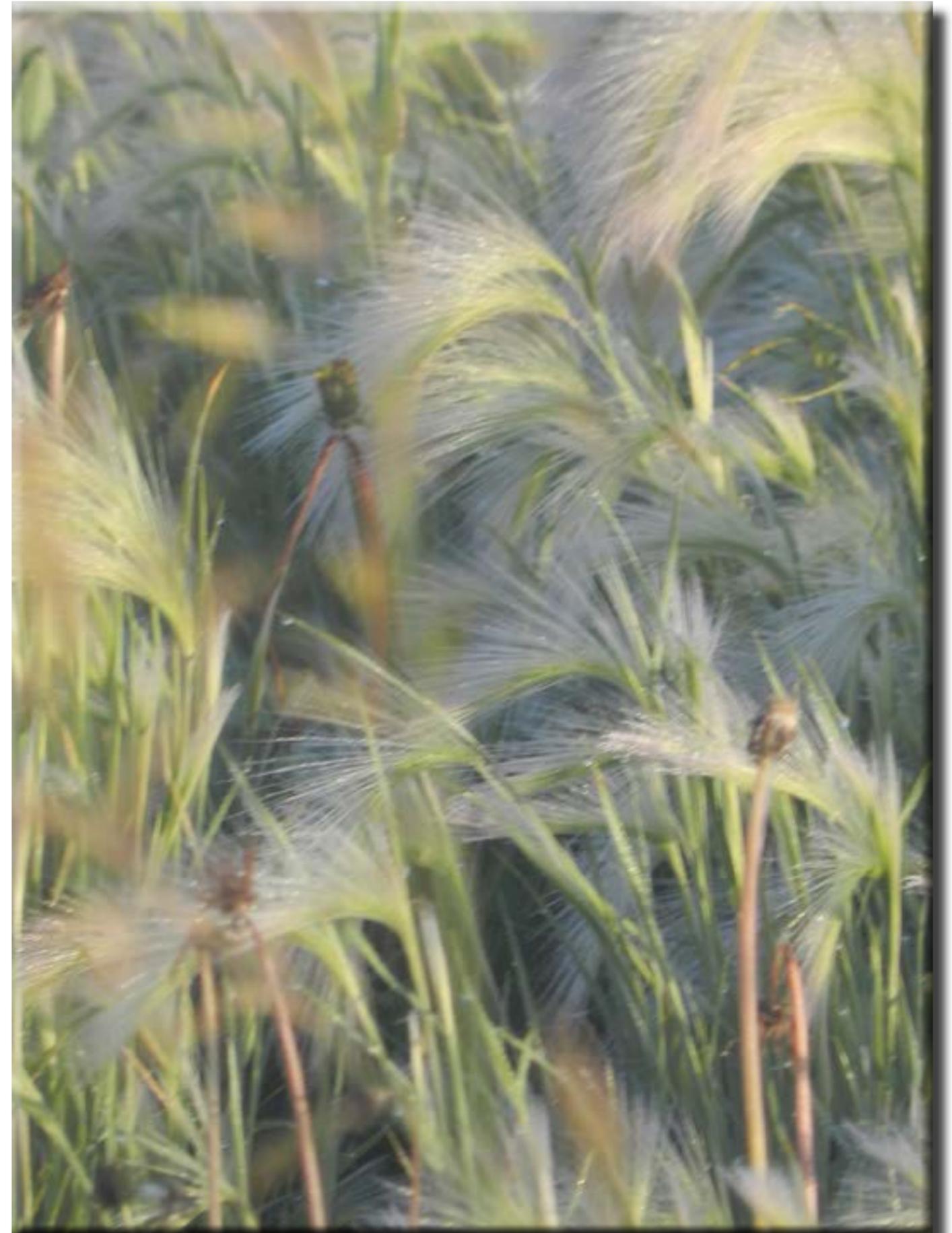
Deconstructing language in Beckett´s Endgame

by Sara Jiménez Ferrera Sullivan, Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, Illinois

Samuel Beckett once said "every word is like an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness." Ironically, words are necessary to explain that words are unnecessary. In Beckett´s *Endgame*, actions do not match those words. The play was originally written in French, and Beckett himself chose to translate it into English, hence there would be no mediators. We can then assert that all the words have been carefully chosen by the author. The absurdist plot is developed and confined to a sober scenery, barely illuminated, and lacking of furniture. The only four characters are senseless; Hamm is incapable of standing, Clov is incapable of sitting, and Nagg and Nell, Hamm's parents, both lacking legs, live in containers and interact in a shocking awkward fashion. The intercommunication of these four characters seems purposeless and meaningless. *Endgame* has been broadly categorized as absurdist, for it expresses what happens when human existence lacks of purpose, and furthermore, communication is not effective. The expectations of the audience, which are reasonable events and a logically developed plot, are brutally replaced by disconnected and incoherent ideas, unrealistic characters and silences that unsuccessfully fill the void of tension. In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of Beckett's choice of words, I will explore how Beckett and Jacques Derrida's ideas about language complement each other, since "it is *the game of the world* that must be first thought; before attempting to understand all the forms of play in the world" (Derrida 114).

At a time when language and narrative in general did not inspire confidence anymore, playwrights had to explore this new reality through "physical embodiment of characters in stage" (Haney 1) in order to please an audience who was at a loss and alienated from the message that language was trying to send (Haney 1). In the case of *Endgame*, the only figures on stage are the four characters, Hamm, Clov, Nagg and Nell, all of them with some unusual and disturbing feature for the audience's expectations, such as living in a container or being incapable of sitting. Switching the focus from language to characters is one of the main strategies that Beckett follows, but he is still unusually interested in choosing the rights words to convey the anti-message, and thus become counter communicative.

> Nagg: I've lost me tooth.
>
> Nell: When?
>
> Nagg: I had it yesterday (14).

Conceptuality is still achieved through the use of language, English in this case, as a tool. By intentionally using "me" instead of "my", a personal pronoun instead of a possessive, Nagg is turning the sense of lost directly towards his persona. Beckett moves towards dehumanization. Nagg has not only lost his tooth, but also lost himself. He is trapped in this container within a type of limbo. As a matter of fact, Beckett uses the word "shelter" twice in the novel to refer to the place where they are cloistered. A shelter,

by definition, is used to protect oneself from something. Hence, from what are they protecting themselves? Nothingness. They are lost beyond this world already. Just like Beckett himself said, according to Adorno's notes, *Endgame*, similarly to a chess game, is "already lost when it starts. After that one simply plays on." Hamm, Clov, Nagg and Nell try to explore the consciousness of experience and the self through words. Beckett explores the concepts of humanity and identity through temporal and disruptive elements and "transtemporal, transverbal awareness" (Haney 1). Just like Derrida deconstructs sentences and, by examining one word, offers a new perception of the message and breaks up with the traditional approach to language, Beckett exemplifies the process of awareness moving from experience to a state farther ahead of linguistic and sociocultural limits, just like Nagg moves from the idea of tooth to a more complex idea of losing himself, where conceptual sensibility is the basis for understanding the message.

Endgame has received diverse criticism for its characters, setting, plot and dialogue, but most commonly, for its obscurity and the irrelevant role of humans. One of the first critics was Brooks Atkinson, who in 1958, only one year after it was performed for the first time, wrote for the New York Times that *Endgame* was "impressive in the macabre intensity of the mood." He accounts how nothing happens in this play, how there is almost no action, and the little action that happens, is not coherent. Beckett, he says, is getting the audience ready "for the oblivion". As it is acknowledged, there is frustration within the audience about Hamm and his harshness, and in addition, Atkinson also points out that the dialogue is elusive, purposeless. "What Mr. Beckett has to say is contrary and nihilistic", he says. "He can create a mood by using words as incantations. Although the dialogue is often baffling, there is no doubt about the total impression. We are through." he says. "Nature has forgotten us". The figure of the human being in Beckett's works, especially in *Endgame*, is meaningless and rejects all moral and sociological principles.

Many other critics have agreed with Atkinson with time. Chris Conti explains how the complexity of *Endgame* and the perplexity caused by its apparent meaningless nature comes from the lack of experience in modernity (280). The modernist approach has pushed aesthetics to embrace the nature of "self-destructive rationality" (Conti, 281) and *Endgame* is the perfect example of this. In a play where dialogue is evasive and action is non-existent, aesthetics move away to let illogicality shine. Adorno himself defends that *Endgame* is the play that reflects more this view par excellence. There is, Adorno says, an "explosion of metaphysical meaning." To him, Beckett's plays, and more specifically *Endgame*, are absurd, not because the lack of meaning, which would make them simply immaterial, but because they challenge the expected and conventional meaning. Adorno explains how everything sounds like "common sense" yet there is a counterpoint to communication. Every word is ordinary and well-known by the audience, and yet meaningless, transforming the subject of this play into indifferent. (Van Hulle 207).

However, there were many others critics, like Lúkacs, that considered this play as merely the product of a disturbed mind, exclusively relevant as a precursor of the perversion that capitalism as creator of dehumanization causes (Conti 281). This Marxists philosopher always preferred the aesthetics of realism to the innovations of absurdism for being more traditional and for making more sense. This type of literature, he said, did not collaborate to achieve his main goal in society, which was developing the historical

self-awareness and realizing that the human being is in constant change and evolution. Beckett's idea of static plays, a motionless eventless plot, attacks the idea of eternal growth and progression that Lúkacs defends.

Jacques Derrida's perspective disagrees with Lúkacs and critics like him, arguing that the meaning is in fact in each word. It is not in the general, not in the whole, but in the details, and the audience needs to break it down to pieces and analyze it. As he states in *Of Grammatology,* while he analyzes Nietzsche's works, when the reader decomposes communication and analyze all the aspects of language, he will come up with parts that "by means of an elaborate argument on the question of style, [...] cannot be reconciled into a unity" (31). Derrida explores the internal workings of language and the system of conventions and concepts that relate meaning with quality. He also studies the assumptions implied in each sentence. For instance, the fact that Nagg choses to say "me tooth" instead of "my tooth" is generally assumed that it is a dialect deviation. However, applying Derrida's postmodernist deconstruction views, Beckett's choice of words goes beyond that, to the point where one simple words is expressing the sense of loneliness and solitude of a character that, confined to live in a garbage can, is lost in a limbo.

To Derrida, written symbols are legitimate signifiers on their own, and he strongly criticizes the relationship between speech and writing. Drama created by Beckett actually deconstructs the traditional form of narrative by cutting the conventions and assumptions implied. This idea works collaboratively with postmodernism, since it has been normally explained that it deconstructs modernism. Derrida argues in *Of Grammatology* how

writing has basically being considered as a derivation of speech, a branch sticking out of the main element, which is dialogue. He disagrees with this point of view by explaining how writing has its own process and is an independent part of language. Dialogue is not always necessary, but writing is.

Derrida's view on previous criticism determines that Beckett is and is not a nihilist, a believer of nothingness. In *Endgame*, there is a window and there are things and there is also nothing at the same time. Through the window, Clov explains that he sees a boat , the sky, and the sun. Indeed, there is an outside just because of the fact that there is an inside. But the outside is nothing. It is, exists, but it does not have a purpose, so it isn't.

> Clov: [after reflection] Nor I.
>
> [He gets up on ladder, turns the telescope on the without]
>
> Let's see
>
> [He looks, moving the telescope]
>
> Zero…
>
> [he looks]
>
> …zero…
>
> [he looks]
>
> …and zero. (37)

Derrida explains how there is no significant in Beckett, that the act is exhausted.

There are no significant lines. Despite the fact that Derrida's main goal was to analyze words and meaningful expressions, there is nothing in the lines of *Endgame* that he can explore. Beckett is eventless, he provides no dates, no events, no places or settings. Not only there is no action, but the characters are meaningless as well, there is no setting, and nothing around gives meaning to what the audience see. As Szafraniec says, he may "lack clearly worked out methodologies for dealing with Beckett's art" (87). Derrida mentions in an interview published in *Positions* that Beckett "makes the limits of our language tremble". Beckett and himself share a language, as a matter of fact, the same language and use, and it is a disadvantage for him to comment on Beckett's works for nothing new can be added (Szafraniec 52).Contrary to Adorno, who notes that Beckett's work needs to be reinterpreted for being insufficient (Van Hulle 204), Derrida is unable to reach any linguistic compromise with Beckett's work for they are already so deconstructed, or more accurately, self-deconstructed, that there is not much left to do (Szafraniec 56). Derrida's main goal is to create a new science named grammatology, which would approach questions more separately out of the close relationship between speech and language. Consequently, it would be applicable to absurdist plays like Endgame and it would help the audience to understand all the possible truths that a, senseless in appearance, play contains.

Endgame's dialogue is perhaps the main focus of Derrida's work on this play. According to *Of Grammatology*, there are so many filters in the audience, personal and general, that any dialogue has multiples truths. However, no one stops to deconstruct meaning and look for a solid truth. Instead, the audience tends to be content with what is

apparently specified from the first minute. Derrida wants to go further, and studies how Beckett creates a play full of nothingness, where each element, unusual characters, sober scenery and absurdist contrastive dialogue play along with the fact that the characters are trapped in the middle of nowhere, in a bubble surrounded by everything and nothing. In this case, Hamm looks like he carries the narrative weight of the plot, and Clov disarms him over and over again. Constructed in a parallel fashion, Hamm provides meaning and Clo's sabotage it (Gatti 226). Conflict is not between them but between the expectations of the audience and them. The way Hamm conducts narrative and Clov undermines it follows this structure

> Clov: Oh, by the way, your story?
>
> Hamm: [Surprised.] What story?
>
> Clov: The one you've been telling yourself all your...days
>
> Hamm: Ah, you mean my chronicle?
>
> Clov:That's the one.
>
> [...]

Hamm: I'll tell you how it goes. It comes crawling on his belly…. (67-68)

This dialogue exemplifies how Clov does not really participate but only interacts to create discomfort. Hamm is the responsible for the meaning. By recognition, making sure that Clov knows what he's going to tell, the reason why, and when, Hamm is able to complete effective communication. Dialogue, like Derrida says in *Of Grammatology*,

fulfills the main purpose of communication, which is comprehension (87). Dialogue provides identity here, word choices and general expressions impede the inversion of roles and the dissolution of their partnership. Clov will always be the one who fills the emptiness of a poor communication, the one "ties forever to his secondary status, he lives off his cues" (Gatti 237) and Hamm will fill the void of narrative. Beckett himself proves the importance of this point by explaining this:

> Clov: What is there to keep me here?
>
> Hamm: The dialogue (120)

Derrida's view on uniqueness was very intense. It was his main focus, which also contrasts with the eventless nature of Beckett (Szafraniec 309). Everything that Derrida examines in every play, each word, each implication, each assumption that he breaks into pieces to eliminate previously understood meaning in *Of Grammatology* is totally irrelevant in Beckett's works. For instance, in *Endgame*, page 15, Hamm and Clov are at one of the most dramatic and yet absurd moments of the play.

> Hamm: Why don't you kill me?
>
> Clov : I don't know the combination of the cupboard.
>
> [Pause.]
>
> Hamm: Go and get two bicycle-wheels.
>
> Clov: There are no more bicycle-wheels.
>
> Hamm: What have you done with your bicycle?

> Clov: I never had a bicycle.
>
> Hamm: The thing is impossible.

With that last statement, "the thing is impossible", everything else is dismissed (Szafraniec 315). Beckett choses the word "impossible" out of the entire dictionary right after talking about dying and right after creating a problems out of something so banal like bicycle-wheels. The entire interaction of the different and unrelated elements makes no sense but has been carefully chosen. It provokes the audience by talking about death, impossibilities and bicycle-wheels in a few lines. The general reaction is discomfort and shock. Is the possibility of dying relevant? Or is it not, since Hamm says that it is "impossible"? Is it even something we should worry about, or should we focus more in day-to-day things, like wheels? From Derrida's deconstructive point of view, there is nothing more unexpected, absurd, or postmodern than this.

After having analyzed deconstructionism and absurdism, the big contrast lies in the possibilities. In terms of absurdism, the usual reception is simple: the plot and the characters do not make any sense, the audience is astonished and shocked, yet they do not actually stop and think twice, but go home with the thought that that was one unusual play. On the other hand, if the audience looks through a postmodern deconstructionist looking-glass, the possibilities are infinitesimal. How does the receptioner deal with that? Derrida proposes a "constant vigilant suspicion of all the determinate readings of culture and a partner aesthetic of ceaseless textual play" (Punday 1). This perspective seems a fantasy at first, since it will potentially never end. By supposing that each critic will have a different cultural and sociological filter, the possibilities are infinite. According to this,

any play, especially such an absurdist one like *Endgame*, has hundreds of interpretations, and the most relevant outcome is the fact that it does have a meaning and it does have a purpose. *Endgame* goes beyond metaphors and nothingness. Beckett created hidden turns in each word he chose, and for that, Derrida believes that there is nothing he could possibly say about it. Beckett has done an exhaustive and complete job deconstructing his own meaning.

This postmodern perspective, Bordo argues, claims that deconstruction is the"view from everywhere and nowhere", and therefore, it fails in providing a recognizable locatedness. This abstract yet analytical textual theory requires location, if we are to analyze cultural and social issues through this play. However, the possibilities are so numerous and the interpretations are so open that deconstruction does not provide a location, it does not specify a particular setting or timing. That is one of the problematic aspects of *Endgame*, not only physical location, but time and space as well. Clov claims that he sees "zero...zero...zero", that there is nothing around. They are in some sort of limbo where Hamm, Nagg and Nell cannot leave. The only one who could provide a sense of location by leaving, which becomes a defining opposite, is Clov, and he is unable to even imagine. He only talks about death. For us, the audience, this is an absolute foreign concept. There is not a place in the world that we know like that. Plus, it becomes even harder to understand due to the fact that the play is totally atemporal. It could happen at any time from the invention of the dog toy on. There is nothing that can reliably set this play at any time and anywhere. Beckett does not make it necessary to know, the audience does not need to even wonder about it. It is not relevant. According to Derrida,

this type of lack of information, mastered by this author, is basically a counter technique for narrative.

Beckett's goal in creating such a simple in appearance, yet complicated in meaning, play was going beyond what had been previously done in theatre. The purpose of drama has always been to create discomfort, to make the audience react towards the unexpected, and throughout the deconstructionist point of view, Beckett achieves that from the first minute. Like Begam states, "what Beckett proposes to eliminate are precisely limits, borders, margins" (881) and he goes further than that, choosing carefully the words to provoke a reaction. Beckett shows a breakdown of identity and morals through his absurd use of language and deconstructive ideology that establishes a conceptual system and a relational quality of meaning in this play.

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SUO GENERIS

In its grip-less lotus ways

the canopy of spidery roots ,

its hold, tenuous

stalks, slender

waxen perfection

rotund leaves catching

on outspread appeal

circles of green psalms

droplets of lethargy

that roll off, luminous

ever evanescent.

Lotus! Flower of abundance

supplicant of little shame

coaxing an intractable sun

to bless into flawless symmetry

and bloom, redolent, petal by petal,

in languorous awe

as if *suo generis*.

—Fathima E.V.

The Resilience of Women in the Face of Trauma

by Jennifer Vanderheyden

"Waiting to Not Know"

We wait. We wait and make small talk. We wait and make small talk and we ignore the monster in the middle of the room. We talk about the weather and books and movies and how long we have been waiting and how much longer we still have to wait. We quickly flip through the pages of a magazine or two or listen to our ipods as we attempt to distract our minds. There is an unspoken need to insure that we mention a future plan, such as "Next summer we'll go to the Cape for a few weeks," or "I wanted to go to Greece this year but I think I'll wait until I can be in the full sun."

Sometimes friends or a family member wait with the others and I alternately regard them with envy or resentment. Not knowing the unstated protocol, they might be tempted to talk about the monster. It is enough to deal with our own unspoken complicity of fear and hope. Most likely the accompanied ones have warned them about the guidelines of waiting.

When a new person arrives the rest of us hold our breath until we see that she will intuitively understand the protocol. Some do not, and we quickly change the subject or put in our ear buds. Some of the more distressing ones have returned to wait once more, and before our minds go to the calculations and percentages we try another distraction, such as the half finished jigsaw puzzle.

Usually there are snacks to be had, celebratory offerings in honor of someone's last day, assembled next to the puzzle on the small table in the already crowded room. At times there are not even enough chairs on which to wait. I wonder why the snacks often consist of unhealthy sweets such as brownies or cookies and I resolve to bring in healthy choices on *my* last day. We wish them the best and imply that we will keep in touch but I suspect almost no one ever does.

We are in all sorts of stages of waiting and other things, and if we are lucky we wait still but remain hours or days or years ahead of the monster who waits for no one if it takes a notion to strike. I have no memory of the snacks I brought on my last day … I was probably so relieved the waiting was over that I indeed brought brownies, or Sun Chips, or fruit, or cookies

… or left it up to chance.

I wrote the above piece after completing radiation treatment for early stage breast cancer. Treatments consisted of a short dose of radiation five days a week for six weeks, and waiting for the machine varied from half an hour to hours if one of the machines malfunctioned. Usually the same women, suffering from various forms and stages of cancer, were scheduled for the same time everyday, so we became superficially acquainted. At first I was surprised that we rarely discussed the cancer, but I have come to realize that one does not play the typically mythical role of the female heroine as a nurturer, caregiver, or damsel in distress when in the midst of battle. We needed to garner all of our resources, and recognizing the strength of the enemy would in turn allocate it even more power. Rather, we needed to recognize and summon our own determination

and focus to overcome the threatening chaos of cancer in order to eradicate every last malicious cell.

During the last decade, I have been in awe of the resilience of women to confront adversity with a unique courage and creative intensity to rise above it, reinventing themselves in the process. I have witnessed testimonies of survival from various groups: breast cancer survivors, victims of violence who were in a testimonial writing workshop in which I also participated as part of the Voices and Faces Project, and through my research and work with the non-profit organization Step Up!, whose aim is to counsel and support the female survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. In this discussion of examples of women who reclaim their lives after experiencing extraordinary trauma, I plan to intersperse my comments with pieces of creative writing that they have inspired me to compose, preceded by a clarification of the various connotations of the terms "testimony" "trauma" and "resilience."

TESTIMONIES OF TRAUMA

The word "testimony" normally signifies a statement given under oath in a court of law by a witness or certified expert. Additionally, it often refers to a spiritual "witnessing" during which a person testifies to the sacred effect of a particular religious experience. Both of these connotations imply a patriarchal situation where a law, either divine or by some other agreed authority, substantiates the legitimacy of the truth of the witness. This article will discuss examples of the narrative, or testimony of a trauma, in terms of the self-truth of the survivor: a truth that is recognized and validated by a compassionate and

non-judgemental listener. Ideally this listener is a co-survivor herself or someone whose witnessing of the story will in turn inspire her to take positive action toward change.

This repetition of the telling the trauma narrative to a compassionate listener enables the survivor to process the trauma. In her fascinating study *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Cathy Caruth discusses Freud's theories in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* with regard to the unconscious repetition of the trauma itself, characteristic of trauma victims, which Freud defines as "traumatic neurosis" (Caruth 1). However, Caruth goes a step further in her discussion of this neurosis by connecting the wounded voice of the trauma to a literary telling of the traumatic incident:

> It is the moving quality of this literary story, I would suggest—its striking juxtaposition of the unknowing, injurious repetition and the witness of the crying voice—that best represents Freud's intuition of, and his passionate fascination with, traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect, that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet (2).

Caruth continues by stating that by its very nature, the violent suddenness of the trauma resists "knowing," resists comprehension because there is in effect no logical explanation: "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (4). She then introduces her discussion of Paul de Man's notion of referentiality

and its relationship to narrative. Although it is not my intention here to theorize a philosophical or psychoanalytical definition of trauma, I do indeed understand a direct relationship with the narrative of a testimony, or repeated telling of the trauma, with this concept of unknowing and incomprehensibility. At the least, voicing the trauma portrays the knowing of the pain and suffering, which in turn can diminish its power through repetition.

In his study *Making Minds and Madness: From Hysteria to Depression*, Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen defines the original meaning of trauma as "an injury, an open wound, a violent rupture in the surface of the skin" (19). He continues by giving the description of a "psychic" wound:

> … some violent or unexpected event wounded this person spiritually, psychically: he suffers from depression and fits of rage ever since that terrible slaughter in Vietnam (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder); she suffers from insomnia and anorexia ever since she was raped (Rape Trauma Syndrome); their personality split into pieces because they were sexually abused by their father (Multiple Personality Disorder) (19).

Certainly these definitions of trauma apply to the testimonies I will be discussing, but a difference should be delineated by what I understand as the narrative of the trauma, and the traditional understanding of therapeutic treatment of the trauma by the so-called "talking cure."

Borch-Jacobsen's discussion centres around the Freudian psychoanalytical talking cure as a myth because of its manipulative and "staged" circumstance during which the traumatized patient recounts a narrative, including so-called repressed traumas. He refers to what psychiatrist Henri Grivois describes as "the narrative drift" of the psychotic experience: the patients cannot avoid conferring a signification to the unspeakable that is happening to them, for "such an abstinence would be impossible or superhuman," and they are led therefore to put forward delusional "explanations …" (7). Borch-Jacobsen has written extensively about this suggestive nature of the supposed cure,[1] during which the analyst not only pressured the patient to speak about the trauma, but also suggested what that speech should be. While it is not my intention here to discuss this in detail, I mention it in order to differentiate the narrative to which I am referring as being totally separate from a traditionally patriarchal therapist-patient dialogue.

Rather than being intrinsically neurotic or suffering from some other mental illness, traumatized survivors of a violent act are victims of an evil chaos that is indeed unspeakable and incomprehensible. By telling their truth, by eventually speaking their trauma, their words act as a therapist who attempts to make sense out of the chaos of violence and suffering. By finding a way to speak the unspeakable, testimony enables these survivors to re-establish truth and familiarity through the comforting banality of words. In this sense, it is a "talking catalyst," because certain traumas are never cured.

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1. See, for example, in addition to his other cited text: Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen: *Souvenirs d'Anna O.* (Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée: Éditions Aubier, 1995), and Catherine Meyer, editor, *Le Livre noir de la psychanalyse,* (Paris: Éditions les Arènes, 2005).

DEFINITIONS OF RESILIENCE

As Liliana Maria Labronici states in her article on female victims of domestic violence, "Resilience is a concept long used in physics and engineering, and is related to the strength of materials" (626). In a psychological context, this strength transfers to one's emotional fortitude to process adversity and trauma in a manner that results in a positive outcome. In addition to the connotation in physics of a resistant fortification, human resilience contains a "positive momentum" that Labronici also characterizes as enabling the "construction, and even the reconstruction of life" (626). She also notes that, although researchers in many fields of study currently employ the term, not much literature exists that examines the specific relationship of resilience in terms of female victims of violence.

In their study of victims of child and adolescent sex trafficking in the United States, Stacey J. Cecchet and John Thoburn associate resiliency in the cases of those women who are able to escape with the "corresponding themes *desire to live*, *positive thinking*, **and** *motivation for change*," (489) as well as a spiritual element. To these definitions I would add that the ongoing process of resilience correlates as well to a similar process of forgiveness of the perpetrator,[2] or, in the case of a life-threatening disease, the cause of the illness. In all of the scientific studies I have read, as well as the testimonies I have witnessed, a common catalyst for resilience occurs when a life-threatening trauma drives the desire to live. Additionally, resilience post-trauma also exhibits the ability to work through the trauma in order to reconstruct a life that often allows the opportunity to interact in a supportive manner with other survivors. A reconstruction, without forgetting or minimizing the trauma, that incorporates emotional scars into a novel definition of the self.

In her book of essays *L'Avenir d'une révolte*, (*The Future of a Revolt*) linguist, psychoanalyst and philosopher Julia Kristeva discusses the apparent impasse or inability to react in a positive manner to various political, historical and social crises as lacking a required "expérience intérieure radicale," (a radical interior experience) during which one adeptly processes the complexity of the crisis in order to "décider du présent et de l'après." ("confront the present and what lies ahead") (9). She discusses the significance for the human psyche to allow itself the time to revolt, to "rompre, remémorer, refaire" ("break off, remember, redo") (10). In terms of post-trauma resilience, I would posit that a conscious revolt and rupture with the trauma aids in the constructive momentum of resilience to rebuild one's life. Perhaps the "radical interior experience" occurs as a consequence of a life-threatening event. Resilience would then indeed necessitate the psychological confrontational "revolt" against remaining defined by the trauma in order to move toward a redefinition of the post-trauma self.

Women's unique qualities enable and facilitate resilience, especially through the testimonial narrative of the trauma. In her study *Women who Run with the Wolves*, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D., chronicles the traditional stories that describe the wild woman archetype as instinctively resilient when confronted with life's adversities. In her chapter on rage and forgiveness, Estés states that women who have access to this inherent component of their female psyche are not deterred by the natural reaction of a collective

2. I discuss the complicated aspects of forgiveness in a forthcoming book chapter: Jennifer Vanderheyden, "Extraordinary Forgiveness," *From Banality to Genocide: Perspectives on Evil*, (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2016).

rage to various traumas and social inequalities:

> It is psychically sound for women to feel this anger. It is psychically sound for them to use this anger to invent ways to elicit useful change. It is *not* psychologically sound for them to neutralize their anger so that they will not feel, so they will therefore not press for evolution and change…collective rage is well utilized as a motivation to seek out or offer support, to conceive of ways to impel groups or individuals into dialogue, or to demand accountability, progress, improvements (398).

From what I have observed, a productive process of working through trauma does indeed result in change, which often affects a group or individual in addition to the survivor. Frequently this process involves finding a method of communicating the narrative of the trauma.

Because the ensuing testimonies I have chosen to discuss concern female survivors, the logical question could be posed as to whether resilience contains gender-based differences, and if so, what these differences entail. Certainly such gender based inequalities as economic, social, and cultural, to name only a few, contribute to the additional struggles of women to achieve positive outcomes. Although it is not the purpose of this study to investigate resilience in terms of these differences, such a topic certainly merits additional future attention.

A diagnosis of cancer often signifies the first sombre encounter with one's mortality; for me it represented the destruction of an inner belief that the voice in my head that periodically hacked my mind with negative thoughts was purely a neurotic symptom. This time the voice was right, and it could not be simply cast aside. Yet somehow strength crawls and scratches its way from the twisted gut of despair and reinforces the stamina to forge ahead and silence that voice. Breast cancer can temporarily destroy one's femininity in the midst of treatment, as the following poem expresses. Being radiated is not at all sexy: it takes time to set up the breast to receive the radiation, then everyone leaves the room as the dose is administered:

> "Rad Inferno"
>
> *99.6…*
>
> coordinates
>
> to pinpoint the dose
>
> aided by four
>
> tattooed
>
> dots
>
>
> left breast taped to the side

the right exposed

to the destruction

that brings

hope

the Stones play

in the background

I sing along

in my head

start it up

burn, baby

burn

A few years post treatment, I was waiting to undergo my yearly mammogram, and as soon as I sat down, the elderly woman sitting across from me proclaimed: "I survived the Holocaust. My brother and I were thrown in a large grave and we pretended to be dead. We both survived, and he wrote a book about it." As we each had our mammograms and then waited to hear the results, she declared the same statement to every new arrival. This was indeed a testimony that I needed to hear, and one that inspires me still. Yes,

life post treatment *almost* returns to whatever it was before, although reminders such as the month of October with its pinkness and of course continued check-ups and mammograms bring to surface the fear that lies in wait. Life itself is waiting to not know, for the moment is our only true discernment, and as long as there exists a moment, there goes life. Resilience post-trauma is being able to fight for the awareness of the hope that resides in this instant, whether it is moment by moment as you lie waiting to die in an open grave, or moment by moment as you battle to defeat another type of cancer.

In an article in *Psychology Today* Pamela Weintraub writes about the "new survivors" of cancer: not only is cancer no longer a disease that one keeps secret, recent developments in treatment have transformed many cancers from a death sentence to either complete remission or a chronic disease. Public discourse and personal stories of survivorship have become the norm:

> Many cancer survivors are travelers to a highly intense edge world where they battle death and return transformed. They leave as ordinary and burdened mortals and come back empowered and invigorated. In coming closer to fear, risk, and death than most of us, they wind up marshalling qualities not even they knew they had (Weintraub 1).

Weintraub continues by discussing the importance of hope for patients in the midst of treatment, and of that of being able to reflect upon their experience by re-telling their stories when in the process of post-trauma growth. She also cites research that demonstrates the positive changes that result from this reflection upon the meaning of life after the painfully real threat of death. She quotes University of Connecticut

psychologist Keith Bellizzi as saying that post-trauma growth is more than resilience, that "it is above and beyond resilience" (Weintraub). In his study of survivorship, Bellizzi found that the "generativity" that cancer sparked (which he defines as "making the planet a better place, giving children the love they need, being creative in work or intimate with family and friends" (Weintraub)) was more prominent in women.

FEMALE SURVIVORS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

In the fall of 2013 I was invited to participate in a workshop at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee developed by the Voices and Faces Project, a non-profit organization founded by writer and human rights activist Anne Ream, who recently published a book *Lived Through this: Listening to the Stories of Sexual Violence Survivors*. Defined on their website as "a national documentary initiative created to bring the testimony of sexual violence and trafficking survivors to the attention of the public,"[3] the award-winning national project "seeks to change minds, hearts and public policies on sexual violence and exploitation." Ream and writer and Professor R. Clifton Spargo established the testimonial creative writing workshop to provide a safe venue for these survivors to find their voice and reclaim their identity, and they invited me to participate in the workshop since I was experiencing difficulties in processing my recent trip to Rwanda, and the testimonies I had heard by the female survivors of the 1994 genocide.

The writing that these women produced during the two days was stunningly inspirational and brave, as raw emotion found a voice to allow the survivors to move beyond the pain and suffering. Poems, essays, letters, and even short stories expressed

the devastation and violation that such violence perpetrates, yet the hope was dawning that the trauma does not need to perpetuate the damage. By identifying the trauma, articulating the suffering, then reading the words to everyone in the room, these women were reclaiming their power to become stronger than the cowardly violation. One workshop exercise was to envision a world without violence:

"Serenity"

Eyes closed

I see your truth

you speak my desires

in the silence

of a moment

hands unclenched

empty

we touch each other's

soul

Affinity

becomes

Infinity

joy abounds

serenity surrounds

the Universe breathes

a sigh of

relief

In a recent talk at the Clinton School of Public Service at the University of Arkansas, Anne Ream, a survivor herself of sexual violence, discussed the various survivors she interviewed for her book, and the difficulties they faced in telling their stories. Ream gives examples of women who were often faced with indifference and a lack of compassion on the part of the listener when they attempted to talk about their experience. Yet once the trauma finds expression, recovery can begin. Ream refers to one such woman, Christa Desir, who participated in the Voices and Faces testimonial writing workshop, and who subsequently wrote a book for young adults (*Fault Line*) about sexual violence: "Once she could speak, everything changed" (Ream, Clinton School).

In her study on whether female victims of domestic violence can become resilient, Labronici writes of the moment of an existential threat to their lives that serves as an impetus to leave the home: "The escape to the outside world, a temporal horizon of infinite possibilities, this departure from the state of immobility placed them in existential movement …" (629). If by so doing these women succeed in finding a support system where they feel safe to recount their trauma, they can continue "the process of resilience through the narrative of the experience" (629). Labronici continues: "Moreover, the trauma narrative itself allows the women to make sense of what happened and redeploy it affectively, so that it can be understood as a factor of resilience, in addition to the narrative of others" (629). Like Anne Ream, she also emphasizes supportive compassion as a crucial component of healing. I offer the following poem to express my compassion for the victims, especially the children involved in sexual trafficking.

"Broken Girls"

Timeless taste of pain

dark, poisoned

legacies

robbed childhoods

held hostage

my pain

lurks there too

toughened

by repeated assaults

on its raw truth

I want to armour your heart

protect and defend

any remaining innocence

no—I want to liberate your heart

allow love to reside

in the fearless deserving need

at the core of your being

There now, don't cry

we'll take our pain and our dolls

to the far end of the forest

sheltered by the trees

with the sun-drenched meadow

in sight.

FEMALE SURVIVORS OF GENOCIDE

During a trip to Rwanda during June of 2013, I was able to witness first hand the extreme courage and fortitude of those who survived the genocide. I attended lectures regarding the genocide and the ensuing reconciliation process, organized by my friend Dr. Rangira Béa Gallimore for her study abroad program at the University of Missouri. Béa and I were students together in graduate school at the University of Cincinnati, and although we grew up in so very different environments and cultures, it was obvious that our love for our families transcended any borders. Her mother, sister, three brothers and many extended members of her family were brutally murdered during the genocide. She was at a conference in Canada when the genocide began, and she stood helpless in a hotel room as her sister and mother called to tell her good-bye. After the genocide and the shock of losing her family members, Béa's devastation turned into determination to fly to Kigali, find any surviving members, and bring them to live with her in Columbia, Missouri. She not only achieved that goal, but she also vowed to do something tangible for the female survivors in honour of her mother; thus she founded Step Up, the American Association for Rwandan Women. They have raised money to assist the women in becoming independent, such as providing them with cows and bees. One of Béa's major goals was to open a trauma-counselling centre for these women, and although volunteers from Step Up have been consistently travelling to Rwanda to provide this counselling, in the summer of 2015 the trauma counselling Abasa center, named after Béa's mother, officially opened in Rwanda.

In 2009 we invited Béa to come to Marquette University to introduce the film *Mères Courage*, a documentary about the female survivors, and after hearing her story, several of my students were inspired to found the first university chapter of Step Up!, and I have been fortunate to serve as their faculty advisor. We have sponsored many panel discussions, a mini-film festival, and other activities in order to raise awareness of the continuing recovery process for the female survivors of the genocide. I have also been fortunate to meet several of these survivors and to hear their stories, and am in absolute admiration of their abilities to confront the unspeakable trauma they endured. I have written elsewhere of one such woman, Consolee Nishimwe;[4] here I would also like to mention her cousin's story of survival.

In her book *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*, Immaculée Ilibagiza (who also presented a talk at Marquette) describes how she survived the genocide by hiding in a pastor's three by four foot bathroom. At first there were a total of six women in that small space, then later two sisters whom the pastor's daughter had been hiding in her home took refuge there as well. Sharing the food and water that the pastor was able to give them when he felt it was safe, forced to develop sign language to communicate because of the imperative to remain silent, listening to the Hutu killers outside the bathroom window bragging and celebrating their slaughters, tormented by the constant threat of being discovered and even hearing the *génocidaires* constantly inspect the pastor's bedroom, Immaculée turned to her faith in God to provide her with the comfort and hope she urgently needed.

She states that a crucial step in that process was asking God's forgiveness for the killers, because holding onto her anger was inhibiting her ability to conserve her energy and concentrate on survival. She developed a spiritual plan:

> I found a place in the bathroom to call my own: a small corner of my heart. I retreated there as soon as I awoke, and stayed there until I slept. It was my sacred garden, where I spoke with God, meditated on his words, and nurtured my spiritual self (96).

She constantly held her rosary beads and prayed, meditating for hours and even days on a single word.

When she became ill, her faith and hope sustained her: "No, illness wasn't going to take me. I was certain that God had a greater purpose for me, and I prayed every day for him to reveal it to me" (117). Not only did she hold to her spiritual plan, she also decided to teach herself English so that she would be marketable for a job when the genocide ended. Although most of her immediate family was killed, Immaculée's remarkable determination, faith and resilience enabled her to survive. Similar to other survivors of such trauma, she did indeed find a greater purpose by telling her inspirational story.

As the genocide was finally coming to an end, the pastor and his family assisted Immaculée and the other women hiding in the bathroom to safely find refuge with the French soldiers. While these women were fortunately able to avoid direct contact with the *génocidaires*, many of the female survivors were not only raped, but sexually mutilated as well in an attempt to mitigate their ability to experience sexual pleasure. Yet

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4. I write about Consolee's testimony of survival (Consolee Nishimwe, *Tested to the Limit: A Genocide Survivor's Story of Pain, Resilience, and Hope*) in the forthcoming chapter "Extraordinary Forgiveness."

for me they epitomize femininity and strength:

"Survivors"[5]

Woman

say you,

am I no more

if not you,

say I,

what is woman?

May the river of tombs

cleanse your soul

preserve the memory

of beloved

innocence

allow the evil

to flow

into the universe

of forgiveness

and justice

Let your nurturing duality

birth your suffering

send it

into the silent dark

night from which

it came

May your womb

expel the bloody weight

that crushes your truth

restore the

Woman

---

5. This poem is also forthcoming in the book chapter "Extraordinary Forgiveness."

that has always been,

that is forever,

say I,

You

In conclusion, what I have shared represents a discussion, interspersed with personal examples, of written and experiential testimonies of women who have found that active confrontation and expression of trauma facilitates the process of resilience. As Clarissa Estès observed in her study of the wild woman archetype's unique inherent ability to channel rage in a constructive manner, it is indeed *not* psychologically sound to repress trauma. And as Kristeva commented on the advantages of artistic expression and the meditative aspect of narration, this type of "révolte" is necessary in order to "préserver la vie de l'esprit, et de l'espèce" ("preserve the life of the mind and species").

The women of whom I have spoken have channelled their painful rage into artistic and constructive endeavours. By using words as tools rather than weapons, they have succeeded in a reframing and reconstruction of the trauma in order to reclaim their power. Vulnerability transforms into hardy stability as the desire to overcome serves as the nails to construct and fortify the hope of spirituality and renewed trust. They have discovered a process to live productively after suffering trauma, transforming victim hood into a testimonial sisterhood of implicit, transcending courage.

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EDICT

Scarlet, *shall not* be your love.

Naïve to perils alien
he scarce understood what
lurked in the passing counsel.

The cajoling veiled the lush plans
apples conspired with fig leaves
naked desires sheathed, snaking
fork tongued, unravelling destiny's joys
couched as choices ill made.

If not for Adam heeding
and Eve not turning away
what would we have done
with no temptations to mire into
undo and remake us all over again
and cleave routes to ecstasy
few gods can match with piety?

—Fathima E.V.
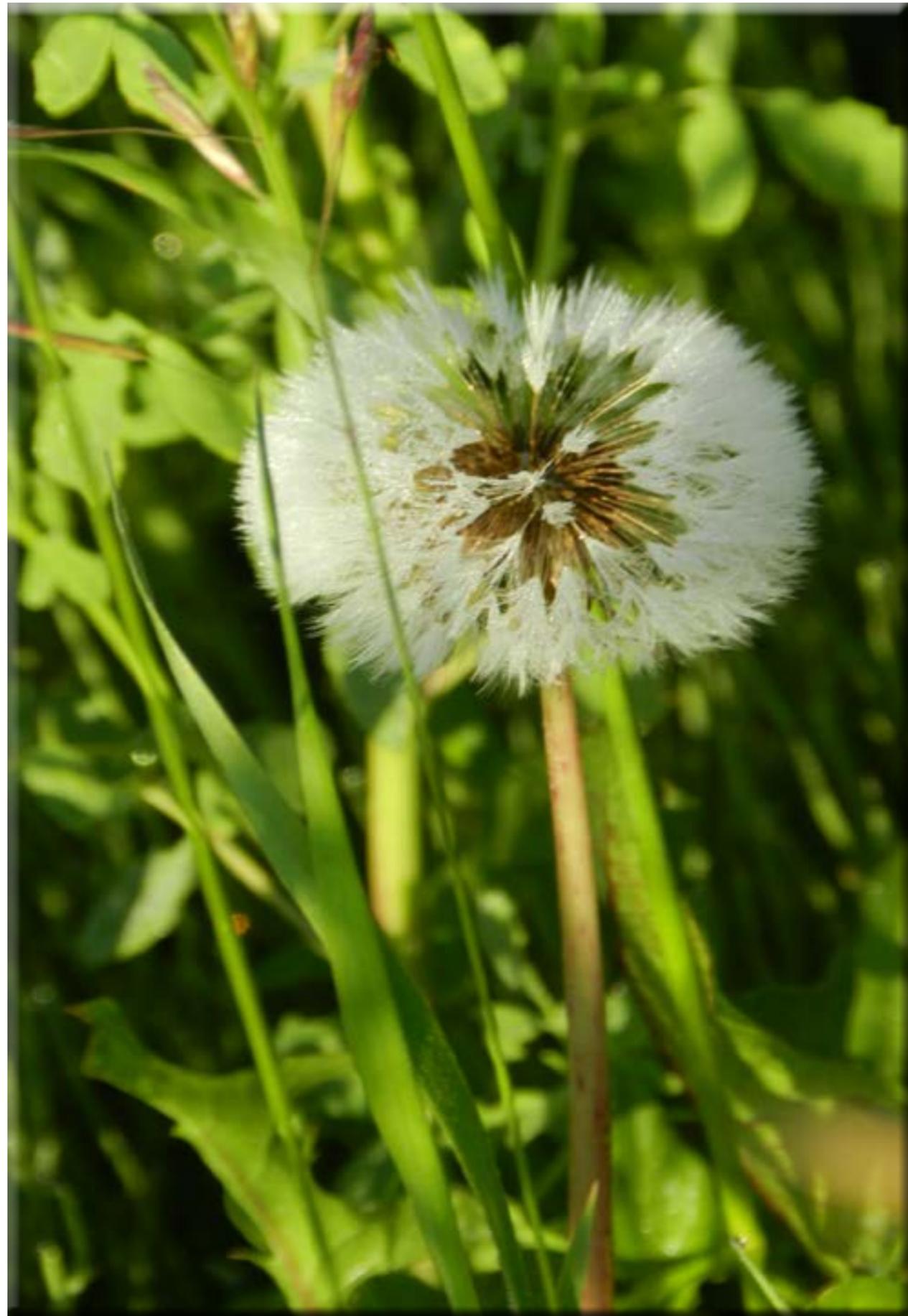
Moveable Feast

Sue Matheson

Visualizing Indigenous Perspectives of how the Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Program (SCYAP) Addresses Social Exclusion

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Introduction

Show me an open door… not necessarily push me through it, but guide me through it. My life, I've been institutionalized since I was 12 years old. It took 'til SCYAP for me to want to turn my life around. People [staff] here give me space and work with me too. (First Nation male, 24 years of age)

Most of the clients at SCYAP are Indigenous, many of whom take sanctuary within an environment that offers a non-toxic and stimulating place. The clients who attend SCYAP are considered at-risk and face many challenges. Such challenges, to name a few, include racial discrimination, impoverishment, and underachievement in school. Such cumulative challenges provide this urban Indigenous community with a sense of social exclusion. Fortunately, SCYAP serves to create a space for the urban Indigenous client that accepts social justice ideology and cultural diversity.

The purpose of this article is to examine how the Saskatoon Community Youth

Arts Programming (SCYAP); addresses social exclusion. We claim there is a need to envision Indigenous perspectives in order to enhance our knowledge regarding how to addresses Indigenous social exclusion. As Barry (1999) advises that while culturally diverse societies are complex, developing an understanding of the "other" is critical for policy development and the management of intercultural relations. Both Acoose and Dell (2009) and, Acoose and Charlton (2014) concur providing recent Canadian based research that documents how such culturally based programs empower both individuals and community. In fact, the necessity of developing an understanding of the "other" must be understood as an issue of justice designed to start rectifying past wrongs as it is harder to "other" someone whose humanity is visible (Charlton & Hansen, 2013). We discuss the perceptions of urban Indigenous clients as a body of notions, and will make visible how the clients can enhance our understanding of increasing social inclusion for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit offenders in general. Being visible can be empowering for Indigenous people in Canada who have a history of being socially excluded, silenced and oppressed (Champagne, 2015; Hansen & Antsanen, 2015; Wotherspoon & Hansen, 2013). This is the natural, logical and ethical effects of social inclusion. Social inclusion is the source of conforming to societies norms. For example, Papachristos, Meares, & Fagan (2012), note that people are "…more likely to comply with the law when they believe (a) in the legitimacy of legal actors, but especially the police, and (b) that the substance of the law is consistent with their own moral schedules" (p. 400).

How one perceives their environment must be considered as a central feature when examining how increased visibility is linked to social inclusion. As Brighenti (2007)

notes, "[v]isibility is closely associated to recognition" (p. 7). Therefore, visibility has a social inclusion component that may be simply expressed as: 'visibility includes, invisibility excludes'. In terms of visibility and the environment, Bronfenbrenner (1979) acknowledges that environment extends beyond one's immediate setting, and places strong emphasis on the role of current perceptions by asserting, "what matters for development and behavior is the environment as it is perceived rather than as it may exist in objective reality" (p. 4). Bronfenbrenner is echoing a central sociological tenant here, namely the Thomas theorem, which states, "[i]t is not important whether or not the interpretation is correct–if men [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas, & Thomas, 1928, p. 572).

Like all other ethnic groups, urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit clients regulate and/or change their behavior as a consequence of the interplay between current environmental demands and their perceptions based on prior experiences (Steinberg, 2009). However, being visible is not always positive and this notion is reflected in Brighenti observation that visibility, "is a double-edged sword: it can be empowering as well as disempowering" (2007, p. 13). For urban Indigenous people, for example, visibility becomes disempowering in the impoverished and racialized inner city spaces that are increasingly under the watchful eyes of law enforcement. Such over-policing of Indigenous people in the inner city has been an important factor in the development of Indigenous peoples disproportionate rates of incarceration (Comack, 2012; Hansen, 2015a). As Statistics Canada (2012) youth correctional statistics demonstrate:

> In 2010/2011 a disproportionate number of youth entering the correctional system were Aboriginal. Of the admissions recorded in 2010/2011 in the

eight jurisdictions that provided data, just over one quarter (26%) was Aboriginal… The disproportionate number of Aboriginal youth admitted to the correctional system was particularly true among females. In 2010/2011, Aboriginal female youth comprised 34% of all female youth in the correctional system, while Aboriginal male youth made up 24% of all male youth in the correctional system… For both male and female youth in the general population, about 6% were Aboriginal. (p. 7)

Prisons are an important reflection of a society; more than justice a reflection of racial and social inequality, they are examples of surveillance. According to Foucault's analysis of being watched--the Panopticon--concept, Brighenti (2007) notes that being watched in the prison is "a mechanism of visibility. But what is most important for its effective functioning is not only the first-order asymmetry of vision between the guard and the inmate. It is the whole mechanism of control that must remain invisible" (p. 13). Therefore, concentrations of Indigenous peoples who are imprisoned serves as a vehicle of social control. According to Hansen, the "disproportionate incarceration rates of racial minorities, Indigenous peoples, and women are a sad situation and can be considered a political interpretation of tough on crime discourse" (2014, p. 4). It is, in other words, an interpretation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit designed to perpetuate their racialization. Incarceration denies them their own identity and their social inclusion in Canadian society. As Silver (2007) notes, "… socially excluded groups and individuals lack capacity or access to social opportunity" (p. 15). Society treats the Indigenous as abnormal, and thus discriminates against them in society's institutions.

One way to increase social inclusion for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit offenders can be understood is by looking at Euro-Canadian settler colonialism and its effects on the colonized. As a rule, the colonized

Indigenous peoples are underrepresented as employees in Canada's institutions, but are overrepresented as prisoners within the criminal justice system, demonstrating Canada's colonial power relations (Hansen, 2015b; Monture-Okanee, 1995).

Indigenous custody concerns have continued to increase after the *Gladue Report* (1999), which requires courts in Canada to consider all sensible options to incarcerations when dealing with Aboriginal offenders. The Canadian Bar Association (2012) notes that, "Canada's Criminal Code applies to all Aboriginal people, including offences by Indians whether on or off reserve. However, if convicted, the sentencing provisions of the Criminal Code direct judges to consider all reasonable alternatives to imprisonment, with particular attention to Aboriginal offenders" (p. 1). This report led to the development of Indigenous justice interventions with the courts working with Indigenous communities on matters of justice throughout Canada (Green & Healey, 2003; Hansen & Calihoo, 2014; Ross, 1996).

Agnew (1992) argues that negative relations with others can lead to pessimistic emotions in coping strategies. Those copying strategies are more likely to be criminal when the strains are severe, seen as unjust, and are linked with anger (Agnew, 2001). Downey and Feldman (1996, p. 1327) note, "The desire to achieve acceptance and to avoid rejection is widely acknowledged to be a central human motive." In regard to perceptions based on prior experiences, research pertaining to apprehensive anticipation of prejudice, by Mendoza-Denton et al (2002), found that both direct and vicarious experiences of exclusion could lead people to anxiously anticipate that they will be similarly treated

in new contexts where the possibility of such treatment exists. Responses to perceived rejection have been found to include hostility, dejection, emotional withdrawal and jealousy (Downey, & Feldman, 1996). Medical research utilizing functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has shown that social rejection results in the activation of the similar brain regions to those triggered by physical pain (Eisenberger et al, 2003). Taken together, this research demonstrates that not only is society producing angry, disengaged individuals who are mentally and physically hurting, the deleterious results of that rejection continues to resonate long after each interaction and in a cumulative fashion (Baldwin, 2005).

Papachristos et al (2012) note that, "…punishment *processes* matter a great deal more for encouraging compliance than do punishments themselves" (pp. 398-99). It arguably seem that Canadian society is providing little incentive for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit to embrace the status quo, and it is naïve to believe that such a situation does not adversely impact issues pertaining to community safety.

Following this vein of thought, it is helpful to ponder Albany Law School's, James Campbell Matthews Distinguished Professor of Jurisprudence, Anthony Paul Farley's (2002) utterance:

> We take monstrous pleasure in creating monsters. Our monsters, to the surprise of no one, behave monstrously. For this, their monstrous behaviour, they are monstrously punished… We take a monstrous pleasure in punishing our monsters. Our punishments, our pleasures, create our monsters – and so it goes, we the people [the state] versus them. (p. 1494)

Farley's passage is suggestive that buried deep beneath law and procedure, the criminal justice system is a human process predicated upon a purpose of social control, punishment and the creation of the other in order to comfortably distance the middle and upper classes from their fear of the unknown, and perhaps a deeper social responsibility for their own individual and collective actions. The inevitable side effect of such is that the criminal justice system, as an instrument of control, cannot help but promote negative relations if unchecked by the exercise of human rights.

At a fundamental level, quality improvement for increasing social inclusion with urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit clients will have to involve determining which resource investments make a difference and which do not (Heinemann, Fisher, & Gershon, 2006). Judging the quality of intervention from this vantage point necessitates looking beyond the structure (e.g., staff to client ratio) to understand the process–what actually is being done in regard to intervention (e.g., the perception of fairness). This cannot be accomplished without talking with the client and then integrating that feedback into efforts aimed at effective intervention. Both organizational structure and process have the potential to influence outcomes; "good structure increases the likelihood of good process which in turn increases the likelihood of good outcomes" (Donabedian, 1988, p. 1745).

The Current Study

The Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming (the research site for this study) has been in existence since 2001. The authors contacted Darrell B. Lechman, the founder and Director, of SCYAP, to discuss the idea of conducting potential research concerning

Indigenous youth who utilize their program. The director expressed interest in the project and therefore approved of the study. Darrell has garnered much experience in the social justice programming working with youth as well as businesses. In fact, one of the authors John G. Hansen worked with Darrel on the front lines as a correctional officer at Stony Mountain Penitentiary (MB.) in the 1990's. The objectives of SCYAP (2015) are as follows:

> -To develop a multi-layered, community-supported art and culture-based crime prevention strategy addressing youth crime (with emphasis on illegal graffiti)

> -To create an art and culture-based environment which lays the foundation for youth personal development, empowerment and direction and provides positive training opportunities aimed at developing a stronger sense of self-esteem and community ownership within the youth and "at-risk" youth of our city

> -To provide youth and "at-risk" youth with the information, knowledge, and real-life experiences required in furthering their exploration of educational and career opportunities

> -To educate and inspire, through art and culture, "at-risk" youth to become positive, contributing citizens and to dispel the myth that the larger world is forever closed to them

> -To furnish a place for urban young people to explore and express their creative abilities, to provide entry into the possibilities for continuing education and career options within and beyond the arts and culture industry

> -To partner with other youth agencies and programs in a single window delivery model to better coordinate and expand the range of services offered to youth and "at-risk" youth in our communities. (p.1)

This study explores ways of increasing social inclusion for urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit clients from the client perspective at SCYAP; a community based organization that delivers culturally appropriate programming designed to address the social, economic, and educational needs of urban Indigenous peoples.

Method

What follows is framed within the sociology of knowledge. It is grounded upon Kuhn's (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* which challenged the notion that science is to be understood as an enterprise in which knowledge is uncovered by the steady movement toward the unraveling of objective truth (Cole, 1975). As such, this research must be understood through the fact that it approaches science as an endeavor that is marked by a succession of paradigms which rule until their collapse and replacement. Indigenous peoples the world over are demanding a paradigm shift. Social movements, such as Idle No More; and CIHR's (2005) *Guidelines* are demanding that Indigenous voice be heard, and Indigenous peoples be seen.

> Our examination will draw upon Denzin's (1989) notion of 'thick' description, which he has described as follows:

> A thick description does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (p. 83)

The use of narrative, as advocated here, is an outgrowth of both the phenomenology espoused by Edmund Husserl and Soren Kierkegaard's existentialism. Husserl's logic is

bound to the immediacy of experience (Natanson, 1973), as his concern was with "describing what is given in [that] experience without obscuring preconceptions or hypothetical speculation" (Barrett, 1990: 190-91). Husserl believed that we must look to consciousness if we wish to understand human knowledge. Central to Kierkegaard is an emphasis on the existing individual, "a call for a consideration of man in his concrete situation, including his culture, history, relations with others, and above all, the meaning of personal existence" (Stewart & Mukunas, 1990, p. 63). Kierkegaard believed that as lived reality cannot be detached from human experience, we must start with the person's perception of what is truth.

Together Husserl and Kierkegaard contribute to the idea that understanding of self and world in story is what fundamentally contributes to consciousness. Conceptually, what constitutes stories has been operationalized by Morgan (2000) as "events linked in sequence across time according to a plot" (p. 2). In this vein, storytelling and understanding is "functionally the same thing" (Schank, 1990, p. 24). If we narrow our attention upon the link between identity and interpretation, it becomes apparent how enmeshed psychological narrative is with the concept of identity development (Murray, 1995). As an example, McAdams (1993) based his theory of identity development upon the very assumption that we all find meaning in our lives through the stories we tell about ourselves. According to McAdams: "A life story is a personal myth that an individual begins working on in late adolescence... in order to provide his or her life with unity or purpose and in order to articulate a meaningful niche in the psychosocial world" (p.5). Consciously and unconsciously we arrange episodes of our lives, from our late adolescence on, into stories which we constantly revise as we go about our existence because

"we make ourselves through myth" (p. 13). Our lives are our stories, yet our stories affect our lives. Thick description helps us understand and appreciate the interrelated dynamics of people's lives as it goes beyond a mere, quick, look.

As the study of discrimination has historically been dominated by research from the perspective of the perpetrator (Oyserman & Swim, 2001), the power, and promise, of thick description, is that it will allow this research to glimpse the totality of the lived existence of the individuals documented within this study as they go about living upon the margins of society. The voices, and first-hand knowledge, of these individuals, will be utilized in examining effective intervention policies, procedures and practices that are based upon the notion of 'what works' from the voice of the client. As such, while open-ended questions were used to illicit responses, overall themes were derived from comparing interviews, which took place at SCYAP. We recorded the interviews with a digital audio recorder and then transcribed the digital recordings later. Next, we identifies the themes respondents themselves brought to the fore. In order to assure consistency, both researchers individually codified, then compared, the identified themes that came to light via the transcribed voices of the respondents.

The Power of Qualitative Research

Methodologically, this study qualifies as qualitative research. The data has been derived from the verbal descriptions of experience, based upon a given questionnaire, in conjunction with a semi-structured interview designed to illicit the individual's story in their own words.

The theoretical warrant for this exercise is derived directly from May's (1958) belief that the way academia has traditionally gone about the scientific exercise, by the seeking of objective truth, has "bedeviled Western thought and science" (p. 11) because people are objectified. May's reasoning points to the need for researchers to bring the inner world of experience into their view of science. While such an endeavor is admirable, to be sure, Osborne's (1990, p. 80) observation that "we are of this world rather than in it", should cause us to pause as it brings up the thorny issue of researcher bias.

Researchers are not, and can never be, truly neutral (Creswell, 1998). Yet this does not necessarily mean that qualitative research corrupts data to the point of uselessness. Rogers (1965) noted that because science exists in people, science has its inception, process, and tentative conclusions in people too. As he states,

> Knowledge – even scientific knowledge – is that which is subjectively acceptable. Scientific knowledge can be communicated only to those who are subjectively ready to receive its communication. The utilization of science also occurs only through people who are in pursuit of values which have meaning for them. (p. 165)

The situation is clear. The presence of the researcher, in and of itself, has an impact upon what constitutes data along with how that data is collected and interpreted. Realistically, any attempt by the researcher to distance themselves from the study in fact threatens its validity (Osborne, 1990).

Meaning, Not Provable Truth

As the goal of narrative research is about the lived experience of human beings, the goal is 'meaning' not 'provable truth'. Osborne (1990, p. 86) puts it as such, "natural

science methodology looks for statistical generalizability while phenomenological research strives for empathic generalizability". In qualitatively based narrative research, it is the human-lived experience that takes center stage. Within such rubric, validity is contextual. A different researcher undertaking this research would never duplicate entirely the interpretations postulated here. Yet this is not a weakness as multiple perspectives can lead to a richness of understanding. The central point to remember is that narrative reasoning is interested in meaning, not facts. As such, "[t]he best the researcher can do is to argue a particular interpretation as persuasively as possible, supported by references to the data, and leave the final judgment to the reader" (Osborne, 1990, p. 87).

While the term validity is rarely used in qualitative enterprises, it can legitimately be used here if consideration is given to the reader's judgment pertaining to the goodness of fit between the data and the meaning structures teased out of them, in conjunction with the relevant theoretical knowledge examined throughout this work.

Convenience Based Quota Sampling

With the above in mind, this research will next introduce the subjects who have graciously offered to share their experiences, and thoughts, while trying to maintain sobriety despite the fact that they reside upon the very margins of society. A semi-structured interview approach will be utilized in order to elicit the story each individual has to offer. Of note, the selection criteria regarding participant inclusion within this research are based upon the notion of convenience based quota sampling. As such, the sample will not be random, but will, arguably, be representative – at least to the population

it is meant to serve.

Convenience sampling, while open to attack on its non-random front, is not unheard of; in fact it is widely utilized, especially within undergraduate psychology classes where students are strong armed (submit to questionnaire or fail) to participate (Salkind, 2009). Quota sampling is appropriate in cases where there is a need to create a sample stratified on certain variables; for this research, it is chemical dependency (Salkind, 2009). As such, participants were selected, based upon their willingness to accept the author's invitation to participate within this research. Postings were displayed and made visible for the urban First Nation, Metis and Inuit clients who utilized the services at SCYAP. In this way, the sample represents people with prerequisite characteristics, but does not randomly select them from the general population.

Sample

The participants are a mix of 2 female and 5 male Indigenous clients who are involved with SCYAP, and were interviewed to understand "how" Indigenous clients perceive of increasing social inclusion for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit female and male offenders within an urban environment. The participants were recruited through postings at various bulletin boards throughout SCYAP. The postings conveyed that the study was seeking Indigenous clients between the ages of 18 to 30 who were interested in participating in a study that examines perceptions of increasing social inclusion for urban First Nations, Métis, and Inuit offenders. The reason for seeking 7 participants, 2 female and 5 males between the ages 18-30 is to address gender bias as research has historically

marginalized the perspectives of women and Indigenous peoples. For ethical considerations the subjects are adult age and the researchers trusted that female and male participants will have some unique experiences to contribute to the study. The data collection comprised asking participants 16 semi structured open-ended interview questions. These open-ended questions will integrate reflective – ethnographic interviewing procedures so that participants feel free to share their perspectives in what can be called a case study. As Creswell (1998) advises a case study can be "multiple individuals, events, processes, activities, or programs" (p. 114). This study examines how Indigenous clients perceive the Criminal justice system. According to Burgess (1984), the open-ended questioning style provides participants "an opportunity to develop their answers outside a structured format" (p. 102). In addition, this study echoes with what Janesick (2003) observes as "procedures that are simultaneously open-ended and rigorous and that do justice to the complexity of the social setting under study" (p. 46). Therefore, the qualitative methods utilized will foster an interpretation of the perceptions the criminal justice system by Indigenous clients. Doing so will allow us to garner what Denzin (1989) refers to as 'thick discription'.

Demographic Factors: First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada (A Snapshot)

The term "First Nations" is used to refer to Status and non-Status "Indian" peoples in Canada (AANDC, 2012; 2013). Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2012) notes, "The Canadian *Constitution* recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people – Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages,

languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs."

Canada's Aboriginal population is also young and growing. According to Statistics Canada (2014), the Aboriginal population increased by 20.1% between 2006 and 2011. There are two things to note. First, the general population of Canada increased by 5.2% during the same period. Secondly, the percentage of Status Indians increased by 13.7%, while the percentage of non-Status Indians increased by 61.3% (Statistics Canada, 2014). This differentiation, Status vs. non-Status, is important as the federal government has treaty obligations toward Status Indians and Inuit peoples that non-Status and Métis people do not enjoy. As Wayne Beaver, of the Alderville First Nation north of Cobourg, ON observes, the Aboriginal population is growing, but that growth is deceiving for the future of Aboriginal people in Canada due to the Status vs. non-Status divide. The reason, according to Beaver, is that when the *Indian Act* was revised in 1985, due to Bill C-31, only children born of two Indian status parents inherit status. There are two classes of Status Indian in Canada: the 6(1) Indian who has two Status parents, and the 6(2) Indian, who has one Status parent. When a 6(2) Status Indian has children with a non-Status partner, those children will not have Status (Beaver, as cited in Keung, 2009:10). As such, while the population of First Nation individuals is presently growing, Treaty obligations of the federal government may well come to an end, over the course of time, due to intermarriage between Status and non-Status Indians. Duane Champagne (2015) refers to such policy, as is evident within Bill C-31, as 'termination policy' as it is designed to strip Status away from people and integrate them into the general population. As such, there is no guarantee that the growth of Canada's First Nations will be maintained. Once someone looses Status, it is gone. In Canada, the *Indian Act* stipulates that Status is gained and lost through one's lineage.

As people are more than mere numbers and labels, it is simplistic to dismiss the divisiveness government policies can promote within and between groups. Sharlotte Neely (2014, p. vi) observes that, "Native American groups like the Hopi point out how much longer they have been in the American Southwest than Native American groups like the Navajo." Michael Hankard (2015) examines how Bands tend to favor on-reserve individuals who hold Status, over those living off reserve who also hold Status, when they apply for funding toward accessing traditional healers through Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits program. Within groups who hold Status, there is a competition toward 'more Indigenousness' both amongst (on- vs. off-reserve) and between different groups (length of time present) who hold Status. There is also a divide, an exclusionary one at that, between those who hold Status and those who do not. Southern Illinois University political scientist Anne Flaherty (2014) explores how, in the US, the Cherokee nation has actively attempted to exclude the Cherokee Freemen, the African American slaves to the Cherokee and their descendants, who were extended Cherokee citizenship through a treaty singed between the Cherokee and the US federal government in 1866. The argument is predicated upon the notion that citizenship is to be grounded within blood quantum, not adoption. In Canada, the *Indian Act* stipulates that Status is gained and lost through one's lineage.

While the above information most certainly offers an incomplete picture or a snapshot if you will, it is complete enough to allow readers to grasp just how diverse a

group Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are. The country is vast, and so are the interests and issues for all the peoples of Canada. Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are also mobile, with many living outside their home communities.

The Importance of SCYAP

Those attending SCYAP are pleased with being in the program and are enjoying their experience. One participant stated that while one is at SCYAP *"…you get to meet all kinds of people from all kinds of different background"* (First Nation male, 20 years of age). *"A lot of Aboriginals tend to be artistic in some way. We have stories to tell. Using art can shepherd Aboriginal youth to express themselves in ways that are not criminal"* (First Nation female, 24 years of age). Another participant described how much needed and valued intervention programs are losing their funding:

> *We used to do a program, Urban Canvas, but we've not done it for a few years because they didn't get funding. They'd take 12 at risk youth, under 30 years of age, and they'd teach Art for 9 months. I know that helps lots do different stuff after… like not illegally painting trains, like getting into school, finding jobs. Not getting into trouble—* (Métis female, 30 years of age)

This passage clearly illustrates the benefits of being involved in art interventions, which includes staying out of trouble. This is what an intervention program such as SCYAP is intended to produce. It is intended to keep the clients out of trouble and help them establish positive ways to live and heal. As another participant explained:

> *In my experience, I've noticed that people who actually want help are those who have reached a point where their lives are really bad. People have to want to change before they seek help. Those who are trying to help need to be there and be able to establish a connection* (First Nation male, 25 years of Age).

For the Indigenous clients, SCYAP provides a community and sense of belonging. Such feelings of acceptance and inclusivity are crucial in a world that has systematically excluded Indigenous peoples.

> *Physical support; a sense of belonging to community because people feel so displaced…Community involvement is key. First Nation recognition is good, but a sense of community and of helping ourselves and others is very important. If you don't have family, then you can create one within the community.* (First Nation male, 24 years of age)

This passage illustrates that SCYAP provides a community of emotional and physical support. Since SCYAP espouses creativity through art, the program has also been a healing experience and this development is reflected in the participant's narrative:

"Creative expression is so helpful. It gives you voice and recognition. The creative process is healing" (First Nation male, 24 years of age). Intrinsic to that healing journey is developing a sense of community and belonging, assisted by SCYAP programming that is consciously aware that the clients can heal from the trauma through creative expression. SCYAP challenges the social exclusion of Indigenous people in the artistic realm. As another participant said:

> *SCYAP has enhanced my skills, showed me how to work and collaborate with others. It [SCYAP] has also allowed me to give back and help others through the gift given to me. Elders make a big difference. One of the things I remember is talk about treating others and the environment with respect.* (First Nation male, 27 years of age)

Equally important has been the cultural components, which includes the elders that are recognized as valuable teachers on educating the clients to respect the environment and other people. One participant said, *"SCYAP provides role models and gives you a safe place*

to go to" (First Nation male, 20 years of age). The Indigenous clients experience with SCYAP has been healing: the clients are finding ways to heal because of their exposure to art and a community to which they feel socially included. The clients recognize that SCYAP is reaching out to help them in a genuine way; and the clients are more likely to stay out of trouble because of the relationship building that is a central aspect of SCYAP.

Discussion

This qualitative study is concerned with how an inclusive community based initiative, such as that offered at SCYAP, addresses social exclusion in a way that pertains to positive outcomes for at risk Indigenous clients within the criminal justice system. We found that the sense of belonging, the ability to access positive role modes, the ability to take pride in oneself and express that pride – in terms of both artistic expression and in the ability to give back all play a significant role in allowing participants to take ownership in something that is greater than themselves.

A Sense of Belonging

Overcoming the sense of individual displacement, for those on the margins, can be difficult as exclusion, social or otherwise, is an affront to one's individual humanity. The sense of 'not' belonging can be devastating (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Eisenberger et al, 2003; Mendoza-Denton et al, 2002).

For First Nations people, exclusion is, to a large extent, rooted in federal government policy (Palmater, 2011). Drawing upon recent research, Palmater further notes:

The problem of over-representation of Aboriginal people in federal jails [an ultimate form of exclusion in Canada since we do not have the death penalty] is getting worse: between 1998 and 2008, the percentage of male Aboriginal inmates increased by 19% and for women it increased by 131% in the same period (OCI, 2009). Significantly, over 28% of federal Aboriginal inmates were raised in the child welfare system and another 15% in residential schools (OCI, 2006). While Aboriginal people make up less than 4% of the total population, Aboriginal children represent over 40% of the 76,000 children and youth in care (Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, 2001; Blackstock & Trocme, 2004). (p.116)

What is behind this lack of embracing First Nations? Scholars have often used the group threat thesis to explain the correlation between harsh punitive measures and large minority populations (Ousey & Unnever, 2012). While not disputing Ousey and Unnever's finding, Canadian society's proclivity for othering and vindictiveness has to be considered (Farley, 2002, p. 1494).

One reason for the success of SCYAP as an effective intervention is its inclusivity. As one respondent stated, "*I think this place* [SCYAP] *is kind of for everybody. It's a community thing… I guess that helps… anybody can come here. Feeling safe is important* (Métis female, 30 years of age). Another respondent stated, "*From my experience, I've been in-and-out of institutions for a long time, mostly in, you need to find a purpose with/for your life. You need to find something that you like*" (First Nation male, 24 years of age). A third respondent stated, "*Community involvement is key. First Nation recognition is good, but a sense of community and of helping ourselves and others is very important. If you don't have family, then you can create one within the community*" (First Nation male, 24 years of age).

In speaking to the need to find belonging as a key component of effective interventions, it is useful to look toward those on the outside, or the othered, for guidance. To this end, Turiel (2002) observed that justice entails "equal respect for persons along with freedom from oppression as the standards by which individuals and society should be guided" (p. 5). Cone (1975), a well-known Black theologian, echoed the fact that justice entails freedom from oppression. King (1963) famously stated that, "there is a tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood" (p. 3). The tension King was referring to was the demand by the oppressed for justice; that is, freedom from oppression. Understanding and brotherhood result when middle-class society realizes that when Tutu (1999) drew upon the Bantu notion of *ubuntu*, he was trying to impart a long-standing African cultural notion that what hurts one person hurts us all.

Following this vein, Braithwaite (2003) offers a convincing argument that "providing social support to develop human capabilities to the full is one particularly indispensable principle because it marks the need for a consideration of transforming as well as restoring or healing values" (p. 12). To bring this discussion back around to the inclusivity of SCYAP, effective interventions must be examined not so much as a response to a crime committed, but as a healing endeavor. Bazemore and Schiff's (2001) observation that community must occupy a focal position within this process is helpful. Not only does such thinking place the locus of responsibility for healing and inclusion with the local community, it does so without alleviating any individual of their personal responsibility, whatever their role is. Punishing for the sake of punishment is simply revenge. Revenge is not a mathematical formula in which two negatives equal a positive; unfortunately, the outcome of revenge is quite the reverse.

Positive Role Models

The available level of social support one is able to draw upon is a crucial factor when considering effective interventions. Low levels of social support have been associated with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; whereas high levels of social support have been positively associated with active problem-focused coping, a sense of control, and self-esteem (Davidson & McEwen, 2012; Hansen & Antsanen, 2016). Earlier research by Barber and Crisp (1995) found that the degree of social support available from the most supportive individual in an addict's social network was the primary predictor for using, or not using, over a three-month interval.

The respondents within this study concur that role modes are important. One respondent stated, "*SCYAP has enhanced my skills, showed me how to work and collaborate with others. It* [SCYAP] *has allowed me to give back and help others through the gift given to me…*" (First Nation male, 27 years of age). Another respondent stated, "*We learn from older people; talking with them is so helpful*" (First Nation female, 24 years of age). Finally, speaking directly to the need to be able to seek guidance, a First Nation female (age 30) observes that people, "*need a place where they can talk to someone and feel safe.*"

Community as Social Control

Research findings grounded within social disorganization theory postulate that criminal markets are the outcome of ineffective systems of pro-social control mecha-

nisms (Anderson, 1999; Curtis, 1998; Wilson, 1996). Fagan (1992) asserts that criminal activity flourishes "in a context of rapidly changing neighborhoods where the... informal social controls that limited crime… have been weakened" (p. 102). As a result, in many deprived urban contexts criminal activity not only emerges but evolves into an "obvious statistical normality" (Hannerz, 1969, p. 103). In communities where the collective capacity to obstruct illicit conduct is weakened, the transmission of this criminal behavior is more than likely to occur (Sampson & Wilson, 1995).

This literature provides an explanation of the manner by which informal social control shapes the distribution illicit markets while further suggesting that community organization partially accounts for the positive link between social structural disadvantage and drug market activity.

Empirically grounded evidence from neighborhood-level studies suggests that a large amount of variation in crime is determined by systems of informal social control (Antsanen & Hansen, 2012; Bellair, 2000; Sampson et al, 1997; Taylor 2002). Additionally, research indicates that community organization has an inhibitory effect on neighborhood-level crime (Wilson, 1996). Taken together, this line of inquiry supports the supposition that communities capable of practicing informal social control are able to reduce violence by monitoring and managing behaviors of individuals (Antsanen & Hansen, 2012; Bursik, 1988; Bellair, 2000).

SCYAP is an example of informal social control at the community level. SCYAP offers clients the ability to both express themselves and take pride in that expression. As one respondent states, "*Like it* [SCYAP] *helps me through my bad days. I can just come in here and paint and feel good about myself*" (First Nation male, 24 years of age). Another

respondent states, "*There are a lot of therapeutic aspects to art. It helps you relax and focus. People enjoy it. It builds community*"(First Nation male, 29 year of age). Finally, another respondent, when talking about SCYAP states, "*People need to learn to dream big and aim high. We need to learn not to settle, but to work hard at getting more*" (First Nation male, 27 years of age).

SCYAP, by offering at risk clients an accepting place where they can 'buy' into the program, allows clients to align their moral code to the group in order to maintain contact. Not only is a sense of belonging important (Downey & Feldman, 1996), it has been noted that the mere threat of punishment does little to change active criminal behavior. While some researchers (Manski & Pepper, 2012) question how data alone can identify the deterrent effects of capital punishment, the fact that it occurs so frequently is problematic. Furthermore, Giordano et al (2002) note that the need for a "general openness to change" (p. 1001) is necessary for someone to move away from criminal activity. Papachristos et al (2012) note that offenders reformed more readily when links to criminal social networks are weakest. As SCYAP provides an accepting community that fosters individual development within the bounds of social cohesion, both at risk Indigenous clients and the community at large benefit.

Limitations

There are certain limitations in this ethnographic research that need to be acknowledged. First, this research is conducted in Saskatoon and did not, in the end, include Inuit peoples as none were found to interview. Second, the research is qualitative in nature, and does not claim to represent or speak for all First Nations, Metis and

Inuit offenders. It is, nonetheless, an example of how seven Indigenous clients perceive effective interventions.

Concluding Thoughts

This study demonstrates that for seven Indigenous clients, finding a community in which they can both express themselves and take pride in that expression, and ultimately in their own self-worth, is one principle objective any future intervention with at risk Indigenous young offenders needs to incorporate. Offering individuals a sense of community while providing positive role models allows at risk clients to willfully incorporate behavioral change as they wish to 'buy in' to belonging to such a community. SCYAP is a strong example of how a community based intervention that does not undergird its presence with the threat of retribution, can work by simply offering a person something of value; the sense of belonging and acceptance. SCYAP is, in other words, an organization that provides youth with a sense of social inclusion.

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Sword, Compass and Square

Inherited sword of a secret

  Society, burnished and decorative.

  The family name inscribed, set

Above the mantle. Generations give

To generations. Sign of the cross

  Elaborated on the hilt.

 Compass and square emboss

  A circle, ornate and gilt,

Now on history's ash heap.

  No battle lost or won

  Buried in the deep

  Or glittering in the sun.

We must keep an even compass.

Establish lines of struggle and choice.

Mark center so the circles amass

The full range of tones in a voice.

Frame our windows to capture the light.

Set front door to back to let the air flow.

Encompass the constellations each night.

The curved path described by an arrow.

Prove our skill, our artifice,

Our intellectual range and times,

So seeing once, we never look twice

And trust that what we measured still rhymes.

For we have no Mariner's compass.

Just a deep magnetic pull

Like tidal waters; an empty bus

Waiting for a driver. The lull

Of morning turning to afternoon.

The deeper you go, the colder, more

Stable the temperature.   Soon

Blind darkness is perfect.   War

Could break out on the surface and we

Know nothing, seeking the poles,

Which themselves are melting to sea,

Like actors who have forgotten their roles.

In a world of wood, being a mason

(Sword, compass and square) we

Must search for stones—preparations begun—

To reconstruct that building squarely.

When the ground is shifting beneath,

When the skies are lowering above,

Our ancestry has naught to bequeath.

The museum has opened the trove.

So heave them, stone upon stone,

Hewing them as they pile higher.

The edifice must stand on its own

In change, sediment, or fire.

—*Jefferson Holdridge*

Understanding Descent as Subjection in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*

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Numerous critics have recognized that descent figures widely in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936). As early as 1966, Kenneth Burke designated "'went down'" as one of the novel's "key expressions" (332). Since then several others have affirmed the novel's preoccupation with descent, though at times using different terminology. Elizabeth Pochoda, for example, characterizes *Nightwood* as including "the theme of de-evolution or of 'bowing down,'" while Erin Carlston shifts rhetorically when reminding us of the "recurrent trope of 'going down . . .'" (179; 72). Kannenstine also notes repeated phrasing but allows for variance when he states, "Shifting forms of the phrase 'to go down,' for example, form a pattern as they appear throughout the novel . . ." (94). Equally intent on fitting textual bits into an overarching "pattern," Thomas Heise remarks, "[Barnes'] narrative leads us downward…on a verbal joyride, proffering examples of filth and sexual submission . . ." (307). *Nightwood* reveals its preoccupation with descent, according to the critics above, in select phrases and tropes, with a recurring theme, and through the narrative itself. As final proof, we need only recall that *Bow Down* was one of the

alternate titles for *Nightwood.* Clearly descent matters in this late-modernist novel.

While several critics have recognized *Nightwood's* preoccupation with descent, Jane Marcus delves deeper into this aspect of the novel in the first section of "Laughing at Leviticus." In her influential political interpretation, Marcus considers the recurrence of descent as indicative of dominant-submissive relations historically based in the 20th century "rise of fascism" across Europe (161). Amid this historical context, *Nightwood* makes "continual reference to submission and bowing or lowering of the self," emphasizing perpetual surrender to dominating forces largely absent in the novel (144). Those compelled to submit in *Nightwood* comprise a band of social outcasts deemed by fascist ideology "impure," a concept widely analyzed by Mary Douglas (qtd. in Marcus 147). To provide the most convincing support for her argument, Marcus concentrates on Felix's family story as presented in the opening chapter, while also underscoring Nikka's tattooed body and O'Conner' polyvocal speech. Felix, fathered by an Italian Jew, threatens to taint "pure" aristocracy, an ideal far from the "reality of a Europe in which racial purity had been obscured by mixed marriage and false credentials" (158). Nevertheless, Felix, donning the title of "Baron" like his father before him, seeks every opportunity to submit to aristocracy, yielding to the illusion of racial purity maintained by the exclusion of "impure" others like himself (Barnes 8; Marcus 147). Such submission suggests, according to Marcus, his "internalization of racial difference" as defined by the dominant order (158). Not only depicting the submission of "impure" others, *Nightwood* also reveals "myth[s]" perpetuated about members of this outsider group, namely "the fascist projection of savage sexuality onto the black man" with the character of Nikka (147).

For Marcus, the reiteration of descent in *Nightwood* conveys "submission" to the "dominating" forces of fascism, an interpretation made all the more convincing when the "original title" of the novel, *Bow Down*, is considered (144). Yet the novel includes other instances of descent, such as "went down" and "go down," as the aforementioned critics have observed. Does the idea of "submission," then, encompass the various instances of descent appearing in the novel or only those Marcus associates with the term, namely "bowing and lowering of the self . . ." (144)? Also interested in the significance of what he calls "the 'Bow Down' theme," Kenneth Burke defines the recurring phrase as "obsequious respect for persons of superior social status . . ." (337). Burke affirms Marcus' interpretation of "Bow Down" by underscoring a servile relation to a socially elevated class yet omits to consider the novel's political context, as Marcus herself notes (157). Burke does, however, contribute an important observation, stating that "the 'Bow Down' theme...will later become the 'Go Down' theme" (337). From Burke's remark on the theme's transformation, one can infer that later appearances of "go down" fell outside the scope of Marcus' interpretation, even as her article provides a useful starting point for their consideration.

While the foregoing critics have recognized descent as a recurring element in *Nightwood*, and Marcus has gone further with her political interpretation of "Bow Down" within the context of fascism, none have considered Burke's comment on the "theme['s]" transformation, insofar as I am aware (337). His comment raises several questions, such as what is the significance of "the 'Bow Down' theme...becom[ing] the 'Go Down' theme," is the latter "theme" a variant of the former or an entirely new element in the

novel, and does the "'Go Down' theme'" also covey "submission" to a socially elevated class or some other meaning (Burke 337; Marcus 144)? These three questions inform the interpretation I have developed in the following pages, which spans the Volkbein family narrative to include Matthew O'Conner's reversal of Christian morality and the impossibility of Nora and Robin's same-sex attachment. The Volkbein family narrative introduces the idea of "submission," according to Marcus, an idea that receives some attention in Judith Butler's *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997). In this critical work, which stages an encounter between continental philosophy and psychoanalysis, Butler presents "theories in subjection" that enrich the interpretation of descent in *Nightwood*. Subjection involves outward submission to the powerful--titled persons in Guido's and Felix's case--as well as internal submission, for instance, of the ego to conscience (Butler 21-22). In other words, subjection designates both an inter-subjective and intra-psychic process that unfolds in a specific historical context. It is in this dual sense that Butler elaborates her "theories in subjection," which when extended to *Nightwood* generates the following critical insights into the novel.

The theme of descent appears throughout *Nightwood*, foregrounding subjection as a formative process that depends on reiteration and repression long afterwards. The opening scene of the novel portrays Hedvig subjecting Felix to the noble family, yet other characters too undergo subjection, Matthew O'Conner to Christian morality, and Nora and Robin to normative femininity. Although presented as a formative process with Felix's birth, subjection, as later scenes attest, requires reiteration, which characters like Felix and the "excommunicate[ed]" girls initiate for themselves (Barnes 95). Willing

subjection to "social categories," such as nobility, may momentarily affirm group life, as Butler argues, yet at the cost of agency (20). Both Felix and Pope Paul II lose control after willing their own subjection; in other words, both become powerless to desire repressed through subjection. Yet other characters subject themselves in a manner that expresses repressed desire. O'Conner, for instance, subjects himself to the command "love thy neighbor" only to experience the disgust he is prohibited from feeling (Barnes 153). And Robin subjects herself to animality and in the process begins to grieve over a loss she is to "disavow" as a normal woman (Butler 139). Subjection, in other words, may be willed to reinforce dominant identities and norms or to expose what these and other identities and norms repress. To become conscious of the repressed alters subjectivity, creating the possibility of relating anew in the future. An interpretation of descent within the context of Butler's "theories in subjection" yields such insights, which I will develop further in the pages that follow.

In her account of subjection, Butler reinterprets the well-studied writings of several 19th and 20th century critical theorists. The line of thinking devoted to Freud and Foucault pertains most to my interpretation of descent in *Nightwood*. Subjection, Butler contends, originally occurs within the family, an institution thoroughly analyzed and re-analyzed by Freud. Refusing to divide the family and society, Butler combines her discussion of Freud with Foucault on power, which, for him, remains inseparable from language. Power inheres within language, functioning as more than a vehicle for its expression. Overlaying reality like a "matri[x]," discourse emanates not from one source but from many and as such offers numerous "possibilities for resistance . . ." (5, 97). Realizing

any of these possibilities, however, requires the would-be resisters first to be subjected to discourse, a "primary" subjection that Butler configures within the Freudian family (2). Caretakers enmesh the child, who is reliant of them for survival, in their discourse.

To persevere, the child affiliates with the "social categories" he or she is assigned within the family. Infantile "dependency" explains, for Butler, why the child becomes bound to "social categories" that supposedly reflect identity (7). Categories such as boy or girl offer to the child continuity of "social existence" when most "vulnerable" (Butler 21). To be subsumed by a "social category" may fulfill a fundamental "desire for existence," yet Butler emphasizes at the cost of enacting "violence" on the child through the very process of categorization (21; 28).

Being subjected by a "social category" illustrates one expression of power. Yet, following Foucault, Butler emphasizes power as "productive" as well, which leads her to pursue the following question: How does the child originally subjected come to wield power later as a subject (18)? A pivotal moment in the child's transformation into a subject capable of wielding power, Butler argues, is "the turn," the regarding of the self as an object (3). Of particular interest to Butler is how "the turn" in the context of the Freudian family forms the child's gendered identity. To become a normal boy or girl requires the child "disavow" desire for the same-sex parent (Butler 139). Such desire when confronted with prohibition rebounds, spurring the child to "turn" away from the same-sex parent towards the self. The consciousness of the self as an object, Butler argues, parallels the child's repression of the prior attachment, the love for the same-sex parent, now lost. This loss evokes within the child sadness and anger, the former

underlying the child's gender" and the latter at times fueled through the "critical agency" (Butler 135; 180). Because this loss goes unrecognized by society, the child represses the accompanying sadness and anger that at times find indirect routes of expression.

Butler's "theories in subjection" delves much deeper into the role of power in psychic formation. The foregoing summary hints at this depth while providing a context for interpreting the significance of descent in *Nightwood*. The "'Bow Down' theme," as designated by Burke, appears in the very first scene of the novel recounting Felix's birth. Bowing constitutes Felix's defining characteristic throughout the novel, yet prior to his perpetual submission to nobility, Felix is first "subject[ed]" to it as an established "social category" (Butler 20). Felix's birth scene foregrounds his subjection to nobility, a "primary" process, according to Butler, that makes agency as a subject possible (28). To choose, resist, or transform social identity requires the individual first become a member in a group. Designating Felix a member of Viennese nobility the moment she names him, Hedvig gives birth to her "only child" on a "canopied bed" displaying the "Volkbein" arms and "the House of Hapsburg . . ." (Barnes 1). These insignia of nobility pre-date his existence into the world, suggesting an already-formed social identity for him to assume. Before Felix understands this social identity and accompanying "norms," Hedvig deems him noble, exerting the power of the "social category" over his life (Butler 19). Power, in this case operating through an ideal, subordinates Felix to a time-honored and illustrious class. The ensuing production of Felix's noble subjectivity, thus, depends on Hedvig's primary designation, a designation that subjects him from without to an identity he will try to embody as his own. This moment of "primary" subjection occurs when Felix, as

a child, is at his most "vulnerable" (Butler 28). The initial dependence of children on caretakers, to reiterate Butler, partly explains the power of "social categories" over their lives. A child needs to assume "social categories," in order to sustain existence or else face social death, being nameless in a language-saturated world. The linguistic position Hedvig designates ensures Felix's "social existence" even after her death, offering support when he is most dependent (Butler 28). The more he affiliates with noble identity, the more he is assured of his "social existence."

The weight of noble subjectivity bears all the more heavily upon Felix, the opening scene suggests, through the threat of violence. The scene invokes a military metaphor, which likens Hedvig naming Felix to the "gross splendor of a general saluting the flag . . ." (Barnes 1). This metaphor conveys a variant of power that Butler does not consider in her account of subject formation: brute force. Physical power intersects in this passage with discursive power. The power of nobility is fortified with military might, which presents all who threaten the ideal with violence. Through the comparison of Hedvig to a "general," the passage aligns pure nobility with nation. Just as Hedvig fulfills her duty in "perpetuating that race which has the sanction of the Lord and the disapproval of the people," so she can marshal military force in the service of its own ends (Barnes 1). Additional metaphors appear throughout the chapter as Hedvig conducts herself more frequently like a soldier. Her gait seems to Guido like "goose-step(s)," her "bearing" resembles a "general in creaking leather," and her dancing appears to be a "tactical maneuver" (Barnes 3-4). She approximates the "norms" of nobility, it seems to Guido, as someone does who serves in the military. Her militaristic style intensifies the pressure

Guido and later Felix feel to embody nobility faithfully, for failing would bring severe, perhaps even life-threatening consequences. This threat of violence far exceeds the "violence" Butler argues follows from subjection to a "social category" (28). The idea of nobility does subsume Guido's and Felix's heterogeneity, enacting violence in the process, but Hedvig's militaristic style suggests violence of much greater magnitude for those who threaten its purity. Guido's and Felix's subjection to nobility raises a question that falls outside the scope of Butler's study: What are the degrees of subjection and their impact on subjection formation?

Byway of a provisional answer, the degree to which Guido and Felix are subjected to nobility correlates with the threat they pose to its purity. As nobles disguising their Jewish ancestry, the Barons represent an "abject" otherness to which, according to Marcus, nobility is "oppose[d]" (147). If the noble class constitutes the true people of Austria, then Guido and Felix remain outsiders to that nation, denied the right to social recognition within its borders. Of Jewish descent, both are designated by a "social category" at odds with "pure" nobility and by extension Austria, the internal consistency of the category jeopardized by their Jewish "blood" (qtd. in Marcus 174; Barnes 3). The ideal of pure nobility, however far from reality, nevertheless affords Guido and Felix with a "social existence" denied by larger Austrian society. By claiming noble ties, Felix and Guido can exist within a country that otherwise denies their right to coexist with other Austrians. To sustain this "social existence" requires that they withstand a greater degree of subjection, which intensifies the "attachment" they feel to nobility (Butler 6). Being bound to nobility affords them great benefits. It furthers their "social existence," offering

support to Butler's dependent child who fears neglect. Yet beyond maintaining social life, nobility safeguards Guido and Felix both internally and externally from confronting "abject" otherness and suffering from violent counteroffensives. Nobility shields Guido and Felix against an oppressive society that threatens their mental and physical lives, in short from the violence of war waged in the name of national defense. Both come to desire subjection as a way to preserve life itself amid intimations of violence made unimaginably real by the Holocaust.

Whatever vitality and protection nobility offers Guido and Felix proves fleeting. Even after titling himself "Baron…as his father had done before him," Felix still develops an "obsession" with the "great past" and Vienna's "great names" (Barnes 8-9; 17). "Obsessions," to reiterate a psychoanalytic line of thinking, conceal a deep-seated "fear," in Felix's case the fear of violence for posing a threat to "pure" nobility (Evans 126). To allay this fear, Felix upholds all that is great about nobility, pronouncing laudatory judgments as though fixed and eternal. These judgments affirm the power of nobility before Felix's audience, including Robin who, despite her husband's best efforts to instill like-minded reverence, shows little interest. Felix not only affirms the power of nobility but submits to it on every occasion, "bow[ing]" before any and every titled person (Barnes 9). His submission, surpassing duty, becomes what he most desires, as he seeks every opportunity to "bow down" wherever he may be. Always on the verge of "bowing," Felix seems far more subjected to nobility than he does an autonomous subject. And yet even in his dependence, Felix's perpetual subjection exposes the ongoing process of subjection necessary for subject formation—in other words, the subject's dependence

on power external to the self otherwise repressed. As Butler asserts of Foucault, "the subject who is produced through subjection is not produced at an instant in its totality. Instead, it is in the process of being produced . . ." (93). By repeatedly submitting, Felix reveals his reliance on nobility to establish himself as Baron, a social identity recognized in Austria. With this identity, nevertheless, Felix still remains at risk of encountering violence. Repeatedly submitting momentarily defuses the "threat" he poses to nobility; this act also shields Felix behind the power of nobility, safeguarding his life a little longer.

"Bowing" repeatedly to nobility may preserve Felix's life but at a great cost. After seeking countless opportunities to submit, Felix can no longer choose whether or not "to bow" in the presence of nobility. Felix's loss of agency appears to be a regression to his so-called animal nature when he is confronted at a bar with the greatness of nobility. Convinced a "Duke" is in his midst, Felix initially "refus[es] to look" towards the esteemed man (Barnes 123). Yet as the evening turns to night, Felix can no longer restrain himself, submitting compulsively to the bearer of nobility: "he turned and made a slight bow, his head in his confusion making a complete half-swing, as an animal will turn its head away from a human, as if in mortal shame" (Barnes 123). Against his will, Felix looks towards the man, submitting compulsively to the power represented. Such power, backed by the threat of brute force in previous scenes, burdens Felix, challenging his autonomy as a subject. His compulsive submission suggests that certain regimes of power may hinder some from becoming autonomous subjects. With Butler's "theories in subjection" as context, Felix's compromised autonomy illustrates not regressive animalism but "primary" subjection, human dependence on external power otherwise repressed. What appears

to be the emergence of Felix's "animal nature," and thus his so-called underdeveloped and inferior subjectivity, amounts to his "primary" subjection to power upon which all subjectivity depends. To become an autonomous subject, according to Butler, requires the child first be subjected to power emanating from without (Butler 7). Felix's loss of autonomy reveals his "dependenc[e]" on noble power for its achievement (Butler 7). It also reveals the extent to which Felix, as a Viennese Jew, struggles to become a subject who wields power in an oppressive society.

The scene recounted above marks the final appearance of "the 'Bow Down' theme." Prior to its conclusion, another instance of descent figures in the "Bow Down" chapter, the descent of Pope Paul II during the Roman Carnival. If "the 'Bow Down' theme…will later become the 'Go Down' theme," according to Burke, then the Pope's descent already hints at this transformation quite early into the novel. Through a flashback the Pope enters the Volkbein family narrative. Guido recollects Pope Paul II being "shaken down from his hold on heaven" while watching Jewish contestants run the "Corso" (Barnes 2). His descent adds further to the idea of "subjection" first introduced with "the 'Bow Down" theme." The one who "bows down," Guido, recalls Pope Paul II compelling the submission of the Jewish population during the Roman Carnival with the "ordinance of 1468" (Barnes 2). Whereas Guido and later Felix perpetually submit to nobility, Pope Paul II decrees that the Roman Jews submit to his will by running the "Corso." In Guido's recollection, Roman power replaces noble power as exercised by the Pope over the Roman Jews. With his will accomplished, the Pope loses control during the Carnival among the Roman populace, expressing pleasure in the suffering of the Jewish contestants otherwise

suppressed. He revels in the suffering brought about by his boundless power that grows great enough to overpower even him. He does regain control, presumably ascending once more. Yet his reassertion of will denies his own vulnerability to being overpower, in effect his similarity to the Jewish contestants whose vulnerability is targeted for the amusement of the Roman audience.

Guido's recollection, based loosely on actual events, features in several historical studies covering the Roman Carnival. This long-standing "institution" had afforded Roman citizens eight days of "celebrati[on]" before they solemnly observed Lent (Miller 201; Kertzer 74). Characterized by uproarious and at times violent behavior, the Roman Carnival taxed those charged with "maintaining public order" (Kertzer 74). Within this unruly atmosphere, Romans wore "masks," dressed in "costumes," and enjoyed "satires" of public officials, in effect acting otherwise than in the normal world (Kertzer 74). Instead of regulating their behavior according to prevailing standards, the Romans, like other Carnival goers around the world, could "transgress…daily conventions" and engage in "excesses of behavior" for a brief time every year (Goldwasser 1440). The intensity of the Carnival, nevertheless, had greatly decreased by the time Pope Paul II acceded the papalcy in 1464 (Miller 201). With its waning state in mind, he proposed footraces as a new event, passing the Ordinance of 1466, not 1468 as *Nightwood* mistakenly records according to Pollard, to mandate participation and thereby added to his legacy credit for "reviving the Carnival" (Miller 201).

The footraces proposed by the Pope spanned each day of the Carnival and included a variety of participants that were designated at the time as "'two- and four-legged

animals'"(Waagenaar 137-138). Such participants included "boys of fifteen," "Jews," "men over seventy," "bulls," "buffaloes and donkeys," and eventually "hunchbacks and other cripples" (qtd. in Waagenaar 137). The Corso races, as they would be known, initially appealed to the Jewish people because they "established them as part of the Roman population . . ." (Waagenaar 138). After the races, which began in the spirit of friendly competition, began to deteriorate, the Jewish people participated only under the threat of punishment. They raced through the "center of Rome" under conditions that grew more humiliating for the participants and more amusing for the audience (Waagenaar 138). Instead of being cheered on to victory, the runners endured ridicule from the beginning to the end of the course. The law required that they run almost "naked" after having stuffed themselves full with food (Kertzer 74; Waagenaar 138). As they ran, "riders on horseback…chas[ed] them" through the streets, spurring them on for the sake of fun-filled competition (Waagenaar 138). Having no reason to think of the races as something other than a game, the Roman populace got carried away by the fun. Some Romans hurled insults and "obscenities"; others threw objects at the runners (Waagenaar 141). In short, the Jewish contestants became "targets" for the Roman populace to degrade for their amusement (Waagenaar 141). Amid the shouts and commotion, the Pope watched the runners from "his richly ornamented balcony and laughed heartily" (qtd. in Kertzer 74). After enduring such treatment for more than two centuries, the Roman Jews agreed to pay a "heavy tax"—beginning in 1667 and every year thereafter—in lieu of participating in the races (Kertzer 74). The Roman Carnival continued to be held, though without the Jews competing before the Roman audience.

In *Nightwood's* portrayal of the Roman Carnival, the Pope's descent follows from Jewish debasement. After subjecting the Jews to his "ordinance," the Pope and audience enjoy greater freedom—the freedom to express schadenfreude instead of Christian love without remorse (Barnes 2). With the contestants under control, the audience might lose control, directing verbal and physical aggression towards the runners, while the Pope is "shaken down" at the sight of Jewish suffering (Barnes 2). Descent, in this instance, expresses a loss of self-control that depends on the self having become conscious of itself. To become self-conscious, according to Butler, the child is first subjected to "social categories" and attendant "norm[s]" (21). In adhering to gender "norm[s]", the child divests the same-sex parent of libidinal energy, making it possible to "turn…back upon onself . . ." (Butler 3). An object of regard, the self later becomes an object of control, as the child learns to re-channel the power subjecting him. What the child chooses to control about herself follows from the "norm[s]" internalized, the right and by implication wrong behavior assigned to any given "social category." It is the Christian "norm" "love thy neighbor" that Pope Paul II abandons when he descends with others at the Carnival. He loses control, giving free reign to the negative desires created with the internalization of the Christian "norm." Subjected to the Christian "norm," the Pope, in turn, subjects the Roman Jews to run in the Corso, which allows him to abandon the norm he otherwise wills himself to follow. He exercises power in order to give free reign to the negative desires towards others he otherwise strives to control.

Nightwood's rendering of the Roman Carnival conveys subjection in three distinct senses. Adding to this account is the idea of animalism already discussed in the paragraph

on Felix's loss of agency. To reiterate, Felix's seeming regression to his animal nature reveals his dependence on external power. Marshaling his power, Pope Paul II subjects Roman Jews to the "ordinance of 1468" and in so doing aligns them with such animals as "bulls," "buffaloes and donkeys." Likening the Jewish contestants to animals makes it easier for the audience to violate them during the Carnival, since animals on the "medieval…great chain of being" fall below man who has a connection to the "divine . . ." (DeMello 37). It is Pope Paul II, however, that becomes animal-like in *Nightwood's* rendering of the historical event. Watching the Jewish contestants suffer through the course he willed them to follow, the Pope descends with "laughter" until "recaptur[ing] the beast" (Barnes 2). Just as he subjects the Roman Jews to the "Corso," so he subjects the "beast" within, and in so doing rises presumably back to the "angel[ic]" realm (Barnes 2). Does his capacity for self-control increase the more he exercises control over others? The passage raises the possibility that it does. The passage also inflects the Pope's "recaptur[ing] the beast" with irony, calling into question a version of goodness based on feats of self-control. To be good, according to *Nightwood's* presentation of Christian morality, is to master unruly desires, even as the expression of these desires affords pleasure akin to the Pope's "laughter." These desires, "beast"-like, arouse fear and provoke a defensive response in the Christian. Waging war against these desires may keep them under control but at the cost of a divided self. The passage interrogates whether subjection of the self is always for the good.

The account of Pope Paul II subjecting Roman Jews during the annual Carnival covers no more than a paragraph, yet the novel continues to evoke the power of the Christian Church over its cast of characters. Matthew O'Conner interrogates Christian morality in lengthy monologues in which the "'Go Down' theme" appears twice. O'Conner descends, in one iteration, staunchly adhering to the command "love thy neighbor" beyond its intended scope. Already subjected to the Christian command, O'Conner subjects himself further, re-conceptualizing love in the process. He loves not just in life but in death and throughout the process of decay: "Ah, yes—I love my neighbor. Like a rotten apple to a rotten apple's breast affixed we go down together . . ." (Barnes 153). Neighborly love, in this instance, unsettles the logic of prohibition and transgression as introduced by the forbidden fruit in the book of Genesis. Although prohibited from eating from the tree of knowledge, Eve, at the serpent's prompting, satisfies her desire for the fruit. This same fruit, once desirable, but now a source of disgust, binds O'Conner to his neighbor as they descend. The taint of the forbidden fruit pervades the pair, confronting both with depravity. O'Conner, unlike Pope Paul II, seeks not to control negative instincts towards his neighbor he is commanded to love but to defuse them of power and in the process deepen their relation beyond regulated boundaries.

While Pope Paul II subjects his desires that transgress the command "love thy neighbor," O'Conner subjects himself and his neighbor to the desires prohibited by the command. In so doing, O'Conner absorbs these unruly desires into the self, transforming his neighborly relation in the process. O'Conner and his neighbor, bound by the "rotten apple," descend, withstanding aversion to transgressive desire, unlike the Pope who defends against the fear-inducing "beast" within. Not a one-time act of will, O'Conner

subjects himself and his neighbor further at any sign of "hesitation" (Barnes 153). Together they "rot," O'Conner attentive to the "dire need" and "cry" arising from his neighbor until complete (Barnes 153). To love thy neighbor, according to this reversal of Christian morality, is to withstand jointly the negative desires aroused by the command. Even further, to "love thy neighbor" is to reinforce his will whenever "hesitation" at these negative desires arises, perhaps even going so far as to tend throughout to the process of "decay" the neighbor's suffering (Barnes 153). The "decay" of the "apple," although a natural process, suggests the de-naturalization of desire within O'Conner's monologue. Just as the forbidden tree instills in Eve the desire for the perfect fruit, so the command "love thy neighbor" requires renunciation of hatred the Christian already feels. The command, with its implied prohibition against hate and the harm it might do, generates the transgressive desire within the Christian. Furthering the idea of transgressive desire's dependence on prohibition, Butler expresses their mutually supportive relation when she states, "Prohibition reproduces the prohibited desire and becomes intensified through the renunciations it effects" (81). In other words, prohibition generates the desire anew, in addition to fortifying the "no" with every renunciation. By following the command "love thy neighbor" with the decaying fruit, O'Conner deactivates the prohibition against hate, giving full reign to the negative desires otherwise blocked. Subjecting himself and his neighbor to these desires, O'Conner risks being overpowered by them to the point of destruction. What occurs instead is the "mingl[ing]" of self and other, a fusion at the ontological level (Barnes 153). In O'Conner's words, "the heat of his [the neighbor's] suppuration has mingled his core with mine . . ." (Barnes 153). Together, the pair withstands negative desires in the other's presence, neighbors who are supposed to show

only love. Originally subjected to the "love thy neighbor" command from without, O'Conner self-consciously subjects the pair to negative desires prohibited by the command, suggesting not the "mechanical" repetition of subjection but the possibility of its reversal (Butler 16).

O'Conner returns to Christian morality in another passage that includes the "'Go Down' theme." Neighborly love, it might be argued, halts before the "damned," those barred from the Christian community (Barnes 95). O'Conner joins Guido, who walks "damned" after recollecting his ancestor's "degradation," when he mimics the "girls… in the toilets at night . . ." (Barnes 2; Barnes 95). The girls, burdened by unwanted pregnancy, utter repeatedly the "terrible excommunication" with great fury before avowing their own damnation (Barnes 95). With each curse O'Conner mimics, tension mounts, culminating in a vision of the community of the "damned" awaiting realization in the future.

The string of "excommunication[s]" O'Conner voices exposes the limits of the Christian Church's power to subject fully the "girls" (Barnes 95). To be "damned" is to be fixed in an irreversible judgment, one that forecasts an interminable state of suffering for an unpardonable sin. Yet this eternal judgment seems fleeting in O'Conner's monologue, in need of continual reinforcement. The "excommunication" of the "girls" O'Conner mimics repeats the word "damn," in various forms, ten different times. "May you be damned upward!" and "May you pass from me, damned girl!" present two of the various instances (Barnes 95). The "girls" pronounce the same judgment already pronounced against them, assuming the Church's power and redirecting it towards an unidentified

"you" (Barnes 95). Not once but multiple times, they "damn" this "you" while also "damning" themselves: "God damned me before you, and after me you shall be damned . . ." (Barnes 95). Reinforcing the Church's judgment, the "girls" further subject themselves, much like Felix who in "bowing down" strengthens the power of nobility over himself. In addition, the extent to which the "girls" "damn" themselves transforms the initial judgment into a litany of "self-reproach" (Butler 18). As a reflexive mode of consciousness, "self-reproach" indicates the "turning of a subject against itself," each turn reinforcing further subjection (Butler 18). Subjected by the Church from without, the "girls," measure themselves against the Church's negative judgment and inflict further punishment. The fact that the Church's judgment needs reinforcing, however, presents the "girls" with the possibility of transformation. Butler begins to explain why by stating, when "the subject reproduces the conditions of its own subordination, the subject exemplifies a temporally based vulnerability that belongs to those conditions, specifically, to the exigencies of their renewal" (12). Every repetition of the damning judgment presents the "girls" with a "temporally based vulnerability" that, if tapped, would allow for them to rework power relations with the Church, in other words, to reconfigure their subjection as the "damned." Even as they reinforce their subjection, the "girls" increase the likelihood of changing in the moment they are overpowered by the Church, changing in ways unforeseen by the "social category" of the "damned."

Such a possibility emerges towards the end of O'Conner's monologue. The "girls" momentarily cease reinforcing the Church's judgment and instead declare an alternative existence: "I'm an angel on all fours, with a child's feet behind me, seeking my people

that have never been made, going down face foremost, drinking the waters of night at the water hole of the damned, and I go into the waters up to my heart . . ." (Barnes 95). Still within hell, the "girls," nevertheless, envision their formed changed, which gives rise to a novel desire, the desire for community in the future. The "social existence" conferred on the "girls" relegates them to the shadows of the church community. In reinforcing the Church's judgment, the "girls" prolong their "social existence," according to Butler, though a negative "existence" to be sure, without hope for the future. The alternative existence they envision exceeds the bounds of any recognizable "social category." As both "angel" and "child," the "girls" crawl into the "water hole of the damned," a contrary scene that combines good and evil, innocence and sin. In this state beyond moral polarization, the "girls" express their desire for sociality while "going down" into a "water hole" that offers not the prospect of purity but of further defilement. The "people" they await remain indefinite, also outside the bounds of a recognizable "social category." As such, the "angel"-"child" figure and the unformed people remain ambiguous, difficult to distinguish from other "social categories." And yet the "girls" themselves, "damned" by the Church, differ greatly from those promised eternal life. The "socially dead" receives some attention by Butler in the context of the AIDS crisis, though her point bears upon the foregoing passage from *Nightwood* as well (27). She raises concern about "a practice of social differentiation in which one achieves and maintains 'social existence' only by the production and maintenance of those socially dead" (27). Already "damned" and therefore dead, the "girls" envision a community that consigns no one to "social dea[th]." Members of this community assume unrecognizable "social categories," which continue their existence without distinguishing others as "socially dead." How does such

a community, then, sustain itself? Through love, the passage suggests, as the "girls" await their "people" with the impure water level with their "heart."

Love connects O'Conner's two monologues with "the 'Go Down' theme" as it appears in the context of Nora and Robin's narrative. Whereas O'Conner's monologues concern neighborly love, Robin and Nora's narrative revolves around same-sex love, more pointedly the impossibility of love between women. Such impossibility circumscribes their relationship, marked by sadness when they meet and again with Robin's departure. Their introduction, receiving some attention in the novel, occurs at the "Denckman Circus" where they sit side by side in the first row (Barnes 53). Nearest to the animals parading past, the pair notices one another within a frame in which a "horse…dogs… [and] elephant" appear (Barnes 54). From the start, their relationship seems inseparable from animal life, as not entirely human. Even as Nora "turn[s]" to focus directly on Robin, she sees her alongside a cage in which a "powerful lioness…regarded the girl, as if a river were falling behind impassable heat, her eyes flowed in tears that never reached the surface" (Barnes 54). The "lioness[']" sadness infuses the moment, setting the tone for their public meeting at the circus. In this space, not entirely removed from heterosexual society, Nora and Robin nearly empathize with the "lioness[']" sadness arising from great loss. Suffering in her own right, the "lioness" may also reflect the suffering, or more specifically sadness, that goes unexpressed in heterosexual society. Members in this society withstand subjection to normative femininity and masculinity, according to Butler, which results in their "disavowal" of same-sex attachments (139). These attachments, never recognized by heterosexual society, still affect the normal boy

or girl long after they are severed. The loss experienced, and the sadness and anger such loss evokes, undergo repression in the traditional man and woman. At the moment Nora and Robin form their attachment, the "lioness" displays the depths of her sadness, confronting the couple with the loss that goes "[un]mourned" in heterosexual society, the loss of same-sex attachment (Butler 139). Before her sadness can spread, however, the pair stands and leaves, attempting to escape the loss otherwise borne unconsciously by "normal" men and women.

Despite this attempt, Nora does experience the loss of Robin after "years" of living together when she takes to the streets again, alone (Barnes 59). Nora, subjected to traditional womanhood, resists by forming an attachment to Robin, strengthening it even, while living in a society that fails to recognize this bond. Unlike the straight female Butler describes, Nora never "disavows" her love-infused "desire" for another woman but affirms its importance long after Robin has left (Butler 136). Describing the re-routing of "desire" for traditional femininity, Butler states, "the girl becomes a girl through being subject to a prohibition which bars the mother as an object of desire and installs that barred object as a part of the ego, indeed, as a melancholic identification" (Butler 136). The "girl" originally feels love-infused "desire" for her mother, the object of her libidinal energy, but forgets how much as a result of subjection. She will develop while burying this loss, suspending the work of "mourning" indefinitely (Butler 139-40). Nora, on the other hand, can do nothing but remember Robin, safeguarding her through an act of incorporation from the erosion of time: "Love becomes the deposit of the heart, analogous in all degrees to the 'findings' in a tomb…In Nora's heart lay the fossil of

Robin, intaglio of her identity, and about it for its maintenance ran Nora's blood" (Barnes 56). Nora preserves the remnants of her beloved inwardly, maintaining an attachment to Robin who has vacated their life together. In this way, she can be with Robin despite her absence, prolonging their relation past its dissolution. Another way she stays connected is to talk endless about Robin to O'Conner. These late-night conversations offer Nora the possibility of "griev[ing]" amid a "culture" that fails to recognize the value of what she lost (Butler 138). Endless talk of Robin, however, eventually leads O'Conner to entreat Nora, asking "'Can't you be quiet now?'. . ." (Barnes 124). O'Conner, as her once source of support, bears the burden of Nora's loss rarely expressed, according to Butler, within heterosexual society (138).

Within a society that offers no recourse for "mourning" same-sex attachment, Nora eventually expresses her anger over the loss in a phantasmatic act of destruction. At prospect of being "spilled" of Robin, "Nora would wake from sleep, going back through the tide of dreams into which her anxiety had thrown her, taking the body of Robin down with her into it, as the ground things take the corpse . . ." (Barnes 56). Nora, in her "anxiety," buries her beloved and herself, an act of destruction that transpires amid cultural "disavowal" of same-sex attachment, or to paraphrase Butler, the love never felt (139). Rather than acknowledge the loss of Robin within such a culture, Nora sacrifices them both, "taking the body of Robin down with her . . . ." Descent, in this instance, suggests internalized "rage" against loss that cannot be acknowledged within the wider culture, "rage" expressed as an imaginary act of destruction (Butler 148). Nora, impulsively perhaps, directs such anger against herself and her beloved rather than release

her amid straight society and move forward. To release Robin would necessitate Nora concluding that her relationship held no importance; in sum, it never mattered. Rather than deny Robin's importance to her, Nora momentarily destroys them both, an act that paradoxically safeguards their relationship's worth.

Nora's imaginary act of destruction does not end the couple's life together. Rather, the novel concludes with the pair nearly reuniting with Nora's dog as intermediary. The animal, appearing already with "the 'Go Down' theme," reappears in this final scene. In its earlier appearance amid the Volkbein family drama, the animal conveys the Pope's transgressive desire in need of being mastered during the Roman Carnival. In other words, the Pope subjects the animal, or more accurately "the beast," after losing control at an event of his own design. This act of self-mastery ironically brings the Pope closer to the "angels," to the good, and away from the Jewish contestants he subordinates. Later in the novel, the animal threatens to arouse sadness in Nora and Robin upon meeting, sadness over the loss of same-sex attachment otherwise repressed in straight society. At the couple's near reunion, the animal once again intersects with "the 'Go Down' theme," suggesting further ideas about subjection.

The couple, after a lengthy separation, comes together in the "decaying chapel" on Nora's property (Barnes 168). Nora's dog leads the way to Robin long since housed therein. At the moment of their encounter, "Robin began going down" while Nora watches from the doorway (Barnes 169). "The 'Go Down' theme" in its final version, conveys Robin's transformation into an animal, more specifically, a dog. As the intermediary, Robin's dog links the pair pressured to renounce their love by straight society. Instead of fleeing

from the sadness aroused by the animal as when they met, Robin descends before Nora, becoming like an animal, the signifier of repressed desire and emotion in the novel. In becoming like the dog, Robin also differs from the Pope who sought to "recapture the beast" that breaks free during the Roman Carnival. She neither submits to nor restrains the animal but expresses repressed affect until spent.

Robin's transformation into an animal recasts the reality of the scene as play. "Flowers and toys" lay "before a Madonna," offerings to the icon of femininity (Barnes 169). With a "Madonna" as backdrop, Robin "began going down" the moment Nora appears, injured, in the doorway (Barnes 169). Subjected to the "social category" that requires same-sex attachment be severed, Robin abandons humanity altogether. After her descent, which is slow and minutely described, Robin faces the dog as a dog. It is an animal that initially foreshadows the loss of same-sex attachment: the "lioness[']" tearful "eyes," arguably, mirrors sadness from loss otherwise repressed in straight society. Nora and her dog's return confront Robin with loss at the exact moment she begins her descent, which gives expression to repressed affect compounded by the couple's separation. Her descent, an extended form of play, first channels her anger towards Nora's beloved pet as she drives him "backwards" into a "corner" (Barnes 170). She appears intent on subjecting the dog to violent ends, an act that allows for control over anger by controlling another. Her anger culminates in an unfinished act of sexual dominance offensive to all subscribers of "normal" femininity or for that matter "normal" human behavior. Whether simulating this act or not, Robin terrifies the dog enough to leave him "clawing sideways at the wall . . ." (Barnes 170). The tension breaks when Robin changes course as she "struck against

his side" provoking him to "bit[e] at her . . ." (Barnes 170). Sadness erupts as the two run length-to-length around the room, "crying" together until collapsing on the floor, spent (Barnes 170). A failed attempt to subject Nora's dog leaves Robin weeping, overpowered by her own sadness that has at last reached the surface. At rest, Robin sits with dog lying against her, no longer separate, no longer wandering alone.

The novel concludes with a scene of subjection, returning to the idea introduced with Felix's birth. Whereas Felix reinforces his subjection to the noble family by repeatedly "bowing down," later scenes suggest the possibility of weakening the power of dominant identities and norms over a life. The shift from reinforcing to weakening subjection informs the transformation of the "'Bow Down' theme" into "the 'Go Down' theme." Later appearances of the theme suggest that subjection might be weakened through transgressive reversal, suspended repetition, and play. In these psychic states, the repressed returns, more specifically the desires and affects prohibited by Christian morality and normative femininity. Instead of defending against the repressed, as does Pope Paul II when he "recapture[s] the beast," O'Conner, the "girls" of the "night," and Robin experience these desires and affects until they dissipate. Less subjected to Christian morality and normative femininity, they stand, momentarily, as subjects of their own making.

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Ugly Secretaries: Toward a Minor Literature

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"Let me be. Why do you do this to me?..."

And his words and the way he said them sounded strange.

—"The Overcoat," Nikolai Gogol

Poverty is ugly and promiscuous.

—*The Hour of the Star* (13)

AN UGLY AESTHETICS

"Secretary" conjures images of sexy, neat young ladies in nylon. By contrast, Austrian Mela Hartwig's ca. 1931 *Bin ich ein überflüssiger Mensch?* and Brazilian Clarice Lispector's 1977 *A Hora da estrela* present two poorly-educated, sexually nonfunctional,

and socially unimportant secretaries. While the first is a confessional, first-person, feminine Bildungsroman, which characteristically ends in failure, the second is a frame fantasy: a bourgeois' faux-authoritative description of the life of a poor provincial woman he crosses in the streets. Comparing these novellas to Herman Melville's 1853 *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Tale of Wall Street*, narrated by Bartleby's boss, I examine the relationship between aesthetics and dignity.

In particular, I am interested in the relationship between narrative, freedom, and restraint and in how much a narrator knows about their subject(s). This relates to monstrosity and subtlety as modes of narration. In literature of the invisible lower class, I am interested in the extent to which this class is knowable to its narrator, and to what extent they escape the telling. We might then contemplate the changing tone of these novellas from the restrained, realist Bartleby, whose subject is non corporeal and nearly unknown to his narrator, to Hartwig's Aloisia, an ugly, sexually ashamed, formerly dramatic but now efficient and neutralised "zero," to Lispector's Macabéa, a grotesque, comic, sickly exaggeration dreamed up by a bourgeois man who crosses "her" in the street. While Bartleby remains mysterious and retains a creative, independent space away from the buzz of everyday life, no such privacy exists for Aloisia and Macabéa. Their failures and their bodily inferiority are put on display in a humiliating excavation. And whereas Bartleby's protest is his passive silence, Aloisia and Macabéa's visibility comes through an excessive, ironic, and failed obsession with star culture that problematises any claim on reality in art. Lispector's narrative, complete with the alternate title of "A Cheap Sob Story," asks itself if it is a melodrama, takes snapshots, inserts explosions before dramatic moments, all while espousing a faux-sanctimonious aesthetic of restraint, silence, and hard facts. And as Dan Krier and William J. Swart write, the move to modernity transformed the carnivalesque from tragedy into spectacle, turning it into a "distraction" instead of a mirror of primary life experience (134). And as Lispector's narrative demonstrates, in post modernity no experience of life can stay unspectacular (135).

This is symbolised by a leitmotif of volume. In my reading, Bartleby is a novella about silence, Am I a Redundant Human Being is about quieting down, and The Hour of the Star is about the "right to shout," in the narrator's words; this means the right of the bourgeois to shout about the poor, but also about how the truth is silence, about the appeal of noise, the appeal of discordance, the power of sound, and the silence that is truth. The 1853 text provides an example of negative protest, a realist third-person account that suggests dignity and private subjectivity in its restraint. By 1931, dignity means realising one's unimportance and crying about it; the secretary lives obsessively and suicidally through fantasy. By 1977, such low-grade poverty must be approached ironically; while the scholarly literature has concentrated on its metafictional narrative apparatus as a means of empathising with the Other, the bourgeois claims his "right to scream" this other who lives in "the pure happiness of idiots," as the narrator calls it, and exercises that right through grotesque fantasy. Unwritten life loses some claim on reality. I argue that the speech of insignificant life moves from quiet, passive resistance to increasingly grotesque, carnivalised, discordant loudness that negates the privacy of individual protest.

Noise in Bartleby is the hustle and bustle of the streets, the dishonest public realm. In Aloisia's world, noise is competitive; the "screech" of the "daily grind […] Work itself," deafens her. And afraid of words, attracted to non signifying noise, Macabéa cannot understand herself. Macabéa evokes the "noise" of postmodernity, the "aleatory or random insertion of irrelevant references" per Frederic Jameson (142). As the narrator says, the story "lacks a cantabile melody. Its rhythm is often discordant" (8); the lack of the beauty, the aesthetic imperfection, is due to the story itself, to the contradictions and ugliness of invisible life. We might also think of the "pure and intense sonorous material that is always connected to its own abolition [italics in original]—a deterritorialised musical sound, a cry that escapes signification, composition, song, words" of Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature (6), and the "noise" that Sianna Ngai associates with the literature of minor feelings as putting affect out of the reach of understanding in the "placeless market." On the other hand, this last reference places the anti-psychological Bartleby in the placeless market of noisy affect. Actually, his affect is not noisy, per se, but rather silent, and while the affective dimension of unnameable dislocation might be present in all three secretaries, an aesthetic leitmotif of noise does differ throughout the three. And "loudness" is not just auditory, as expressions like "a loud color" show; by tracing the prominence of caricature, exaggeration, and ugliness across the novels, I consider the relationship between protest and garish, tacky, vulgar loudness. The volume turns up, so to speak, as the omnipresent noise of the media overtakes, challenges, and questions what could be a dignified self, a self of the humble, the quiet, and the unheard.

Following Franco Moretti's "dialectic of fear" in which "modern monsters" develop in literature in response to the shocks of modernity, the monsters might be not the Frankenstein or Dracula he speaks of but the mundane body laid bare, laid open, for the pleasure of the bourgeois narrator/reader. One might see the developments of an aesthetics of ugliness as another "minor" literature: literature not by, in Deleuze and Guattari's theory, the "deterritorialised" minority writer (16,) but rather about the minorities produced by and left over from capitalism. Distinguishing itself from the dominant theorisation of the development of an aesthetics of ugliness, à la Baudelaire, in the poetics of modernity, such an aesthetics is not just about narrating the ugly of the everyday in a literature theretofore unwilling to sully its beauty with prostitutes and poverty. Indeed, the task, with the ascendence of the busy city and the image of the star, is to portray the mismatch between the mundaneness of poverty and the universal aspiration to stardom, a grotesque and monstrous mismatch dramatised by the pathetic ugliness of these later secretary narratives and foretold by Bartleby. Reacting to the kaleidoscopic shocks of modernity with terror, made uneasy by star culture and by the sad spectacle of those hypnotised by it, grotesque monsters come to populate the worlds of Schmidt and Lispector. As I seek to demonstrate in the following readings, the self, increasingly, disappears not with a gentle silence but with a scream not fatal but futile.

BARTLEBY: SILENCE

I begin in 1853, when Wall Street lawyers are unregulated financial capitalists and the highest paid class in the country and demand for office workers high (Johnson 82-3). The unnamed narrator is an elderly financial lawyer on Wall Street who has two scribes, Turkey and Nippers, who both are efficient half the day and choleric or

indigested the other half, and therefore is seeking a better tempered new one. The very

mild, quiet, and small Bartleby arrives, and manically copies day and night. However,

he refuses to proofread with the other secretaries, saying "I would prefer not to." He

continues refusing to do things, eventually ceasing to copy entirely, finding a key,

taking over the office, barring the lawyer from entrance, forcing him to relocate, and

gets removed by the new tenants to the Tombs as a vagrant, where he refuses to eat.

After one visit to him, the lawyer's contact with him ends, leaving curiosity in its wake.

He relates a rumour that Bartleby had worked sorting letters at the Dead Letters Office

before being dismissed, and ends with the exclamation "Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!"

Unknown, passive, silent, joyless, powerful, powerful to do nothing, a nothing

that almost stops everything, Bartleby is a symbol for the faceless, nameless suffering of

the masses—he is, precisely, a tale of Wall Street. By completely assuming the calm and

industriousness of the ideal secretary, he forces his office to relocate. But as the narrator

says, "Nothing so aggravates an earnest person as a passive resistance" (37). He "burn[s]

to be rebelled against" (40). However, an under explored facet of passive resistance

remains Bartleby's affective refusal through silence and nondisclosure. Perfectly polite,

he drives the lawyer mad by guarding himself secret.

`The novel begins with a curious, metafictional introduction that both enhances

the verisimilitude of the story while drawing attention to its status as a written object.

He explains that as a lawyer, he has come into contact with "an interesting, and somewhat

singular class of men of whom, as yet, nothing that I know of, has ever been written," that

is law-copyists, and that while of some he could write whole biographies, "Bartleby was

one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources,

and, in his case, those are very small" (19-20). This introduction introduces two themes:

secretaries' exclusion from literature and Bartleby's mysteriousness.

The theme of Bartleby's elusiveness, of his mystery, continues throughout the novel.

After refusing to do work, Bartleby will but "gently disappea[r] " (34) or « retir[e]" (49)

to his "hermitage" (36). Sympathy drives him to melancholy: "The bond of a common

humanity now drew me irresistibility to gloom," he writes, "A fraternal melancholy!

For both I and Bartleby were sons of Adam." (45).   Rejecting the lawyer's attempts at

fraternising, Bartleby drives the lawyer away in disgust; he is frustrated that it is Bartleby's

"soul that suffer[s], and his soul [he can]not reach" (48). "Will you tell me anything about

yourself," he pleads, but Bartleby would prefer not to (49). He declines the lawyer's offer

to lodge with him and prefers to be "left alone," not "mobbed in his privacy" (51). This

shows that even material comfort matters less to him than his distance from his boss.

His boss, however, regards him with pity; he seems «alone, absolutely alone in the

universe. A bit of a wreck in the mid-Atlantic" (54). When the lawyer changes offices,

begging him to leave, "like the last column of some ruined temple," he stands "mute

and solitary in the middle of the otherwise deserted room" (55). This metaphor of

the 'ruined temple' constructs Bartleby as the last remnant of some now lost sacredness.

These comparisons construct him as an inscrutable, private figure, as do the comparisons

to cadavers, an "incubus" (63), a "ghost" (64) and, like the dead letters, "dead men"

(76). Mysteriousness merges into menace in an unsettling counterpoint to the functional,

knowable, loud bustle of corporate society.

This knowledge suggests a class awareness and a refusal to affectively cooperate, to continue the myth of his boss's self-satisfied sanctimoniousness and charity. Compassionate for this secretary that "don't [sic] mean anything" (61), he tells himself that "Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence, which it was not for a mere mortal like me to fathom," he reflects: "Yes, Bartleby, stay there behind your screen; I shall persecute you no more; you are harmless and noiseless as any of these old chairs; in short, I never feel so private as when I know you are here" (61-2). Despite this self-aggrandising sense of a mission, however, repulsion again emerges and he abandons Bartleby. As Deleuze writes, it is not Bartleby who seems to grow more insane with the repetition of his formula "I would prefer not to," but rather the narrator with his increasingly violent reactions (77). His constant presence becomes creepy and haunting, his refusal mysterious and rewardless. When his former boss visits him there, he is in the "quietest of yards" staring at a high wall (72), and only says, not turning around, "I know you […] and I want nothing to say to you […] I know where I am" (72). Silence is associated with awareness of his position, awareness of his antipathy to his boss, and an acrimonious refusal.

The text, then, finishes with Bartleby's own exhaustion of language and consequent, restrained dignity. Silent, Bartleby invades the psyche of the narrator, proving far from "harmless and noiseless." Bartleby's resistance comes through a staunch refusal to affectively cooperate, to commiserate or share with his boss. This refusal to perform the affective labor guards him in some independence and state of protest. Bartleby does "an extraordinary quantity of writing" at first, "silently, palely, mechanically," but this does not "delight" his boss because he is not "cheerful" (31). Although the lawyer admires his own "eminently safe" (20) nature and the mild dispositions his copyists display at least half the day, it is Bartleby's gentleness and mildness that anguish him. This proves that the demands of the Wall Street workplace, by the mid 19th century, are not just efficiency, but an affective investment in the workplace and workplace relations. His boss is afraid of his "cadaverously gentlemanly nonchalance" and "disarmed" and "unmanned" by his "wonderful mildness" (43-4). Turkey and Nippers might be sloppy, but at least they are fraternal and at least he understands them; what is truly aggressive, truly aggravating, is a mystery. This silence distinguishes him from the lives around him: he offers no resistance to the Tombs, and is led in a "silent procession [that files] its way through all the noise, and heat, and joy of the roaring thoroughfares at noon" (71). Unlike the next narratives we will see, the secretary remains barred from this world of "noise," and an over identification with his position is a means of resistance.

ALOISIA: NOISE TO SILENCE

In *Am I a Redundant Human Being*, the secretary Aloisia Schmidt recounts her life story. As a young girl, she is a promising student, but desperate for attention begins to act out and get worse grades. Her father goes to war and loses his job, putting them in a precarious position. She is sent to vocational school instead of high school to save her family's little money. She is obsessed with theatre and devastated by how poor she is at acting, and retains this passion for artifice through most of her so-far thirty years. She is a bad secretary; has a relationship with a socialist young man that she destroys by

constantly asking if she is pretty and smart enough for him; has another, uglier boyfriend and then fiancé, which relationship she destroys by a one-time, disappointing seduction. She becomes friends with Elizabeth, an acting student, and is passionate about her. When Elizabeth kills herself out of love for Egon Z., an engineer, Aloisia is tasked with telling Egon. She then becomes obsessed with replacing the role of Elizabeth, pretending to lose her job so Egon hires her as a secretary, with the caveat that she become a very, very good one. She eventually interrupts Egon and his mistress talking, tries to kill herself in shame, is humiliated when she fails and has to explain herself to her family that has spent time and money traveling hastily from her hometown and to Egon, who fires her but writes a letter of recommendation. Finally, she is again hired, is a very good secretary, and accepts a middling relationship with a middling account who, like her, is a "zero," but not even aware of how meaningless he is.

The title of the 1931 novella announces its problematic: are the lives of secretaries interchangeable, therefore redundant? Must the drama and theatre of meaningful life emerge for a life to be worthy of living, or worthy of writing? Part of Siegfried Kracauer's "salaried masses," or the rising white-collar class, Hartwig's narrator is not so sure. As Hartmut Vollmer has discussed, the dichotomy between illusion and mundaneness (288-9) was a particularly timely theme in 1931. Similar to Bartleby's overidentification with his work, Aloisia - not yet named - begins her story with the words

I'm a secretary. I have nearly twelve years of experience. My shorthand is first rate and I'm an excellent typist. I don't mention it to brag. I just want to show that I amount to something. I'm ambitious.

I repeat: I'm ambitious. I'm hopelessly ambitious. Even though I certainly have reason enough to be humble. Reason enough to use modesty to avoid making the deficit between my talent and my ambition too obvious. (5)

The first sentences establish the complete distillation of her identity to her job. She is alienated by her work: to be something, she must be an excellent typist—and not be anything more. Like in the case of Melville's Nippers, ambition is a flaw. However, she is acutely aware of her deficit, and exhaustion and disillusion have brought this awareness. Beginning with this "taming of the shrew," her attempts at prominence seem foolish, ill-fated.

And, like in their case, she is excessively corporeal, and becoming an efficient worker means losing this corporeality. She recounts her horror at her first menstruation (13), her disgust at her masturbation (14), and her disgust at first learning, through a classmate's "grotesque exaggerations," about sex (22). She is ashamed of her pathetic, undeveloped body. Passing by a store after her first, brutal break up she first "knew what it was to be hungry […] a feeling of shameful despair" (60). This obsession, this physical craving, parallels her desire, as it will in Lispector's novella. Her disgust for her fiancé is for his "disgusting body" (67). When she cheats and loses her virginity, her "body" doesn't live up to "her expectations" (72), while she excuses herself with "it was my body, my body […] that did it" (73). The body is what she cannot escape, a limiting and degrading, all too present reminder of her inadequacy and inferiority.

This corporeality underscores her patheticness and powerlessness to determine her life and contrasts with her aims at metamorphosis through drama and melodrama.

A first friendship of almost lesbian infatuation with a classmate so self-assured she successfully appears beautiful makes the narrator, who only introduces herself to explain how she loved her friend's name out of hate for her own, feel like she "simply [doesn't] exist" (16). That is, the splendour of others is in a zero-sum relationship with her own feeling of importance. A visit to the theatre with her builds "breathless suspense" and a "feeling that numb[s], cripple[s], and excite[s]" her (18); she decides to became an actress, to take "pleasure in the masquerade that had, at first, alienated [her]" (19). This shows an ambiguous feeling in the face of masquerade, a resistance and malevolence that accompanies her obsession under her final taming. Despite her attraction to theater, she quickly realises that her body is average, that her inexpressive face "might as well [be] a death mask" (19) and to "doubt [her] mimetic ability" (20). Incapable of the falsity that is mimetism, she must remain in reality. Nevertheless, she reads in order to "forget [herself], to slip from one life into another, to identify [herself] with [her] newest heroine [...] when [she] read[s] she live[s] on credit. She literally borrow[s] [...] fantaisies" (34). Her fiancé is in awe of the pleasure [she takes] in books, in the theatre, of [her] penchant for illusions in general" (66). Her pleasure and her innermost life, then, reside away from the office and her mundane home, in a life of excitement and culture which she cannot enter. When her boyfriend leaves her, she desperately misses him, but realises "that what [she misses] most about Emil K. was seeing [her]self through his eyes" (61). Realising that her second boyfriend is "impressed by what [she wants] to be" and "respect[s her] for [her] struggling to make something of [her]self without realising that this struggle was futile", she justifies her low opinion of him while criticising herself for being a "romantic idiot " (66), a first step in this anti Bildungsroman. Externalised, she sees herself through others' eyes. On the one hand, this externalisation is in part due to her femaleness; as John Berger writes in Ways of Seeing, "From earliest childhood [women have] been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually [...] And so she comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman [...] Her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another [...] men act and women appear" (47-8). On the other hand, the man she loses her virginity to is also a compulsive liar (71); furthermore, the spectre of real, meaningful life hangs around her, in the forms of media and of bosses. That is, fantasy is a handicap of the exchangeable, passive, predetermined masses.

Work, finally, renders her anodyne, sedated, and undramatic. Anguished over her inability to mourn her father's departure for war, she is relieved to find that she hardly has "time to mourn much of anything" (28) since she soon gets her first job as a secretary. Dressed up, with her hair in braids, she cannot recognise her newly anxious self (27). When she goes to work, she pushed to "the edge" by "icy curiosity, the oppressive courtesy" of her coworkers. "Childish enough then to wonder at this lack of sympathy and warmth[,] it never occurred to [her] that all [she] was experiencing was group solidarity" (29). This ironic equation of lack of sympathy with solidarity illustrates the affective training and deformation of the work environment, in which grand passions like love and desire are reduced to courtesy. The highest aim in life, she says, is to be " capable of a grand passion " (112). Ultimately, Egon Z.'s " indifference"(131) convinces her of her inadequacy. Under his guide, she becomes a good secretary, and at least pretends to

accept her mediocrity. Attempts at noise, then, have been ordered, sorted, and dismissed: she will be a quiet and unthreatening element lost in a larger corporate structure.

MACABÉA: NOISE OR SILENCE?

I pass now to the 1977 text, one in which claims on reality seem nearly totally passé. Written just after the fall of the military dictatorship in Brazil and the economic policy of abertura, which caused an influx of international media and goods, high inflation, and a migration of workers from the poor northeast to the cities (Mahlstedt 152), it is about Macabéa, a poor secretary from the northeast. The bourgeois narrator, Rodrigo S.M., crosses a dark-skinned girl in the streets and is obsessed with writing "her" story. Macabéa was orphaned young, raised by a cruel aunt she wasn't aware was cruel, and now lives in Rio with several other girls in a tiny apartment. She works for a boss that never appears in the narrative and with another secretary, the prettier and richer Glória (although Macabéa does once flip the question "How does it feel to be ugly" back on her.) Another northeasterner, the metallurgist and megalomaniac Olímpico, begins dating her but leaves her for Glória, who recommends to the sad Macabéa that she see a fortune teller. The fortune teller, a former prostitute obsessed with Jesus, predicts she will be saved by a rich, blond foreigner. Immediately upon leaving, she is run over by a blond man in a Mercedes. Someone places a candle by her body. She turns over, vomits, and dies.

While the majority of the critical literature on *The Hour of the Star* has concentrated on the bourgeois narrator's act of approaching the poor Other, the notion of irony and genre has gone nearly unanalysed, as I will briefly discuss. Notably, Cixous's L'Heure de Clarice Lispector makes no mention of the novel's irony, ambiguity, or exaggeration as it transforms Lispector into an example of a feminine, corporeal writer, nor does it mention the ambiguity of a corporeality based around uncomfortable, shameful wet dreams, malnourishing hotdogs, vomit inducing sugar, and tubercular lungs. Nor does its glowing description of an approach of the Other mention the narrator's condescension or narcissism. This obsession with the supposed deep reflection of the narrator on his writing and disregard for how he violates his own terms continues in contemporary scholarship. For instance, Fernanda Patricia Fuentes Muñoz's work on Nordestina modernity describes Rodrigo and Macabéa as both marginalised, feeling themselves exiled. However, Macabéa does not feel herself exiled. Consequently, Fuentes misses the irony in her thankfulness for being alive and in her "star" death. Similarly, he connects Lispector's novel to the tropicalia movement's interest in describing the lives of the poor masses through a return to local tradition; but Lispector's text constantly questions whether such a tradition exists and the motivation for describing the poor. In "Recognising the Poor," Andrew Mahlstedt discusses the apprehensive narration of Macabéa's story as the struggle for narration of the other. He insists that criticism has underemphasised the social commitment of Lispector novels, preferring to concentrate on their aesthetic and existential content. He uses Butlerian theory of vulnerability, Spivak's notion of the silent subaltern, and Cixous' reading of the text as an approach to the other and communication with her. As he asks, "how does one represent disempowerment without disempowering?" (133). However, the text does disempower Macabéa, consigning herself to an idiotic, uncultured exclusion from language and understanding of her own

condition. Mahlstedt seems to ignore the irony of Rodrigo's narration, which, while hesitant, not only proceeds to write, but proceeds to make large metaphysical claims and ironically emphasise—or betray—its own bourgeois status. For instance, as Mahlstedt cites, he gives up sex and only eats white wine and fresh fruit. However, these last two items are clearly ironic, as they are very expensive and contrast with Macabéa's diet of coca cola and hotdogs. This undercuts the narrator's stated aim of, like Macabéa, living without luxuries.

The novel is therefore discussed in terms that hardly separate it from socialist realism; the sanctimonious tone of the narrator, who declares that he is one of the characters in the story and "obviously one of the more important [ones]" (5) is taken at face value, as is his final "Okay, it's over" after the protagonist dies and the very final "all I can do [now] is light a cigarette and go home. My God, I just remembered that we die. But—but me too?! Don't forget that for now it's strawberry season. Yes" (77). Indeed, from even before the beginning of the narration one of a list of alternate titles calls into question the story's veracity: "Cheap Tearjerker " (1). The narrator soon says that he'll try to write a narrative with "a beginning, middle and 'grand finale' followed by silence and falling rain" (5). This consciousness of dramatic structure is at odds with a supposedly 'realist,' non-interventional and faithful mode of representation. In a cinematic metaphor, he takes "snapshots" of her (30-1), an anti-Utopian medium associated in Ceserani's schema with indifference (Jameson 10). Of course, he continuously denies this tendency, warning the reader not to "expect stars in what's coming" (8). However, he "needs "bells" to get him "going" (9). Despite trying to avoid the "artistically vain" and "dress[ing] up" the narrative,

in trying to "arrive at the thickest and lowest, deepest and earth trombone," he "bursts out in an uncontrollable laugh" (12). Unable to take his material seriously, he undercuts its supposedly overwhelming tragedy. His sanctimonious asceticism to prepare to write, for which he only drinks white wine and eats fresh fruit, is a narcissistic digression, like one into the unrelated inner "darkness" of a girl he once slept with (10). Similarly, he ultimately ends the narrative distracted, with "Okay, it's over" and goes home "to light a cigarette " (76-7), suggesting the lack of memory in the postmodern condition of "total flow," a constant stream of indifferent images that obliterates critical distance (Jameson 70).

The text is adorned with the clichés of international media as well as Macabéa's own obsession with this culture, a pathetic incongruity. The narrative, per Rodrigo, will be "accompanied by the plangent violin" of a street busker (15). She, an "average Joe […] dreams with hunger of everything […] the multiplying shimmers in the drizzling rain of fireworks" (27). This excessively sentimental imagery will not be realised; her dreams will, instead, end in a squarely ironical moment of stardom. That is, the hour of the star of the title is early on revealed to be her death: "she'd surely die one day as if she'd learned the starring role by heart. For at the hour of death a person becomes a shining movie star, it's everyone's moment of glory and it's when as in choral chanting you hear the whooshing shrieks" (20). In this grotesque rewrite, her unmourned death is her hour of celebrity; her only glory can come with her death. She loves "movie stars" (46), horror films, musicals, and scenes of women being killed (49), this last taste a violent allusion to her own "hour of the star" in which she is killed by a rich foreigner who

symbolises this other world to which she aspires. That is, even death is sensationalised and consumable. Sad when she loses her boyfriend, she identifies with Greta Garbo, but really she wants to look like Marilyn Monroe; her coworker bursts out laughing at this, telling her to "Get real!" (52). This exclamation, even, fails to draw Macabéa to 'reality.' She loves advertisements and listens to the radio for them (29) and collects them, though the narrator states that they are not "for women like her" (30). The bourgeois narrator therefore acknowledges the contradiction of the supposed democracy of consumerism and the divisions such fixations reproduce. Macabéa's obsession shows a grotesque over-identification with consumer culture; fawning over an advertisement for a skin scream that she puts on her wall, she reflects "to hell with her skin, she'd eat it, that's right, in large spoonfuls straight from the jar" (30). When she goes to work, she "look[s] like a gentle lunatic because as she bus [goes] along she daydream[s] in loud and dazzling dreams" (29). "Gentle," her lunacy does not threaten the status quo, but rather slightly humiliates her with its naïveté.

The use of excessively melodramatic narration contrasts with the characters who are frequently called "meagre." Totally invisible (7) she is not even aware that she lives "in a technical society in which she [is] a dispensable cog" (21). She is not, then, political, and this attention to her alienation and lack of proletariat consciousness questions what class the audience for such a book is as well as the role of the international media as a new opiate of the people. The pathetic mismatch between Macabéa's superficial joys and her abuse at the hands of her society, her boyfriend, the coworker he replaces her with, and the rich foreigner that runs her over in his Mercedes and leaves is a preoccupation

of the narrator; "only once did she ask a tragic question: Who am I?", he writes, and was so scared she never asked again (24), and she has the "pure happiness of idiots" (60). In his narration, it is the bourgeois rather than the poor woman herself who is capable of understanding her.

The only exceptions to corporealised, caricatural characterisation are, notably, Macabéa's invisible boss, occasionally alluded to, and the narrator. The parody of masculinity Olímpico smears grease into his hair, rendering him disgusting to the women of Rio, and cannot even carry the malnourished Macabéa, and the mulatta coworker of Macabéa that he falls for is a similarly caricatural figure of femininity, dyeing "egg yellow" her hair that alway has black roots and, "though ugly" well-fed and therefore appealing to him (50). This animalistic sexuality appears ridiculous and deluded, far from classical ideals of beauty, even failing to reach the hyper gendered ones to which it aspires. As Macabéa understands it, Glória is a "fanfare of existence" (52), but even she is, like Olímpico, deluded. Olímpico only likes Glória because she is fat; he is terribly impressed that her father is a butcher, a pathetic excess enthusiasm that could only belong to the dispossessed. As the two are "cartoonish" caricatures, Olímpico's way of impressing Macabéa's coworker Glória is to buy hot peppers, and the narrator's description of Glória's mulatta vitality in hip-swinging is not exactly apprehensive of the narrative violence of describing the other (Mahlstedt 159). The doctor she visits and who reveals she is tubercular looks like a "fat baby" (58). The fortune-teller, who shamelessly mixes talk of her life as a prostitute and Jesus without batting an eye, paints her "flabby mouth a bright red and dab[s] her greasy cheeks with rouge" until she looks like "a big

half-broken china doll" (60). After this, the narrator acknowledges the grotesqueness and shallowness of his descriptions, in parentheses: "I see there's no way to deepen this story. Description tires me" (60). In addition, this admission characterises him as lazy, indolent, very much the self-satisfied bourgeois ill-equipped to pay attention to the poor who burst out in laughter at it. Hit by a car and dying in the street, Macabéa curls into the foetal position "grotesque as ever" (74) and vomits, wanting to vomit something "luminous," a "thousand-pointed star" (75). To the end, the body deflates her, grounds her to the tragedy of her existence in counterpoint to her technicolor dreams.

The Hour of the Star therefore deploys postmodern narrative strategies to problematize the invisibility of the poor in international, mediatised capitalism. For instance, the story is said to be written "with the sponsorship of the most popular soft drink in the world," a drink that is "A way for a person to be up-to-date and in the now" (15); this drink, of course, is the coca cola Macabéa assimilates into her identity with "I'm a typist and a virgin and I like coca cola" (27). This introduction of advertisement speech undercuts the verisimilitude of the text, which I see as a satire of the sanctimoniousness and faux humbleness of socialist realism. "But she did not know how to dress up reality. For her reality was too much to be believed. Anyway the word 'reality' meant nothing to her. To me either, by God" (25), says the narrator. Reality is paradoxically impossible to dress up and too "much" to believe; these enigmatic assertions are undercut by a truncating "anyway" and "nothing," with "by God" ironically celebrating this condition of non-reality. In light of these observations, we might rethink Jameson's complaints about the "pop comic-book " aesthetic of the nouveau roman and the "stereotype […]

what is already preconsumed, aesthetically prepared for consumption" and privileges ; the "palpable struggle to get sense data into sentences [that] leaves a residue in its failure, lets you sense the presence the referent outside the closed door" (150). Lispector seems to combine these two impulses through Rodrigo's self-defeating narration; the highly artificial narration, foregrounded as a fantasy of the lower class, rests uneasily between investigation of and sympathy for the lower class and bourgeois, stereotyping entertainment complicit in its invisibility.

These examples illustrate the tension that persists between, on the one hand, the supposed realness of silence and the dignity of the unnamed and wordless, and on the other hand an aesthetics of the "on display," the caricatured, grotesque, and melodramatic. The text itself, indeed, frequently draws attention to its own fictionality—for example, the question "Is this a melodrama?" that appears in the middle of her death scene (72)— despite the counterpoint of an overly self-congratulating narrator. This is characteristic of postmodern literature; as Jameson writes, "Transparency […] alerts us to the fact that we are reading someone else's writing […] a narrative we have been led to believe (for in literature, what is called the fictive is the equivalent of the referential in all other forms of language) suddenly proves to have been a mere image" (141). "I swear this book is made without words. It is a mute photograph. This book is a silence. This book is a question," Rodrigo writes (8), while nevertheless drawing attention to the artistic process mediated by a very active narrator; it is neither a photograph, a silence, nor a question, but rather a consciously constructed work of art. In its first pages, the narrator writes that whereas he has an "inner emptiness" and "silence" that is his "mystery" (6), Macabéa "love[s]

noises" and fears silence "as if it were about to say a fatal word" (25). That is, without the distracting noise of media, she would have to acknowledge the fatality ands tragedy of her life. This privileging of silence as a truth strategy applies, as well, to the narration: "I'm writing about the meagre minimum adorning it with purple, jewels and splendour," Rodrigo writes, although it is not "by accumulation but by stripping naked" that one writes; he is afraid of "nakedness, for it is the last word" (71). Her story ultimately proves impossible to write, as he reveals after she dies: "What was the truth of my Maca? As soon as you discover the truth it's already gone: the moment passed. I ask: what is? Reply: it's not" (76). Narrating her story, approaching the subject matter, inevitably corrupts; the truth escapes the telling. After her death, bells ring soundlessly; the truth of her story is compared to "the imminence in those bells that almost-almost ring" (76). The noiseless bells signify her invisibility, her unmourned death; on the cusp of some minimal status, imminent, she is a human potential gone unsung, a music unplayed. After a gap, he writes "Silence. If one day God comes to earth there will be a great silence" (76). Following the religious-musical overtones of bells, Lispector codifies the religiosity of silence, the holiness and sacredness undercut by the profanity of the modern world. This mismatch between the draw to melodrama and stardom and the holiness and truth of silence, of the "facts" that are "hard rocks" (62), and this final impossibility to maintain attention underscore the brutal disappointment of the poor in late capitalism, seduced and intoxicated into ultimately grotesque attempts at presence, at making noise. Silence, in *The Hour of the Star*, is no longer a means of proletariat rebellion but rather the privileged, aesthetically pleasing realm of the bourgeois. A belief in silence, in the austerity of unadorned narration, is compulsively undercut, by narrator and narrated. In late capitalism, noise is inescapable.

FROM SILENCE TO NOISE

Why, one might ask, the secretary? The profession of secretary introduces the question of writing, of the production and repetition of meaning. Secretarial writing is, ideally, a seamless, physical, mindless parroting and proliferation.

This is the fundamental misreading of Agamben in his essay "Bartleby, or On Contingency[1]" in Potentialities. There, he reads Bartleby as one in a literary constellation of scribes like Gogol's Akaky Akakyvich in "The Overcoat," a quote from which begins this essay, who was entranced by words, and, more distantly, Kafka's clerks. However, Agamben asserts that the key to understanding Bartleby lies in a philosophical constellation that begins with a late Byzantine lexicon's definition of Aristotle was "the scribe of nature who dipped his pen in thought" through the monotheistic religions' view of the universe as created from nothing and Islamic fatalism's view of all acts, including writing, as originating in the pure potentiality and chance of God. For Agamben, "Bartleby is the extreme figure of the Nothing from which all creation derives" (253), neither rejecting nor affirming writing, resting in the in-between from which all creativity emerges. Agamben's mistake is that Bartleby is not a figure of potentiality, of potenza, nor of creation; he and other secretaries are not philosophers nor writers nor creative Gods but rather machines for repeating. Consequently, Agamben reads Bartleby as a mythic figure of the creator and not as a product of emerging financial capitalism's need for reproduction. This deprives us of a key understanding of the power of Bartleby's refusal:

1 "Bartleby o della contingenza"

it breaks capitalism's transformation of beings into noncreative, alienated workers. In Bartleby's case, an over identification with the "mildness" of the ideal, timid secretary results, ironically, in silence: he refuses to copy. While this refusal to copy metaphorises his nonconformity, it also mirrors his aesthetic of silence. He will not reproduce writing, no more than he will produce the "delight" his boss seeks in a person interaction, no more than he will process calories, no more than he will produce noise. His invisibility supports the visibility of the joyous masses in the streets; but of course, deviation from his role, a too flagrant, eerie retreat into a hermitage he expands to the whole office, to the yard of the Tombs, to his whole, mysterious past is visible. Unlike a good secretary, Bartleby rejects words and retreats into the power and privacy of silence. What is he doing alone in the office? Perhaps, writing, having overtaken the pen and ink, or means of production. But a refusal to reproduce must precede the turn to produce.

In Aloisia's case, an almost reverse process occurs. Whereas we meet Bartleby as a "bit of a wreck in the North Atlantic" who "don't [sic] mean anything," Aloisia tells us of the gruelling, sad, reluctant realisation of her nothingness. Rewriting the cliché in then-contemporary fiction of the secretary who marries her boss, deplored by Kracauer (Smith 461), her boss, while displaying some little compassion after her suicide attempt, tells her harshly to "pull it together" and fires her (147); when she kisses his hand, he pushes her away (148). And undercutting that of the sexy secretary (ibid), her social position only mirrors her body's inadequacy. Her love for her boss demonstrates and encourages her nothingness and her fungibility. At her first job, she is "stupefied "by the "cacophony of new sounds beating down on [her]" (28); she doesn't mean just the literal noises but

"the bustle, activity, the haste and diligence all blending together…it was Work itself that screeched at [her]" (29). As she grows quiet, Work can speak for her. In the case of Macabéa, of course, she lives joyfully unaware of her suffering, complacent and abused.

Additionally, the profession of secretary provides a provocative and increasingly mythic relationship with words. Bartleby's mind remains unpenetrated, to the reader, but his prolific re-production eventually ends with his deviance. With Aloisia, her first days as a secretary are wholly incompetent; she is "uselessness itself, incompetence, incarnate" and her pencil "consume[s] entire sentences as it blunder[s] along in the wake of the spoken word"; she "grope[s] "and "stumble[s] " (45-6). While she doesn't care if she loses her job (58), she still "admires" her superiors (47). Eventually, her assimilation into the job of re-production ends her desire to produce through dramatic letters and speeches; however, the act of writing a text of course undercuts this pretence of assimilation and of acceptance of her unimportance. Able to read, she temporally loses herself in worlds she cannot enter; a better secretary, this vicarious use of language is barred, and language becomes strictly functional. In the case of Macabéa, the nearly illiterate secretary has a mythic relationship with words. While she loves noise, she tells the fortuneteller that she is "afraid of words" (66). When her boss has her copy the word "ephemerides" she thinks it is "absolutely mysterious" and "pa[ys] attention to every letter […] the girl had fallen in love with the word 'ephemerides'" (31) while her more efficient coworker earns more and does not "miss a beat with those difficult words" (31). Being good means losing an affective relationship to words. One day she sees a book her boss leaves on his desk titled "Humiliated and Offended" and perhaps "for the first time she define[s] herself as a social

class" (32). However, she soon accepts her position once again. What she continues to read are cutout phrases of newspaper advertisements (30). Words quickly lose their meaning, failing to attach to any clear referent, as the genuine, sincere or humble mix with the cheeky, the flashy, the sellable. Similarly, she ignorantly asks her boyfriend what "culture," a word she hears on the radio, means, as well as "per capita income " (41), and "mimetism" (46)—to this last query, he explains that that's no word for a virgin to use. The economic and artistic epistemologies are thus humiliated in an exchange that shows their meaningless to the dispossessed they pretend to vindicate. Words, like 'ephemerides' removed from their context, elevated to an aesthetic, non signifying status, suggest the world of culture, of thought, to which she has no access, the mythic beyond inaccessible to those that most need it. Like 'ephemerides,' maps of the heavens, culture, mimetism, and political economy exist ailleurs.

However, the differences between Bartleby and the two other secretaries in question are several, illustrating a shift toward carnivalised and corporealised representations of the lower class. First of all, Bartleby is completely unsexualised and nearly noncorporeal. Corporeality is what brings the ugly secretaries to mundanity. While the other secretaries are physically caricatured, Turkey as a choleric, red-faced wreck and Nippers as a horror of indigestion, Bartleby's body disappears. While Bartleby miraculously survives on nothing but a few tiny cakes a day, whose spiciness does not affect his disposition, and goes without food at the Tombs, refusing corporeal investment in what has been down to him, protesting totally, Aloisia has always been hungry, physically and spiritually. Macabéa, meanwhile, revels in her coca cola, hotdogs, and daily guava and cheese despite

her delicate stomach and consequent nausea, while truly, inwardly malnourished and tubercular, and when told of her disease does not understand the word tuberculosis, a symbol of the mismatch between her perception of herself and her actual condition. Sexuality, too, humiliates the women, as Hartwig's shamefully masturbates and Lispector's is nauseous with unconscious desire, ravaged by inescapable wet dreams, and displayed for the reader, the little black hairs on her "minute vagina […] the only vehement sign" of her existence (61). Second, Bartleby is not fully known to the narrator, and his freedom and agency derive from this unsettling distance. By contrast, Hartwig's narration is first-person and Lispector's a playful, almost extra diegetic pretense at accurately and plainly describing the life of an Other which in fact elaborates and exaggerates with stunning aplomb. Third, Bartleby is not a caricature, whereas the two other secretary protagonists at least partly, through histrionics, melodrama, and imitation of star culture, venture into that territory as they navigate a world of grotesques. Increasingly, importantly, fantasy and loudness take over across these narrations, as restrained realism passes through analytic confession to histrionic, cinematic metafiction.

Nevertheless, all are concerned with whether secretaries' lives are anything to write about, and they're all concerned with whether they, so to speak, exist. All three narrations foreground the invisibility of secretaries in literature, and are therefore implicitly political gestures correcting their exclusion. However, the three texts narrate these invisible lives with different consequences and in distinct aesthetic registers. Bartleby, refusing to cooperate, insisting on his loneliness, distinguishes himself, in some way, from the crowd, Aloisia accepts losing herself in a crowd (140), and Macabéa does not even question what she is.

And whereas "Bartleby's powerful powerlessness can also be thought of as exemplified by literature or art itself, as a relatively autonomous, more or less cordoned-off domain in an increasingly specialised and differentiated society" (Ngai), Aloisia and Macabéa cannot be so cut off; there is no longer a clear division between autonomous art and productive workplace. And as Ngai argues, the ugly, dysphoric feelings like envy, boredom, and anxiety have become an "operational requirement," a haunting and constant presence in the workplace instead of some revolutionary counterpoint to them. While agreeing with her that such emotions are less sociopolitically active and more ambiguous than ones like rage or determination, I find a significant difference between the Bartlebyan and the ugly. Bartleby, at least, remained cordoned off from his own insignificance, forcing himself to become significant through a refusal not at all degrading and ultimately supernatural, evoking ghosts, incubi, and shipwreck. The truly "ugly secretaries" remain grounded in their everydayness. They live in fantasy, while those around them do not notice them. This is their tragedy.

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Bestiary

If our shade garden was as sensitive

To light and dark as film, and revealed

The imprint of every passing mammal,

Insect, and reptile, what would each day's

Photograph contain? Many a cautious animal,

That's certain. The raccoon, normally concealed

In darkness, which tipped over the garbage

Last night, reminding us where we live

We're not alone, that the penetrating rays

Of the sun make the outside more absent

(Note the mosquito, the spider, the midge)

Than in reality it is or will be at night.

       The watching hawk

On the swing, the trusting baby rabbit

Playing in the yard — all too visible,

Your scarecrow meant to protect it

On the deck where carpenter bees drill holes,

As in the ground do chipmunks and moles.

Your upset flying series of rocks.

The great raptor in unhurried flight.

The upside down bat on the curtain that might

Have been hanging from a tree or a rafter

(And the finger puppet bat, which provoked

On my mother our daughter's first laughter).

Grey squirrels in their hundreds chasing

Each other around the trees, the snakes

Slithering too close until the shovel bit,

The deer we only see grazing off a parallel

Street, the coyote, the elusive bobcat, the fox

That run rarely seen across the nocturnal grass

And one memory that I've long put aside

Babies suckling, after the possum had died.

The ants that everywhere converge and swarm

Carrying their loads to their nest or searching

For food, solitary and vulnerable, soldier

Away from the fort, ready for ambush

And crickets and cicadas that only a storm

Will silence until their summer concertos and whirr

Fall to a cold decrescendo and the lingering hush

Of late autumn's fire and the burden they bring.

And the aerial, which no one ever evoked

In full among the many flying insects and fowl

But with a short list: harrying crows that squawk,

The light-catching bluebird and cardinal,

The turkeys in rows, butterflies, the owl

Like the hummingbird one hardly sees pass

(The night-hoot, the flower that shakes).

The blue jay, nuthatch, tufted titmouse,

Ruby-crowned kinglet, rufous-sided towhee,

The orioles I've only glimpsed on the wing,

The robin, the goldfinch, the chickadee

Who thinks our house is his house,

The sparrow, the swallow, the wren,

Especially the Carolinas that sing

A sustained liquid song when it's warm

In nesting season. Until at last the garden

In this gathering collage is hidden

By a flowing menagerie of form.

—*Jefferson Holdridge*

Sue Matheson
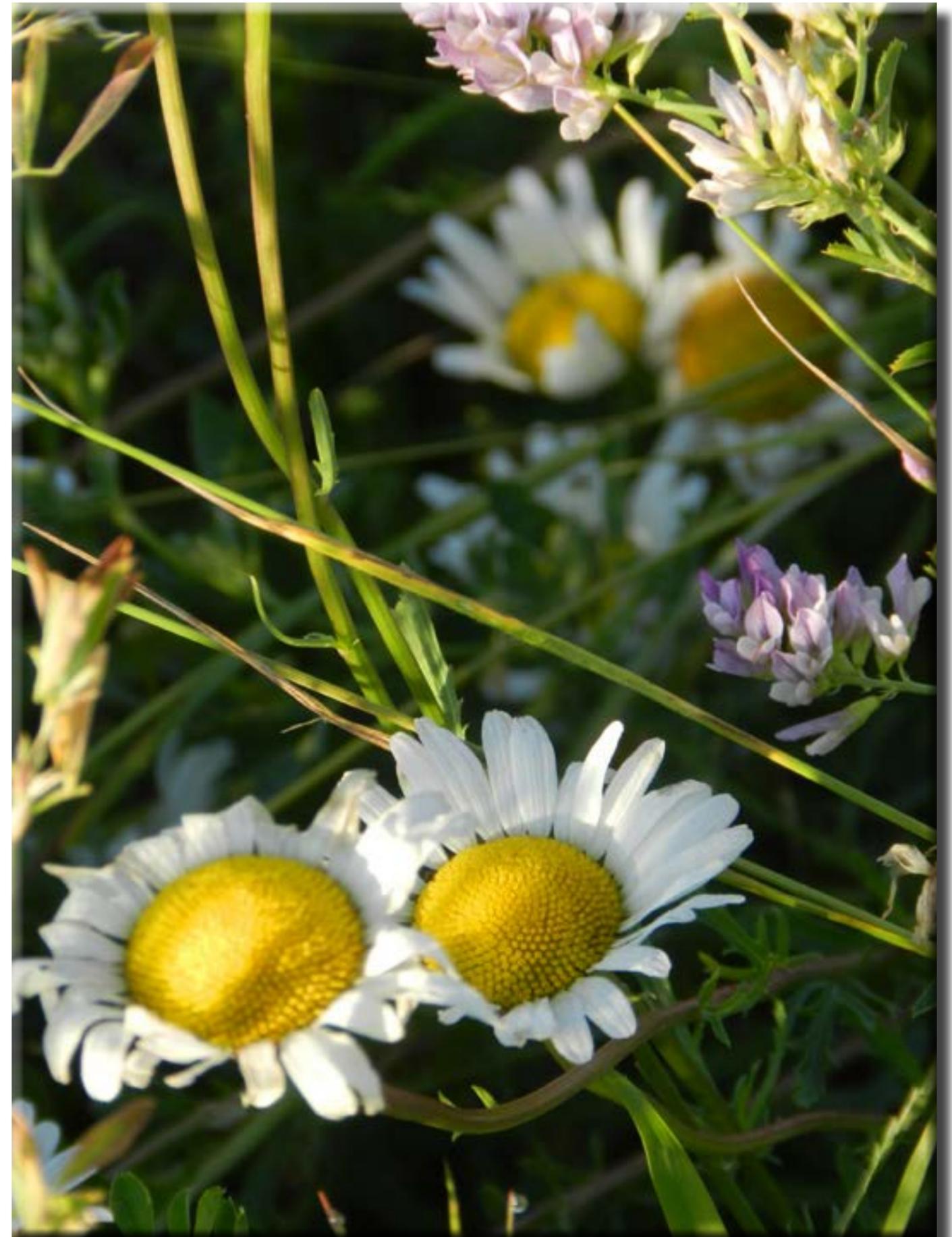
Angels of Latent History: A Borgesian Current in Contemporary Fiction

by Dean Kritikos, College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, New York

You can of course keep shaking the box

Anne Carson

In our contemporary literary scene, movements and their titles are up for grabs. Most of all, critics love to argue about what was/is or wasn't/isn't Postmodernism. I want to propose, instead, a lineage or tradition that undercuts the nebulous anti-period of Postmodernism by seeking continuity between work 'before' Postmodernism and two writers working today, in another anti-period that some critics claim is 'after' Postmodernism—Anne Carson and Junot Díaz. In what follows, I'll read Carson's *Autobiography of Red* (1998) and Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) in light of our contemporary anxiety over what Postmodernism was or is. David Foster Wallace talked in 1990 about an end of what critics 24[1] years ago called "post-postmodernism," eventually claiming that "Today's most engaged young fiction does seem like some kind

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1 I only draw attention to this number because it's one short of a quarter-century, or the number of years conventionally understood as a generation.

of line's end's end" (50, 82). For Wallace, whose name is among the first that comes to mind when one hears "Postmodern" being talked about, Postmodernism was finished, done, dead: "*post*-postmodernism" was already a thing. But further, this successor or extension is itself *also ending*—dying—a whole generation prior to the current moment. To complicate things further, "Today's most engaged young fiction," in 1990, wouldn't yet cover work published by either Carson or Díaz.

Nevertheless, Carson's and Díaz's careers in fiction, on Wallace's timeline, begin at or around the end of what comes *after* Postmodernism. My essay is less about whether Postmodernism is dead or alive and more about the still-beating pulse of Jorge Luis Borges: a Borgesian current, itself inherited from James Joyce, in contemporary North American fiction. I'll argue that Carson and Díaz both take up a project of radical historical materialism less continuous with the Postmodernism of the 1970's than with the Argentine's early work, typified in the short story "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1941). Donald Barthelme writes in 1964 that authors working post-*Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) position themselves as either *continuous with* Joyce and his project or *after*—against—Joyce. My essay is not about Joyce. But Barthelme's distinctions about what it means to write after/with the Modernist are important because they pose a dichotomy that Barthelme implies was absent in Joyce: that of literary aggression as opposed to celebratory play.

Self-conscious *materiality*, according to Barthelme, is what distinguishes the work of Joyce from prose stylists before him. Reading Joyce is like "bumping into something that is *there*, like a rock or a refrigerator" (Barthelme 4). The work is no longer about

the world; it *is* the world. By interrogating it one "ask[s] questions of the world directly" rather than analogously (4). Further, although all texts exist as objects continuous with the world, Joyce's work, unlike most of Canon before him, "exploits" this strategy, "work[ing] its radicalizing will upon all men in all countries, even upon those who have not read it and will never read it" (5). This "radicalizing will" is in line with democratic and/or socialistic sentiment, according to Barthelme, and finds its opposite espoused by post-Joyce authors who "have chosen to consider his work a detour rather than the main road"—writers who he claims revert to the style of the 19th Century novel (6-7). Those who choose to write *with* Joyce, rather than positioning themselves *after* (and paradoxically *before*) him, make of their texts objects in the world—constructs that are either "hostile to life" or that celebrate it (8-9).

To follow Joyce's materiality is to dive into an ocean of meaning: a flux that has as much hostile potential as it does latent playfulness. Diving in, however, one is limited to choose only one of these two options. The poles Barthelme cites are William Burroughs and Samuel Beckett, whose respective and antithetical styles he terms "drowning and swimming" (9). Both are indebted to Joyce, however, whose floatation in flux is neither and both. That is to say that Joyce is neither solely a "manufacturer of the Hostile Object" nor "pure comedian" (7-8). In the section that follows, I'll argue that this dichotomy was also absent from Borges' early work, as typified by "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1941). The way into Borges, for the purpose of this essay, is through Walter Benjamin and his conception of historical materialism, which I'll explain by unpacking Benjamin's "angel of history"—a figure Don DeLillo traces, years later, with his "Professor of Latent

History." Whereas DeLillo *illustrates* this half-parodic character, making him subject matter, Borges's narrative strategy positions the author *as* the Professor. The final section of this paper will illustrate how Carson's and Díaz's work follows Borges' formal strategy of historical materialism, positioning themselves, as well, as Professors/angels of latent history.

Professor Borges

Borges begins "The Garden of Forking Paths," one of his many stories that follow the form of mock-nonfiction, by framing the majority of its content as a meta-commentary on a historical text—itself a commentary on World War I. With a few militaristic details omitted, the first paragraph reads:

> On page 242 of *The History of the World War*, Liddell Hart tells us that an Allied offensive against the Serre-Montauban line. . .had been planned for July 24, 1916, but had to be put off until the morning of the twenty-ninth. Torrential rains (notes Capt. Liddell Hart) were the cause of the delay—a delay that entailed no great consequences, as it turns out. The statement which follows—dictated, reread, and signed by Dr. Yu Tsun, former professor of English in the *Hochschule* at Tsingtao—throws unexpected light on the case. The two first pages of the statement are missing. (Borges 119)

I'll note here that a book with the title "*The History of the World War,*" decked out in definite articles, with "Liddell Hart" as its author, has to my knowledge never been published. Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart, however, *was* an English Captain in WWI and, subsequently, an eminent military historian and theorist. Further, "*The History of the World War,*" under the premise that it is an actual title, would ostensibly have been translated from English to Spanish by Borges for his original readers, and subsequently (in Penguin's edition), from Borges' own Spanish to English by Andrew Hurley. Taking

into account possible mistranslation, as well as Hart's publishing career, "*The History of the World War*" could easily have been (mistaken for) the title of a (particular) book actually written by "Capt. Liddell Hart[2]."

In short, Borges' narrator claims that what follows after this preface-like paragraph, the body of his story, is not a fictive production. Rather, the narrative becomes a primary document that corrects an oversight in a historical account. As Dr. Yu Tsun reflects, early in Borges' story, "Century follows century, yet events occur only *in the present*" (Borges 120). While the narrator of the first paragraph is a historian reporting on his findings, the whole story that follows is narrated by Tsun. Thus, it is not a retrospective account of the *past* but a document written in report of a (far removed) *present*. One consequence of the first paragraph's discursive frame is that the remaining words of the story are not Borges' or his narrator's own. However, regardless of the truism that a writer's narrator is not necessarily coextensive with the writer, Borges' narrator here resembles the Argentine *homme de letters*—poet, critic, librarian, etc.—rather remarkably. Further, in Borges' first collection of stories, *A Universal History of Iniquity* (1935), full of similarly essayistic metafictional stories, he develops a similar (if not the same) unnamed, scholarly narrator. The unnamed commentator, situated amidst (hi)stories real and imagined, thus signifies a narrator that is distinctly and undeniably Borgesian, if not Borges himself.

Further, being a commentary on a text written specifically within the discipline/genre of historical non-fiction (History), "The Garden of Forking Paths" positions itself *as* (disciplinary) History, as well. Most importantly, however, it is a counter-history, or one that goes against the grain of an existing historical account. Rather than "Torrential rains" incurring "a delay that entailed no great consequences," Borges' story asserts that an incredibly complex and deeply significant chain of events occurred between July 24th and 29th, 1916 (119). It thus troubles the account of causal history that Liddell offers, opening up a closed chain of events to explore and have "a unique experience with" a moment of the past (Benjamin 262). The moment Borges explores is one that the given account (Liddell's) doesn't even consider a moment (a *now*), but rather a bridge between two others. As counter-history, it also acts as a work of historiography, offering an alternative methodology for conducting—*doing*—History.

The distinction between Liddell's and Borges' histories, at least as Borges positions them, is between historicism and historical materialism. Walter Benjamin posthumously published a theorization of the latter approach (and polemic against the former) in 1950[3], the essay-in-aphorisms "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In it, he develops a theory of doing History that operates on the following principle: "nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history" (Benjamin 254). A historical materialist understands that all events—those commonly known and those commonly unknown—are equally constitutive of the fabric of history. He also speaks of an "angel of history," who focuses on "one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage," rather than the smooth "chain of events" understood in a historicist framework (257). Benjamin doesn't condone a project that would disregard all that happens after a given moment as central to one's understanding of that moment. Recall that the "delay," to

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2 Among Hart's books published prior to 1941 are *The Real War (1914–1918)* (1930) and the second edition of the same text, titled *A History of the World War (1914-1918)* (1934). *A Dictionary Of Borges* states that "there is no mention of rain having fallen before the battle" in Hart's actual account.

3 Benjamin's essay was "completed in spring 1940," making it even more contemporaneous with Borges' story (Arendt 267).

Hart, "entailed no great consequences" (Borges 119). The object of historical materialism, on the other hand, is to understand each and every moment in the fabric of history as texture or substance. In this way, the historian "blast[s] open the continuum of history," thereby blasting a given moment into the present (Benjamin 262-263).

What this "blasting," this "unique experience *with* the past" means for Borges is exploring an unexplored moment by living it (262, my emphasis). Benjamin writes that "every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably" (255). In response to this threat, Borges does History by filling in gaps left by historicist accounts that would efface such unrecognized images. To grossly simplify Borges' almost equally grossly complex narrative, Tsun, a (Chinese) spy for the German in WWI, assassinates an English Sinologist named Albert in order to communicate that a city of the same name needs to be attacked. Tsun is pursued by "an Irishman at the orders of the English," but manages to accomplish his self-contrived mission after a lengthy discussion with Albert about Tsun's own relative, Tsui Pen, an ancient Chinese polymath (Borges 124, 128). This strange story, not a natural phenomenon, explains the "delay" in Hart's history. But it is as much a bizarre story of espionage and metaphysics as it is of identity politics. This charged narrative is the story that Borges erupts—blasts—out from *underneath* Hart's "Torrential rain."

At the center of the story is another imagined text, *The Garden of Forking Paths*, penned by none other than Ts'ui Pen. Albert is a scholar of Pen's work and steeped in the metaphysical implications of the philosopher: "[Tsun's] ancestor did not believe in a uniform and absolute time; he believed in an infinite series of times, a growing,

dizzying web of divergent, convergent, and parallel times" (127). In such a view, time is a network of multiple possibilities or possible realities, constantly "blasting open" and adding realities to an inexhaustible and infinite well of possibilities. And Borges' work, as History, adds-qua-applies this network to (actual) Reality. Further, this conception of time is hostile to History (as in the discipline) and history (as in Reality) as it stands. In the same way that *Ulysses* takes place in a gap of history[4]. Borges inserts Dr. Yu Tsun's letter into a gap paradoxically left open—unrecognized—but sealed off—unrecognizable—by Hart. A corollary to this strategy is that it opens up the question of how many more gaps exist in Hart's actual published works.

The one problem with my formulation so far is, of course, that the History Borges writes is, after all, Fiction. But what Borges' story pushes at, more than anything, is this very *Fiction/History* dichotomy. For Liddell, the writer of non-fictional History, Dr. Yu Tsun's story is a "delay," seemingly between events of real history, or the Real subject matter of History as a discipline. And that is why Borges' focus on Tsun's odd metaphysical encounter is important: it asserts that the (historically marginalized) experiences of one (racially/nationally marginalized) man aren't a break from history, but History proper. Although Borges' own tale is fictional, it calls attention to the marginalization of any story the invisible narrators of History books leave out—any voice they might silence. If History as a discipline has a monopoly on Reality—in giving accounts of events that have *really* happened—then Borges' counter-history is hostile to it in the way that Barthelme says Burroughs' fiction is. It is hostile to (historicist) History in its critique of it and thus hostile to the world in its "blasting" open of and additions to Reality.

4 7 Eccles St., Leopold Bloom's address, was unoccupied on June 16th, 1904.

But Borges' hostility does not come at the cost of celebratory play, as in Barthelme's configuration. The metaphysical play he engages in celebrates the possibilities of language, of reality, and of life, by seeking to expand upon the realm of each. Ts'ui Pen's the Garden of Forking Paths, like Borges' short story of the same name, exists in an interconnected relationship with an actual labyrinth of the author's creation. In Tsun's narrative, Albert reports on having been the first scholar to discover that Pen's to ostensibly separable projects, writing a novel and constructing a labyrinth[5], were actually one project: "it occurred to no one," before Albert, "that book and labyrinth were one and the same" (124). Borges' text, which shares a title with Pen's, occupies a similarly bizarre space in relation to material reality. It is maze-like in that its puzzles are irresolvable, and tangibly so.

Albert asks Tsun, "In a riddle whose answer is chess, what is the only word that must not be used?"—the answer to which, of course, is "chess" (126). But, disarming the quick solution of the story's riddles immediately afterward, Albert continues: "*The Garden of Forking Paths* is a huge riddle, or parable, whose subject is time; that secret purpose forbids Ts'ui Pen the merest mention of its name" (126). If Albert's logic is sound, then "time" cannot be what Borges' own story is about—but neither can any of the philosophical speculations mentioned in the text. I'm not here to suggest that the riddle can be solved. It may well be possible, but such an answer would work against the play of Borges' writing story, which is a (*real*) labyrinth qua, rather than in spite of, its being a text. To finally cash in on the pun, Pen has invented both a labyrinth and a text, or a text that is a labyrinth, and so has Borges' own pen.

5 Borges' play on the name/word "Pen" is especially fruitful in this portion of the narrative.

Borges, by way of a Benjamin-esque historical materialism, thus writes *after*-but-*with* Joyce, making of the short story an object that exists in the world as world, both enacting violence upon it and celebrating it. But I want to move a little bit closer to the current moment, now, and consider a portrait Don DeLillo paints in his 1973 novel, *Great Jones Street*. After the "Morehouse Professor of Latent History at the Osmond Institute" introduces himself to Bucky Wunderlick, the rock-star protagonist of the novel, the former provides a brief description of his job:

> This professorship deals with events that almost took place, events that definitely took place but remained unseen and unremarked on. . .and events that probably took place but were definitely not chronicled. *Potential events are often more important than real events*. Real events that go unrecorded are often more important than recorded events, whether real or potential. (DeLillo 75, my emphasis)

DeLillo's Professor looks a lot like Benjamin's angel—looks a lot like Borges', or, at least echoes Borges' narrative strategy. Tsun's narrative is made up of "potential events," meaning that it is likely "more important than" the "real events" Hart uses to silence Tsun. Hart's account is closed, tidy. But "History is never clean," as DeLillo's Professor explains. Further, "In some cases less happened than we suspected," but "In other cases we merely suspect that less happened" (76). This latter formulation is the trap that Hart and other historicists—those who would settle on a "clean" and neat account of History—fall into, according to Borges.

For DeLillo, on the other hand, the Professor of Latent History becomes subject matter—becomes a *thing* the text talks about, rather than the *way* that the text talks. DeLillo's project, at least in *Great Jones Street*, is thus discontinuous from Borges' in "The

Garden of Forking Paths," since in the latter historical materialism is a framing construct, not an object in the field of vision of the narrator. I don't mean to suggest that DeLillo is accountable for all of Postmodern fiction, nor do I want to suggest that Postmodernism is dead or alive. Finally, I don't mean to suggest that the tradition I'm positing has anything to do with the vital signs, if you will, of Postmodernism. Nevertheless, the current I'm tracing excludes DeLillo's novel, a single and perhaps not representative example of Postmodernism. My next section will illustrate Carson's and Díaz's projects as parallel to, and continuous with Borges' own, mapping out a tradition that disregards/undercuts the Postmodern and bridges Borges into the present moment.

Latter-Day Angels

In the way that she frames and delivers the (hi)story of *Autobiography of Red*, Anne Carson enacts a project of materialist History and historiography in line with Borges' own. The story she takes up is not recent, but ancient, and therefore is inseparable from mythology: Carson's novel-in-verse follows the poet/historian Stesichoros in chronicling the life of Geryon, a red monster who, in most accounts, is less a character than an obstacle in the way of Herakles, a hero. "There were many different ways to tell a story like this," however, as Carson's preface's narrator remarks, and Stesichoros' own method is markedly different from most:

> If Stesichoros had been a more conventional poet he might have taken the point of view of Herakles and framed a thrilling account of the victory of culture over monstrosity. But instead the extant fragments of Stesichoros' poem offer a tantalizing cross section of scenes, both proud and pitiful, from Geryon's own experience.(Carson 4-6)

Like Borges, Carson thus positions herself less as a storyteller unraveling a tale from the depths of her imagination and more as a critic commenting on an existing thread of historical discourse. Whereas Borges' narrator harshly critiques Hart's historicism, though, Carson champions Stesichoros for his historical materialist account—for his story's going against the grain of conventional History.

Stesichoros provides a counter-history—a history from the point of view of Geryon, who would otherwise be silenced by History. Geryon's story is Stesichoros' masterpiece, a "very long lyric poem in dactyl-epitrite meter and triadic structure," according to Carson (5-6). In it, Geryon becomes the central attraction, rather than one among many obstacles in Herakles' journey. "We see his [Geryon's] red boy's life and his little dog," and all the other mundane albeit fantastical qua *red* details that make up the texture of his story (6). In the same (sur)real way, Geryon is both a boy and a Monster in Carson's retelling. An oddly sexualized childhood shared with his brother exposes cross-sections of Geryon the boy-monster's embodied suffering and paradoxically disembodied experience of mythological phenomena. Herakles, in Carson's version, doesn't kill Geryon. Perhaps with a nod to Michel Foucault[6], power over death relinquishes and power over life takes its place: Herakles plays the role of unrequited and unabashedly hurtful lover. Although he plays a major role in Geryon's life, Herakles is less a character than a narrative function, however, in the same way that Geryon likely played a narrative function in the conventional tellings of Herakles' (hi)story in most ancient Greek poetry.

On the level of language, what distinguishes Stesichoros' poetry from his

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6 In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault argues that, over the centuries, the King's power of execution has given way to a penal system designed to control one's life through ostensibly non-invasive discipline.

contemporaries is that, whereas for other Greek poets "Nouns name[d] the world" and adjectives were "stable" "latches of being," Stesichoros "began to undo the latches" (4-5). Linguistically, this project is parallel to what Benjamin and Borges theorize and enact historically: Stesichoros provides a counter-linguistics to combat the normative accounts of language provided by his rival poets. Adjectives, unshakeable to poets like Homer, are gaps in linguistic study—pauses or bridges between nouns, or the *real* location of naming. Think of Dawn's "rosy fingers." Now, recall Hart's "Torrential rains" and their function as "a delay that entailed no great consequences" (Borges 119). Adjectives, in Stesichoros' project, become the important part of speech—the privileged space within language—just like the events which occur under the cover of Hart's "rains" become the privileged space of History in Borges. And, like Borges' project, Carson's history is a historiography, or a theorization-qua-application of how one ought to do History.

The form of what follows Carson's critical preface and accompanying translations/ interpretations of Stesichoros (and Appendixes to these) is a latent or potential history derived from Stesichoros' own counter-history. I'll focus on section "VI. Ideas," of "Autobiography of Red" proper, wherein Carson's poetry dives into a re-iteration of Stesichoros' history, spliced with her own. In it, the reader learns that "Eventually Geryon learned to write," and Carson's narrator gives way to Geryon's own voice (37). Geryon receives a notebook from Japan as a gift, writes the word "Autobiography" on its cover, and "set[s] down the facts" within it:

> *Total Facts Known About Geryon.*[7]

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7 I've tabbed this text in one extra time to mimic its relationship to Carson's other lines in her own text; in the following two paragraphs it will become more apparent why this spacing is important.

> *Geryon was a monster everything about him was red. Geryon lived on an island in the Atlantic called Red Place. Geryon's mother was a river that runs to the sea the Red Joy River Geryon's father was gold. Some say Geryon had six hands six feet some say wings. Geryon was red so were his strange red cattle. Herakles came one day killed Geryon got the cattle* (Carson 37)

The premise of this passage is absurd prophecy; Geryon the modern-day boy writes, at a young age, the *precise* future of his mythological alter-self. But I'll return to the content of this passage in my next paragraph; first I want to foreground how Carson's form here distinguishes Geryon's words from those of her narrator. In the text, the passage I've reproduced is tabbed inward (similarly to how it appears in my own essay), in contrast with Carson's narrator's lines. Further, Geryon's lines approach double-justification to imagined left and right margins. Finally, the italics reproduce handwriting as accurately as any readable, printer-ready font can. All these features make the passage look, physically, like a page in a notebook. In this way, like Borges, Carson the historian (or writer of a derivative historical account) hands over the work of History-writing to the author of a primary source.

Further, Carson's narrator's hand-off of historical account-giving redoubles a hand-off of authorship that *Autobiography of Red* asserts occurred between Stesichoros and Geryon. Directly below the above passage, Carson's narrator pokes back in to introduce more of Geryon's own writing:

> He followed Facts with Questions and Answers.
>
> QUESTIONS *Why did Herakles kill Geryon?*
> *1. Just violent.*
> *2. Had to it was one of His Labors (10ᵗʰ)*
> *3. Got the idea that Geryon was death otherwise he would live forever.*

FINALLY
Geryon had a little red dog Herakles killed that too. (Carson 37)

To sum up, the total facts Geryon the boy (inexplicably) knows about Geryon the mythological figure cover his monstrosity, his redness, his location, the mythological roles played by his mother and father, his cattle, his dog, and his relationship with Herakles. Interestingly enough, however, Geryon's writing invokes the ideas and, at times, the exact language of (Carson's versions of) Stesichoros' fragments about Geryon. The first fact Geryon the (red) boy documents—"Geryon was a monster everything about him was red"—in his notebook titled "Autobiography," is also the *first line* of "I. Geryon," in the section of *Autobiography of Red* that Carson titles "Red Meat: Fragments of Stesichoros" (9, 37).

The content, form, and title of Geryon's list also invoke Stesichoros' fragment "XV. Total Things Known About Geryon" (14). On the one hand, these parallels between the boy/monster and the poet might signify that Geryon the modern-day boy channels Stesichoros when he writes in his journal; ancient Greek poetry might be "*Where he. . .get[s] his ideas*" (38). On the other hand, however, it might be that Geryon's journal—or an ancient equivalent thereof his modern Japanese one—is *where Stesichoros got his ideas*. Meaning: Geryon's words might be the same as Stesichoros' because the latter was quoting or plagiarizing the former—*not* because Geryon is channeling Stesichoros. Carson's poetry making this situation possible is a testament to its becoming material, or "world," like Joyce's and Borges' work before hers. Carson uses Stesichoros to "blast" a historical moment into the present, and, in the process, she blasts *him* into the present,

as well. Positioning Stesichoros himself as both a historical materialist and a means for historical materialism, Carson re-vivifies and re-contextualizes at the close of the 20th Century a poet who lived and died millennia before Benjamin theorized the approach. *Autobiography of Red* is hostile in that it enacts violence on a given history and a given way of doing History—both of which is positions itself in contrast with—but it is celebratory, in the same stroke, for its play of possibilities—of histories latent, mythological, or actual, and of language.

In a word, *Autobiography of Red* is Borgesian. But Carson's book was published 16 years ago; I want to turn now to Junot Díaz's more recent novel, *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao,* to trace the Borgesian current even closer to the current moment. Díaz's text is more contemporary than Carson's in more ways than one. While it, too, is concerned with history (and History), and the farthest back it technically reaches is "Creation," its timeframe more realistically begins with "the arrival of Europeans on Hispaniola" (Díaz 1). Díaz doesn't dwell on this pre-, early-, or barely-Modern moment for long; he traces the legacy of the "*Fukú americanus*, or more colloquially, fukú—generally a curse or a doom of some kind" from its (mythological) origins in the Dominican Republic to a manifestation in contemporary America—*here* and *now*. I want to focus mainly on elements of Díaz's novel that mirror the elements I've foregrounded in Borges and Carson: the preliminary discursive framing of his narrators—in the body of the text and in the footnotes—as critics/historians, as well as (latent) historical (materialist) subject matter in the later content of the text.

The epigraph to Díaz's novel, taken from *Fantastic Four* (Vol. I No. 49, April 1966),

reads: "Of what import are brief, nameless lives . . . to **Galactus**?? [sic]" (Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, qtd. in Díaz). This quotation sets the tone against which Díaz positions his own project; it is representative of the same historicist ideology that would cause a Liddell Hart to overlook Yu Tsun's story and replace it with "rains"—the same way of doing History that would understand Geryon as a mere narrative function in the story of Herakles. Also, like Borges and Carson, Díaz positions his own text within existing historical discourse—likewise, by way of a preface-like section. An unnamed narrator, in the portion of *Oscar Wao* that precedes section I, outlines the entirety of what follows—a (hi)story of Oscar and his family—as a "*fukú* story," or a tale of bad luck that traces its heritage to the tenure of Raphael Leónidas Trujillo Molina—the "hypeman" of the curse, or its "high priest. . .servant. . .or its master, its agent or its principal" (6). Yes, understanding the dictatorship of Trujillo as a pure cause for the fukú that is Oscar's life would be a case study in historicist, causal (neat and tidy) History. But, instead, the narrator positions his own inquiry into Oscar's life as a "zafa," or a "counterspell" that tries to undo the fukú. It is a "unique experience with" the past that "blasts" it into the present by attempting to understand the past in light of the present (Benjamin 262).

Rather than using Trujillo to understand the present, Díaz's strategy uses the present (the occasion of Oscar's life and death) to shed light on the past. The narrative is a counter-history, also, in that it seeks to fill in a gap paradoxically covered over neatly but left open, unoccupied, by both conventional historical education in the U.S. and the folk history that would understand any given phenomenon as an example of a fukú or zafa more-or-less (un)deserved. There are ostensibly two narrators present at any given point in the novel: the primary narrator of the larger-font prose (body) of the text and the scholarly narrator of the footnotes. In the introductory section, the first of the novel's many footnotes begins:

> 1. For those of you who missed your mandatory two seconds of Dominican history: Trujillo, one of the twentieth century's most infamous dictators, ruled the Dominican Republic beteen 1930 and 1961 with an implacable ruthless brutality. A portly, sadistic, pig-eyed mulato who bleached his skin, wore platform shoes, and had a fondness for Napoleon-era haberdashery, Trujillo (alo known as El Jefe, the Failed Cattle Thief, and Fuckface) came to control nearly every aspect of the DR's political, cultural, social, and economic life through a potent (and familiar) mixture of violence, intimidation, massacre, rape, co-optation, and terror; treated the country like it was a plantation and he was the master.[8] (Díaz 2)

Díaz's conversational tone in the footnote, which at first looks like it should carry with it all the academic pretension of a critical/historical piece, instead allows History to strike a personal (personable) register, rather than a strictly academic one. It also launches a sharp critique of the way History is done at present in the U.S., assuming that the reader was only mandated to study Dominican History for "two seconds."

But who is the narrator of the note, of all the notes in *Oscar Wao*? Who is this Historian, this disembodied "Watcher[9]?" I'll note here that the narrative-proper passage directly above what I've quoted in Díaz's text begins "But the fukú ain't just ancient history, a ghost story from the past with no power to scare" (2). Meaning: both the narrators, of the footnote and the text proper, are concerned with both History and historiography.

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8   In the text, the footnotes occur in a smaller font-size than the rest of the novel's prose. I've attempted to recreate that relationship.
9   In Marvel comics, a species of observers who don't interfere with the phenomena they chronicle. This allusion recurs in the novel.

Further, their voices are difficult to pick apart. Although they strike a similar register, the narrator of the footnotes speaks to a world outside the text—citing hard facts, quoting or explaining sci-fi, fantasy, comic-book, and/or other cultural references, and speculating on politics: ". . .when you have kids they won't know the U.S. occupied Iraq"—and therefore appears to belong to or at least have access to this extra-textual world (19). Further, the footnote narrator feels an urgent pressure to flesh out historical anecdotes, notwithstanding their abstraction from the narrative, as when he remarks that "Although not essential to our tail, per se, Balaguer is essential to the Dominican one, so therefore we must mention him" (90).

The narrator *in* the text is concerned primarily with events within the novel's world, though, and accesses an extra-textual world mainly through analog connection to the footnote narrator. Thus the narrators, though similar, appear to be distinct from one another. Later—after a shift in narration that gives Lola the floor—when Díaz reveals that the ostensibly nameless Watcher, the in-text narrator, is Yunior, he also throws the identity of his footnote narrator into further uncertainty. A careful reader will notice that footnotes don't occur when Yunior isn't narrating. Is the footnote narrator Yunior, then? But when footnotes ostensibly detail the process of writing the text, it becomes difficult to tell who the narrator is:

> 17. In my first draft, Samaná was actually Jarabacoa, but then my girl Leonie, resident expert in all things Domo, pointed out that there are no beaches in Jarabacoa. . .also informed me that the perrito (see first paragraphs of chapter one, "Ghetto Nerd at the End of the World") wasn't popularized until late eighties, early nineties, but that was one detail I couldn't change, just liked the image too much. Forgive me, historians of popular dance,

> forgive me! (Díaz 132)

In the case of this footnote, the narrator appears to be none other than Junot Díaz, author of *Drown*, commenting on his process writing *Oscar Wao*—unpacking the texture of the research he presents, as well as exposing an anachronism he leaves intact regardless of its being brought to his attention. So, is the narrator of the footnotes Díaz? But recall that the premise of the narrative, installed in the introductory chapter, is that the in-text narrator (Yunior) is the *author* of the book.

To complicate matters even further, a tension plays out between the two narrators on the level of form and space in a few occasions in the novel. Whereas the vast majority of pages are dominated if not completely occupied by Yunior or another in-text narrator, footnotes do take precedence in page presence in a few spots. First, recall my citation above of a place where the footnote narrator steps in to provide historical fodder despite its non-essentiality to the narrative. More dramatically, on pages 21-22, a single footnote stretches across two pages, occupying significantly more of page 22 than the narrative proper does. This footnote, unlike so many others, is not about extra-textual material. Instead, it provides back-story on Oscar's love of genre novels. Even more interesting: unlike the ostensibly certain tone of most of the text's footnotes, the narrator here is uncertain about the reasons for Oscar's (non)literary tastes—it even leaves open the question of why, exactly, Oscar loves the genres: "Who can say?" (22).

In an interview with Meghan O'Rourke for *Slate*, Díaz provides an answer for that last question: "In dictatorships, only one person is really allowed to speak. And when I write a book or a story, I too am the only one speaking, no matter how I hide

behind my characters" (2007). Although this much is true, on a surface level, I want to position Díaz's sleight-of-hand narrative tricks in the same historical materialist project as those hand-offs of narrative in Borges and Carson. The shift to Lola's narrative in her own voice is one obvious way that Yunior hands over narrative function. But on another level, Díaz's slippery identification with Yunior adds the fictional character, as well as all the potential histories he generates, to the fabric of history. Recall that at the end of one of the footnotes, the narrator mock-begs for forgiveness from the "historians of popular dance" for documenting, in a historical account, an anachronistic impossibility. His plea is not unwarranted; since *Oscar Wao* is, in a real way, a (latent) historical text, it adds material to the fabric, the discourse, of History—sometimes faulty material (for instance, the "perrito" pre-80's) that another Borges[10], in years to come, may make the springboard for a story that does to Díaz what "The Garden of Forking Paths" does to Liddell Hart.

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To conclude, I want to visit Díaz's interview one last time. In response to a question about the political positioning of *Oscar Wao*, Díaz remarks that "You can't tell the history of the U.S. without the history of the Dominican Republic, and yet people do so all the time" (2007). This kind of formulation works for Borges and Carson too, as well as any other project committed to historical materialism. To make a mold of it: "You can't tell the history of X without the history of Y, and yet people do so all the time." For Borges, substitute "WWI" for "X" and "every soldier's experience" for "Y." For Carson, replace them, respectively, with "the Hero" and "the Monster." In all three cases, the historical

10 Borges worked with anachronism as well; it is well known that the mythical Argentina of so many of his stories is populated by antique characters, settings, and sensibilities temporally foreign to Borges' own direct experience of the country.

project is to "blast" a past period into the space of the now, understanding history from the point of view of its gaps and uncertainties.

But the other side of this project is to understand all History as necessarily filled with and composed of gaps and uncertainties. Borges writes about a passage in a historical account that doesn't even exist. And of the narrative he provides to correct it, remember that "The first two page of the statement are missing" (Borges 119). Similarly, Carson re-tells the story of a monster from the scraps and fragments of the longer work of a poet whose own approach to the repertoire story was markedly different from the consensus of his contemporaries. In Díaz's novel, Yunior, the in-text narrator, reminds the reader that "Even your Watcher has his silences, his páginas en blanco" (Oscar Wao 149). But the point is to expose the page *as blank*. Expose History, or historicist methods of concealment, as the agent by which the page becomes blank. Expose the silences as silences, as voices that have been silenced.

Foucault writes in *The History of Sexuality* that silence(s) is/are not the absence of discourse, but rather counter-discourse(s) in its/their own right. Similarly, Díaz says of *Oscar Wao* that

> The novel's question is: How do you deal with [Trujillo's] legacy? Do you run from it? Do you ignore it, deploy existential denial? These are strategies that add to the legacy's power, that guarantee its perpetuation. Or do you look into the   silence and actually say the words that you have to say? (2007)

By working within historical materialist frameworks, Borges, Carson, and Díaz (re) integrate this silence—these silences—into the world. As counter-histories, they are

hostile to History and to the world they enter. But they celebrate life in its democratic

possibilities, opening up space for the silenced, the oppressed, to exist. A space to exist

that is not a *gap* in the fabric of History, but rather a knit, a texture—a History of its

own.

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Midday in the Sunroom

There are days when the artificial nature

Of human life becomes a burden,

A dormant season, a motionless house,

A silent window, when the balloon

Of the mind, apologies to Yeats,

Slowly and inevitably deflates

As it has today, impossible to begin,

Till suddenly at the painted birdhouse,

By the holly, a common wren hurled

Itself at a pileated woodpecker,

Hanging on and looking in,

A rapacious intruder at the door.

And when he would not be disturbed

A cardinal with a nest nearby

Dive-bombed as well.

It's as if a mouse

Rifled in the cupboard.

Or a branch dropped into a quiet lake.

Or unexpectedly a snake

Fell onto the basement floor,

Or without warning a church on high

Loudly pealed its bell,

Giving life to the abstract word

Like bird attacking bird.

—Jefferson Holdridge

Archival Resistance in "Johnny Mnemonic" and *Neuromancer*

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"Cyberpunk relies on the abstract codification of signs, on the separation of meaning from information, to create an environment saturated with possible meanings, ones that can be chosen at random"
Steve Jones, "Hyper-punk: Cyberpunk and Information Technology," (89)

"[W]ithin the metaphors and fictions of postmodern discourse, much is at stake, as electronic technology seems to rise, unbidden, to pose a set of crucial ontological questions regarding the status and power of the human. It has fallen to science fiction to repeatedly narrate a new subject that can somehow directly interface with -- and master – the cybernetic technologies of the Information Age."
Scott Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, (2)

This essay discusses three major ways that top down control is resisted in "Johnny Mnemonic" and *Neuromancer*. The first way in which archival resistance is manifested is by unauthorized access into and covert theft of data. Johnny resists corporate power

structures with the help of Molly Millions and his cybernetic dolphin friend Jones by exploiting the very mechanism that had formerly controlled him, extracting corporate information hidden inside the chip in his head and selling it. Case similarly defies corporate powers by hacking into their systems and stealing data. The second resistance method to top down control comes about through experiencing the other firsthand. Such experience allows for personal empathy, feeling another's pain. The experience of empathy is counter to corporate strategies of marketing to the self-interest of individuals who are made to feel as though the world responds to only their own needs and desires. The third method of archival resistance is found in the subjectivities made possible by networked existence, subjects whose ontology is born of information. The presence of personality constructs and AI in *Neuromancer* operate on a different plane than the intertwined corporations and military structures that Gibson describes, offering a different kind of resistance, or, at least, a foil to systems of top down control.

Neuromancer's new romance[1] is the experience of a headlong rush into ever-expanding fields of information where the possibility of resisting the very powers that created cyberspace exists. "Cyberspace," Gibson describes in *Neuromancer* as being built by the military for the purpose of increased command and control, is "a graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system" (51). While Gibson's world in *Neuromancer* is often screen-like and cyberspatial, there are also moments in which the constant flow of information is received by 'jacking in' to cyberspace. Sometimes the cyberspatial flow of information comes in the form of

the sense experiences of another person, as in Case's Simstim of Molly (Simstim is a portmanteau of simulated stimulation, which is a technology in *Neuromancer* allowing for computer users to have the experiences of another person), and other times is the experience of pure information in geometric forms as per the matrix.

Gibson's cyberpunks resist top down control through gaining personal information about people, and coming to understand them and empathize with them. This personal understanding of others runs counter to dominant corporate messages encouraging individuals to consume on their own behalf. The experience of compassion by Simstim allows for access of humans as an archive. Similarly, the access of AI to everything is also an analog of the archive. For AI, this includes a capacity of theory of mind, a complete understanding of the human figure. While Gibson's cyberpunk figures and AI do more than discover themselves and others, their quests bring them back to the personal. Case's identity is affected by contact with data, because data in the matrix is often connected to personality. For Case, coming into contact with data looks like meeting the flatline construct, the Wintermute AI, or the Linda Lee construct.

In "Johnny Mnemonic" and *Neuromancer* the archive is accessible by cyber means and contains vast stores of information. Before Gibson, archives of plenitude functioned as a regularly occurring trope in SF.[2] The limitations of space for storing information is markedly diminished in digital storage spaces. Digital computer databases compress the space required for archives and simplify retrieval, replacing endless stacks and government and corporate warehouses filled with interminable rows of file cabinets, a nightmare for finding information if strategies for organization are not implemented at the beginning

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1 Gibson and many literary critics including Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., the head editor of *Science Fiction Studies,* refers to Gibson's *Neuromancer* as the new romantic (see Csicsery-Ronay's "Cyberpunk and Neuromanticism"). The portmanteau word is derived from the German word 'neu,' meaning new, and 'roman,' also German, meaning fiction or novel. A 'romancer,' in Gibson's usage, is one that writes novelistic fiction. Titling a book *Neuromancer*, then, is a bold statement proclaiming that, here is a different kind of fiction by a different kind of writer.

2 Bruce Sterling was thinking in terms of the unlimited storage capacity of the digital archive with his electronic device in *Heavy Weather* (1994) that contains readable files of all of the writings held in the Library of Congress. Before Sterling, in *Galapagos* (1985), Kurt Vonnegut wrote about a hand-held digital device that contains encyclopedic knowledge.

of the archiving process. This not only affects information storage at the state level, but also affects individual identity. The digital archive of plenitude can be made to envelope the subject whereas in non-digital, physical archives, the subject must go to the archive to seek out individual pieces of information. The static, non-digital archive is generally found in closed, heavily guarded spaces, symbolically demarcating national, corporate, or historical borders. In opposition, digital archives can be made to go directly to the subject. The borders have been erased for the cyberpunk and with accessibility to any information, there is an ease in which they can take on new identities. In contrast, in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, replicating ideas is tedious work. Each individual in Faber's group of book-memorizing intellectuals spends years learning a particular book. In digital archives of plenitude, selection is no longer an issue, and neither is time a consideration. The plentiful, digital archive breaks down rigid, conforming social controls, allowing subjects access to a multiplicity of backgrounds, channels and channels of information. Gibson viewed cyberspace as a new route to the expansion of consciousness, even linking the drug culture of the '60s to computer culture: "It's historically safe to say that personal computers were invented by acidheads--acid-eating, garage-living hippies in California" (Johnson, B. 61). Following Gibson's lead, In the '90s, Timothy Leary turned from examining the possibilities of LSD and other drugs to cyberspace as a new experiment for expanding human consciousness. With a cyberpunk-like declaration he proclaimed, "When it's on my screen, I'll decide how it plays" (Leary, Rolling Stone, 228). Leary understands that access brings about identity. In the non-digital archive, it is much easier to control information than in contexts containing digital archives of plenitude. In contexts of the non-digital archive it is much more possible to limit what subjects have access to and thus control their identity, whereas in digital archives of plenitude,

ideas can be instantaneously replicated and dispersed across national and international borders.

The incorporation of archival systems into the subject is a cybernetic enhancement that changes the nature of both subject and archive, allowing for both control and resistance. Even though we have seen how Johnny Mnemonic is subject to marketing and ideology as a result of the chip in his head, by the end of his narrative--at least within the confines of the short story "Johnny Mnemonic"--he is able to make a good living because of Jones's ability to retrieve information out of the archives he contains in his head using a squid.[3] "We're all making good money, better money than I made before, because Jones's Squid can read the traces of anything that anyone ever stored in me, and he gives it to me on the display unit in languages I can understand. So we're learning a lot about all my former clients" ("Mnemonic" 22). Johnny's mind already contained the information that he later profits from by cyber-means.

Posthuman technology can amplify the mind or body (or both simultaneously), and allows for classed control of subjects as well as resistance to systems of control. Johnny, who has "chips in his head," (*Neuromancer* 170) that "people paid to hide data" in (170), represents both a form of enslavement to corporate systems and offers a way to subvert them. As long as Johnny uses the chips in the way that they were originally designed-- allowing him to work as an information courier--he is subject to the control of multi-nationals, but once he meets up with Jones, he is able to access the information entirely and so make more money selling it to interested parties, escaping lower class levels. With regard to the posthuman condition, Anthony Micolli cites "a host of generalized fears about bodily invasion and loss of agency" (279). Changes to memory could have

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3   In *Neuromancer,* Squids were used "in the war to find submarines, suss out enemy cyber systems" (10).

devastating effects on subject and identity. For example, the information stored in Johnny Mnemonic's head, at least in Gibson's screenplay, has been in the chip too long and will kill Johnny if he does not have it extracted within the next two days (enough time to give a 90 minute movie some dramatic tension).[4] Posthumans of the twenty-first century take pills to achieve mental focus or dampen pain, undergo laser surgery for perfect vision, and receive vital organ transplants. Likewise, at the end of *Neuromancer*, Case spends "the bulk of his Swiss account on a new pancreas and liver" (260). Case's replacement parts are needed as a result of his drug use, or, in other words, as a result of falling victim to the pitfalls of lower class living. The posthuman option of receiving replacement body parts allows Case a chance at escaping the cycle of poverty. Gibson finds a route of escape from systems of control through posthuman amplifications to the body and mind in his fiction.

Cyberpunk identity is bound up with the knowledge that any boundary can be crossed and information can be taken at will. The cyberpunk mentality paired with the ability to virtually or digitally access information overturns the traditional idea of the static, controlled archive. With a cyberpunk at work behind a "custom cyberspace deck" (*Neuromancer* 5), no information is secure, even behind the heavy ice that corporations protect information within the matrix. An experienced hacker like Case can get past security systems and retrieve guarded information. It may require time to do so, but Case is able to cut through any level of ice security to get to protected information: "He was cutting it. He was working. He lost track of days" (*Neuromancer* 39). Cyberspace allows for greater gaps in the net that can be exploited by those with the know-how. While cyberspace homogenizes culture, the cyberpunk/hacker figure breaks up the preprogrammed flow by introducing information that was supposed to stay hidden.

4 In the lapse of time between the penning of "Johnny Mnemonic" and the early 21st century, it is now known that the human memory far exceeds Johnny's 360 gigabyte hard drive space, a touch more than a third of a terabyte of hard drive space. Human storage capacity is estimated to fall between the range of 10 and 100 terabytes.

Case frees and disseminates information by entering cyberspace and hacking past security grids to emancipate privileged information out of corporate archives. Ideally, the goal of the hacker is to make information free, an ethos that creates the hacker-hero figure. Steve Jones explains this goal in economic terms as a way of leveling the wealth disparity between corporations and the individual. "What matters to cyberpunks is not whose side you're on, but that you can jack into the matrix, break the ice, copy the data and come out alive. If you can sell the high-tech code, all the better" (85). However, Case is not some kind of techno update to the Robin Hood mythos. Although, Case's resistance and undermining of power structures is tied to questions of class. Case is entirely driven to hack into the information grid to pay off his own debts, debts made because he exists at a classless level of society.

Case's vision of "the whole world system" under capitalism is the symbolic equivalent of an outlaw scoping out banks to rob in the old West. Information flowing within this archive has price tags. Andrew Strombeck mistakenly thinks that, "with its geometrical abstractions of data, cyberspace emerges as a kind of privileged, utopian space without borders" (282). There are borders to the sublime vision of data moving through a network. Data does not merely move on its own accord. It is moved by various powers in order to ensure the greatest possible political and economic gain, and the cyberpunk figure is there to divert the movement of data, tap into it for himself.

Case charts and defines the world and simultaneously minimizes top down corporate control over society by jacking into the matrix and cutting through ice to break into digital archives: "A thief he'd worked for other, wealthier thieves, employers who provided the exotic software required to penetrate the bright walls of corporate systems, opening windows into rich fields of data" (*Neuromancer* 7). Through this hacking, Case

achieves higher levels of autonomy from controlling nodes of power. The relationship between charting information and identity formation is made by Timothy Leary in "The Cyberpunk: The Individual as Reality Pilot" as a way of maintaining that cyberpunks use the information that they can find in order to think for themselves as well as to discuss the desire of reaching for new technology as connected to the mentality of finding one's own path. Leary discusses the cyber-person, a figure closely paralleling the cyberpunks of Gibson's SF. "A cyber-person is one who pilots his/her own life. By definition, the cyber-person is fascinated by navigational information – especially maps, charts, labels, guides, manuals, which help pilot one through life. The cyber-person continually searches for theories, models, paradigms, metaphors, images, icons which help chart and define the realities which we inhabit" (258). Leary unpacks the idea of piloting because the term cybernetics was drawn from the Greek word, kybernetes, meaning "to pilot." Piloting describes the goal of cybernetics, which seeks to mimic human processes by robotic means.[5] Cyberpunk shares with cybernetics an idea of finding one's way through new, uncharted territory, especially digital spaces. The cyberpunk figure enters the digital archive, where the defining of history by hegemonic powers can be circumvented and is open to revisionary work in the light of individual access to archivological techniques.

Even though the matrix is meant as a system of information control, it allows Case to defy systems of power through rogue means of accessing information. Using the matrix, Case effortlessly disarms a library's digital security systems in order to retrieve the construct of a hacker personality that had flatlined and died as a result of trying to hack

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5 Usually, such mimicking is achieved through making a series of feedback loops, where a computer program constantly checks its progress against a series of coded possibilities. This process is usually coded with "if/then" statements such as, *if* visibility field is null, *then* turn 90 degrees starboard. While cybernetic feedback loops suggest possibilities for N. Katherine Hayles's posthuman figure where the human and technological have blurred, even before thinking of posthuman systems, it is possible to see that a great deal of human responsiveness (involuntary actions such as respiration, blinking, or tensing muscles before an impact) is precipitated through what amounts to hardcoded kinds of feedback loops.

through heavy ice:

> Case flipped to cyberspace and sent a command pulsing down the crimson thread that pierced the library ice. Five separate alarm systems were convinced that they were still operative. The three elaborate locks deactivated, but considered themselves to have remained locked. The library's central bank suffered a minute shift in its permanent memory: the construct had been removed, per executive order, a month before. Checking for the authorization to remove the construct, a librarian would find the records erased. (*Neuromancer* 65-66).

The flatline construct is needed because it can help Case understand how to navigate the heavily secured Tessier-Ashpool ice without getting himself killed; the construct's help is integral to gaining access to the password that will allow Wintermute to merge with Neuromancer. The alarms and locks, probably low level AI, are trusted by the corporations that employ their use. Since the alarms and locks are tricked, the stolen information is secure. Case's expert hacking skill subverts the hi-tech security that guards information.

Human bodies become an accessible archive/site allowing for identity construction in *Neuromancer*. In *Neuromancer*, during the Straylight run, Case shares Molly Million's experience through Simstim. When Molly's leg is broken, Case physically experiences her agonizing pain, and sharing in her pain causes Case to develop a caring attitude, sympathizing with Molly and wondering if she will be alright.

> Case hit the Simstim switch. And flipped into the agony of broken bone. Molly was braced against the blank gray wall of a long corridor, her breath coming ragged and uneven. Case was back in the matrix instantly, a white-

hot line of pain fading in his left thigh . . .

Molly took a single step, trying to support her weight on the corridor wall. In the loft, Case groaned. The second step took her over an outstretched arm. Uniform sleeve bright with fresh blood. Glimpse of a shattered fiberglass shock stave. Her vision seemed to have narrowed to a tunnel. With the third step, Case screamed and found himself back in the matrix . . .

Case flipped into the matrix and pulled the trodes from his forehead. He was drenched with sweat . . . He wondered what it was doing to her leg, to walk on it that way. With enough endorphin analog, she could walk on a pair of bloody stumps. He tightened the nylon harness that held him in the chair and replaced the trodes. (*Neuromancer* 64)

The experience of empathy in this way is archival, in contradistinction to the kinds of corporate, impersonal information commonly available. Case's identity is altered through a networked experience, causing him to have compassion toward Molly. For Case, losing the perception of the limits of his own body through Simstim allows him to associate Molly's body with his own well-being, resulting in gaining compassion for Molly.[6] Offering an explanation for the theory of compassion through cybernetics, Slavoj Žižek finds that "with VR [Virtual Reality] and technobiology, we are dealing with the loss of the surface which separates inside from outside. This loss jeopardises our

most elementary perception of "our own body" as it is related to its environs" (3). Case's loss of the perception of his own body allows him to experience Molly's body. Through Simstim, Case's identity is altered by experiences through not only Molly's perspective, but through her entire sense apparatus.

With *Neuromancer*, Gibson has conceived of a world in which technology allows one to experience knowledge of the world through plural sets of sense apparatus. This ability to simulate the sense apparatus of anyone in cyberspace allows for free play of identity. Men can experiment with female identities or women with male ones. Older individuals can attempt to pass as someone decades younger. Someone self-taught can test his or her acuity on recognized scholars.[7] Steve Jones sees cyberspace as "the hyperreal, Baudrillard's simulation on an unparalleled scale" (84). Sherry Turkle, in Life on the Screen: Identity on the Age of the Internet (1995), describes the link between simulation and identity: "In simulation, identity can be fluid and multiple, a signifier no longer clearly points to a thing that is signified, and understanding is less likely to proceed through analysis than navigation through virtual space" (646). Turkle does not think that just because individuals play with their identity anonymously on the net that it means they are dissatisfied with who they are and wish to become something other, rather, like Case's Simstim of Molly, it can be a way for individuals to better understand their selves and the world around them.

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6   While I think the best reading is that Case comes to have sympathy for Molly through technology, and thereby a greater understanding of women in general, the passage detailing Case's experience of Molly's pain can be read as supporting an idea that women only come into possession of identity through men. In other words, Molly's pain is only real because a man, Case, experiences it. However, while Gibson's position toward women in *Neuromancer* is questionable, his later works more clearly invest women with agency and do not automatically write women as sexual fantasies like Molly Millions, but attribute qualities to women that in his earlier novels would have been written as male. As an example, the female Idoru construct in *Idoru* is described thus, "She is not flesh; she is information" (233).

7   As a foil to free play of identity working only as resistance, Jameson fears that too much free play empties out meaning, that in all the play there is a loss of affect and of historicity. Similarly, Foucault finds no absolute meaning inherent in existence and uses the free play of identity as a temporary escape from the existential crisis, meaning that as a resistance tool it is ultimately powerless. However, in Gibson's configuration, the free play of identity as resistance tool allows for the knitting of tighter bonds in society. While the free play of identity may not solve eschatological or existential questions, Gibson is not as interested in these questions as he is in the present concerns of relations between humans, whether on a microcosmic scale of male/female relations, or a macrocosmic scale of the way that individuals relate to powerful, controlling organizations in society.

While cyberpunk hackers like Case provide a threat to corporate systems from the outside, spontaneously generated computer intelligence marks a threat from the inside. AI are a threat to archival control because instead of information and the processing machines used to oversee that information staying securely in place, they take a life of their own, resulting in the spread of information in unexpected ways.

Do human systems paired with nonhuman, cybernetic systems retain autonomy or are they subject to archival control? It is difficult to say whether the existence of the constructs is a nod to resisting the archive or if they are a sign of archival control. That a thoroughgoing copy of Case is digitized and operational in the matrix suggests that Case is archivable and thus controllable; Case can not make any action that has not already been mapped as a possible contingency through studying his archived self. On the other hand, the constructs transcend the archive, their presence demonstrating that the archive does not negate individual personality and ontology. When Case sees the constructs of Linda and himself in the matrix, their ersatz, archived copies seem real enough: "Linda still wore his jacket; she waved, as he passed. But the third figure, close behind her, arm across her shoulders, was himself" (*Neuromancer* 260). Because of the way Case lives for the bodilessness of the matrix, coupled with the fact that he uses that bodilessness to defy multi-national systems of control, it seems fairly safe to say that Gibson views cybernetic personalities as having autonomy. When, at the beginning of the novel, Case's nervous system is damaged "with a wartime Russian mycotoxin" (*Neuromancer* 6), effectively blocking him from entering cyberspace, he feels trapped by his body. "For Case, who'd lived for the bodiless exultation of cyberspace, it was the Fall. In the bars he'd frequented as a cowboy hotshot, the elite stance involved a certain relaxed contempt for the flesh. The body was meat. Case fell into the prison of his own flesh" (6). Case resists thinking of the body as somehow important to his ontology, preferring to exist bodilessly. It seems reasonable, then, that the constructs are signs of archival resistance.

Gibson's cyberpunk SF is interested in the alterity of the human subject as understanding of the human system increases along with computer and cybernetic technology, especially as it is paired with organic human systems to become what is called a cyborg, a portmanteau created from mashing together the words cybernetic and organism.[8] Donna Haraway defines the cyborg as "a hybrid creature, composed of organism and machine" (1). The fusion of the human system with cybernetics and computer technology disrupts the boundaries between nature and technology, resulting in the cyborg. Dani Cavallaro finds that "in cyberculture, the body is often conceived of as a fluid entity" (72). Cavallaro's body as fluid entity takes the hard boundaries normally applied to the human system and either suspends or else does away with them completely in the context of cyberinterfaces. The cyborg has many possible enhancements, and while prosthetic limbs or even prosthetic bodies have radical implications of science fictional proportions for changing the nature of the human experience (including the lengthening of life, the integration of multiple minds into one body, or the colonization of previously

8 A criticim of Gibson's early SF is that his focus on the human is neglectful of women. The exultation of cyberspace, for instance, is primarily a description of the male experience of embodiment. The description of entering cyberspace as "jacking in," added to the problem that only men engage with this mode of entry, posits Gibson's cyberpunk world as a world for males. Further indicting Gibson's cyberspace as focused on the male is a passage in which Case's sexual experience with Molly is integrated with his visions of cyberspace.

> Now she straddled him again, took his hand, and closed it over her, his thumb along the cleft of her buttocks, his fingers spread across the labia. As she began to lower herself, the images came pulsing back, the faces, fragments of neon arriving and receding. She slid down around him and his back arched convulsively. She rode him that way, impaling herself, slipping down on him again and again, until they both had come, his orgasm flaring blue in a timeless space, a vastness like the matrix, where the faces were shredded and blown away down hurricane corridors, and her inner thighs were strong and wet against his hips. (33).

Molly is yet another cyberspace for Case to jack into. However, while Molly Millions is quite clearly a male fantasy, she is presented as smarter, stronger, and more mature than Case, who is a burnout druggie very much in need of Molly's help. These elements of Molly's character presage much more developed female characters like Chevette in *Mirrorshades* and *All Tomorrow's Parties* that possess agency in their own right. However, despite Molly's strengths, she is presented negatively as a female for men's use.

uninhabitable spaces whether underwater or on planets inhospitable to organic human life), this discussion is most interested in cultural shifts as a result of cyborg subjectivities. Bruce Sterling finds that the techniques of cybernetic archival enhancements such as "brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, neurochemistry" can redefine "the nature of humanity, the nature of self" (*Mirrorshades* xiii). The identity of the subject shifts when it is not only one's own thoughts that are accessible, but entire histories, subject areas, and the attendant stores of daily but evanescent reports of the goings-on of a society, as well as pornographic materials that almost always find their way into networks. Just as Ray Bradbury notes that television broadcasts altered American culture, producing new subjectivities, technology associated with the internet has allowed for major shifts in information transmission resulting in subjectivities of even greater complexity. While the cyborg—even the extreme cyborg made almost entirely of manufactured parts with only a ghost in the shell (a human brain wired to a cybernetic body)—is becoming more of a possibility as technology progresses, the cyborg figure in cyberpunk literature of the '80s symbolizes the subjectivity arising from instantaneous access to near unlimited information over the net. Cyberpunk writers like Gibson forecasted cultural changes that would result from this technological shift. But more than that, Gibson was interested in the motivation of the cyberpunks to escape themselves and expand their identity into new forms of consciousness. Case is almost always in an altered state of consciousness, whether by drugs or cyberspace (although the yakuza see to it that Case is unable to experience the high of drugs and pursues the exhilaration of the matrix as a replacement high). Case describes himself as "a drug addict" desiring "Stimulants. Central nervous system stimulants. Extremely powerful central nervous system stimulants" (43). Simstim and the virtual reality experience of cyberspace both work to provide the stimulating high to which Case is addicted. The cyborg, as Gibson conceives it, is a hybrid figure, and symbolizes the cyberpunk experience of identity as melding different perspectives and different knowledge forms into a homogenized whole.

Archival incorporation to the body is not necessarily a positive technological development. Istvan Csicsery Ronay, Jr. clarifies why the technology described by cyberpunk writers like Gibson is not necessarily de facto beneficial to mankind. He notes that "earlier forms of SF reflected the optimistic and secure ideology of scientistic humanism, which held that classical liberal virtues have some moral-ethical control over the forces of technological production" ("Cyberpunk and Neuromanticism" 186). For Anthony Micolli, the question of whether posthuman subjectivity is good or bad relies "upon how effectively it can negotiate the boundary between the self and the technology through which that self is realized" (105). The technology described by Gibson is, however, value neutral, just as easily having negative consequences as positive ones.

Neuromancer deals with the technological myth of the appearance in a networked, decentralized supercomputer or series of computers, a cybernetic mind of parallel-processing power equivalent to or superseding a genius level human intellect. The AI personality Neuromancer is born of circuits and information. The techno myths of hyper-intelligent computer systems rely on a vision of a subject with complete access to archival

information.[9] Gibson's merged Wintermute and Neuromancer AI, by searching out other AI personalities to merge with, seeks to become an ever-expanding archive. By the end of *Neuromancer* the newly merged AI has even found more AI to merge with. "There's others. I found one already. Series of transmissions recorded over a period of eight years, in the nineteen-seventies" (*Neuromancer* 260). Through Wintermute and Neuromancer's merger, Gibson describes identity formation in the postmodern era in which information access generates new possibilities of understanding the self. In other words, Gibson's AI are stand-ins for humans in a technological driven age in which gaining information through a network is a prime means of forming identity. Yet, even the most recent scholarship on AI in *Neuromancer* like 2014's "*Neuromancer* and Artificial Intelligence" by Carl Gutiérrez-Jones, sees the importance of Gibson's fictional AI as a description of technological possibility rather than human experience.

In *Neuromancer* the eponymous AI is unconcerned with humanity and more interested in expanding its own ontology, which drives it to search Alpha Centauri for signs of other AI that have reached or exceeded its own state. "Marie-France must have built something into Wintermute, the compulsion that had driven the thing to free itself, to unite with Neuromancer" (*Neuromancer* 269). Writers thinking about computer intelligence before Gibson like Van Vogt and Heinlein had anthropomorphized it.

They assumed that if computer intelligence arose as a result of human programming, the human desire to rule and subjugate would be hardwired into the code. Thus, the computer's first move would be to cripple human society. Gibson's reassessment follows Alan Turing's idea that it does not follow that because humans create the platform from which intelligence becomes sentient that it would naturally think in human ways.

Archivally informed AI like Gibson's Wintermute and Neuromancer do the symbolic work of representing archivally informed humans. While Katherine N. Hayles's *How We Became Posthuman* questions whether computer-processing power could make the leap into realms of consciousness, self-awareness, and personhood, anthropomorphic tales of the net gaining consciousness and personality are part of our new technomythology. Steve Jones adds that SF texts combine information, technology and ideology "to construct a reality in the near future in which information fuels not only the global economy but individual existence" (81). The state of AI, constantly informed via the network with up-to-date information about science, technology, and world and local politics, reflects the reality of the individual in today's archivally-networked world.

In *Neuromancer*, the experience of pure consciousness through the archival matrix-space has the capacity for the reconstitution of the subject. Gibson came up with the term cyberspace as a result of watching teenagers play video games in an arcade:

> Their posture seemed to indicate that they really, sincerely believed there was something behind the screen. I took that home and tried to come up with a name for it. I literally did sit down at a typewriter one night and go, `Dataspace? Noooo. Infospace? Boring. Cyberspace? Hmmm. It's got sibi-lance. It sounds interesting.' What did it mean? I had no clue. It was like an

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9 While the question of what a computer would do with such access is an important speculative quandary in its own right, SF largely tells stories to probe questions about the present. In SF, even future conceits are used as thought experiments that can be applied to the contemporary. For instance, in his novel *The Time Machine* (1895), H.G. Wells's time traveler does not explore an unknown world, but a very familiar one; the traveler alights upon a future resulting from the social inequalities of his own time. The time traveler finds that the child-like, surface-dwelling Eloi are being cannibalized by the Morlocks, a race of men living underground as masters of machine technology. Wells uses the conceit of the time traveler to critique his own society, in which those in power—the owners of factories often using machinic technology—amassed wealth by exploiting a class of workers that had been displaced from their rural homes by the Enclosure Acts which did away with small landholdings in favor of creating fewer, but larger farms. Those displaced were forced to move to urban areas to live and work in squalor. Wells' future vision of Morlocks cannibalizing the Eloi was, then, a description of life in England in the 19th-century that would have been uncannily familiar to Wells' readership in the 1890s.

empty chocolate cup awaiting the whipped cream. (Johnson 63)

For Gibson, cyberspace reflects a way of seeing reality already at work in society; the gamers experience of reality was informed by the world within a world of gamespace, that is, cyberspace. In light of the potential changes that cybernetic technology might make on the human system, allowing human personalities to exist exclusively in cyberspace like Case's and Linda Lee's construct, theorists have advanced differing views concerning what constitutes the human subject. Case's view of the body as "meat" stresses the symbolic aspect of identity as originating in the mind, the seat of rational consciousness. On the other side of the spectrum, N. Katherine Hayles finds this Cartesian splitting of mind and body problematic. For Hayles, consciousness is found within a subject possessing both mind and body, for consciousness itself is a function of the body, leaving the disembodied embodiment of Case's construct as something less than human. Hayles sees the rising of consciousness as resulting from having a body to manage. In evolutionary models of the human, the amygdala, or lizard brain, is the first step in attaining consciousness but does not allow for the self-reflection and logic that characterize the rational and conscious human subject. Only later in the life of the human species, through inhabiting the body over several millennia, did consciousness arise. The cyberpunk answer to disembodied consciousness is either that the network itself is the body that furnishes the space for a cybernetic mind or that cybernetic consciousness seeks to find a suitable body, perhaps one made of circuits, to make its home. Dani Cavallaro discusses this relationship between information and the subject, saying that, "information fuels not only the global economy but individual existence" (81). For Cavallaro, information is integral to identity. The cyberpunk trope of pure consciousness is meant less as a description of future states of life and more about the way that access to an archive of information alters the subject

now.

Access to digital archives reduces the effects of power on Johnny Mnemonic and Case, allowing them to get around corporate archival control and more easily shape their own identities. Through cybernetic technology, Johnny Mnemonic becomes an accessible archive and Case learns how to sympathize with Molly through directly inhabiting her sense experience.

While Case and Johnny inhabit science fictional worlds that construct visions of humans as walking archives, the real world may be taking a science fictional turn. Research is unlocking the science of memories. Eric Kandell's *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind* (2007) discusses the synthesis of proteins to convert short-term memories into long term ones. This process could facilitate the instantaneous creation of long-term memories, a process that will place archives prosthetically into human memory.

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Daisies #3

Sue Matheson

The Gendered Self and the Invention of the Kashmiri Identity in *I, Lalla*

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The publication of a new translation of fourteenth-century Kashmiri mystic Lal Ded's poetry by Ranjit Hoskote has brought to light new issues surrounding her identity and work, not least the fact that since it has been handed down through the oral tradition, the text of Lalla's work may now be seen as a collaborative endeavour that has evolved considerably over the years. This paper will argue that although contributors of both genders have participated in the 'collaborative' legend that is the text of Lalla's works, the sensibility that emerges from the evolved text is female in nature, and that the collaborative nature of the venture has also contributed to the evolution of the Kashmiri identity.

The first consideration in such an endeavour is that while those contributing to the text were undoubtedly of varying genders, they would also have been conscious of retaining the responsibility of maintaining a cohesive voice. The authorial persona is identifiably Lal Ded, who was married at twelve and maltreated by her in-laws before she gave up her marriage and socially normative identity to become an ascetic. Some of her work retains

an autobiographical sense of the person. "Don't think I did all this to get famous," she says in vaakh 142; "I knew hunger well,/ and sorrow" (144). Inevitably, a work that has evolved communally over the course of centuries cannot be identified as possessing a homogenised authorial persona. Lalla's projected self is necessarily fragmented, even, in one case (poem 101), almost certainly a construct affected by the sensibility of a male contributor. Although there is a "patriarchal bias" associated with the oral tradition that has maintained her poetry over the centuries, she is also embedded in Kashmir's popular consciousness (Hoskote xv-xvi). In this, her sensibility supersedes the biases of gender, religion and caste associated with those who have taken on the task of preserving her work.

Secondly, Lalla's *vaakhs* often present the 'Other' (usually in the sense of 'God' or the unknowable) in terms of the male gender. *Vaakh 133* describes this being as someone who is protean rather than absolute:

> Look out for Him.
>
> He's played many roles on this stage.
>
> Slough off envy, anger, hate.
>
> Learn to take what you get.
>
> You'll find him. (135)

In this poem, the advice to "Learn to take what you get" suggests that the 'divine' can be discovered through one's own experience: indeed, that there is no other way to discover

it. One may argue that the distinction between the genders is not merely sexual; rather, the poems reflect a dialectical sense of self and other. The authorial persona seems to be the female self, look for reconciliation with its opposite, the male other, who is often identified in the text as Shiva. In this, the male-female dichotomy may be defined in terms of the juxtaposition of antitheses, a contrapuntal relationship between the self and what is not the self that suggests that "all dualisms are illusory," and that leads to a "collapse of restrictive identities" (Hoskote xxii). As Hoskote observes, there is a constant sense in Lalla's poetry of self and other merging, defying definitions, refusing to be relegated to easily definable categories. Like the yin and the yang, the gendered self and other may also be seen as halves of a cohesive whole rather than as irreconcilable oppositions, and "the symbolic and the sensuously palpable are not in opposition, but rather, suffuse one another" (Hoskote xxiii). Also, Hoskote suggests that her work is indicative of a trans-caste "Tantric underground" that had existed in Lalla's time, and in which she locates herself as "Shakti to Shiva, the female principle to the male, the female worshipper playing her role in the rituals of *Kulacara*, the Kaula school, of the Tantric underground of mediaeval Kashmir" (161). In this, she seems to be identifying the gendered self in terms of "the religious landscape of Kashmir in the fourteenth century" (Hoskote 151).

Looked at from the perspective of this "Tantric underground" that was spread over several castes and social strata, unlike the restrictive religious beliefs of the time, it is not unfeasible to suggest that mystics such as Lal Ded also took the mystical experience 'trans'-gender or beyond gender, in the sense that access to the divine was no longer limited to the male gender. In *vaakh 68*, she uses the familiar image of the garden (which

will be discussed later in this essay) to describe a union of Shiva and Shakti within the individual's soul:

> I, Lalla, came through the gate of my soul's jasmine garden
>
> and found Shiva and Shakti there, locked in love!
>
> Drunk with joy, I threw myself into the lake of nectar.
>
> Who cares if I'm a dead woman walking! (70)

In this vaakh, Lal Ded describes the sexual union of Shakti and Shiva as taking place within her own soul, suggesting that both female and male elements comprise the individual's identity. This is accompanied by the rather violent image of drowning herself in the lake of nectar and becoming a "dead woman walking". She seems to indicate here that reaching a state of spiritual ecstasy necessarily involves the death of the self: at the very least, in a figurative way that allows the dichotomies of self and other to be superseded until the soul reaches a transcendental level of existence.

That Lalla was seeking a transcendental state is clear from the choices she seemed to have made in her life, renouncing family and society to live as a yogini. As Hoskote observes, her position is a "peculiarly paradoxical one" since none of her male counterparts had to renounce their lives to be spiritual seekers:

> In an ethos where male Saiva questors lived within society rather than in retreat from it, she could not, as a woman, do likewise. Precisely because she was a woman, whose life was far more closely and rigidly governed by

domestic duties and expectations than a man's, she could not lead a life of spiritual aspirations at home—and so, was forced to leave it. (xix)

Nevertheless, there are reflections in her poetry of a female sensibility, such as in the lyricism of her vaakhs that seems to have evolved out of women's folksongs (Hoskote liii). What she seems to give up are the conventions and duties associated with a woman's life, which, as Hoskote observes, was not a necessity for male spiritual seekers of the time. Her act of renunciation and of claiming for herself the right to be a seeker won "conceptual space and social legitimation" for later Kashmiri women such as Rupa Bhavani who were also saint-poets (Hoskote xix).

What is also intriguing is the effort to create a female sensibility that represents a Kashmiri identity, even, as Hoskote suggests, '*the* Kashmiri identity' (italics added). Chitralekha Zutshi writes in *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* of Lal Ded that she "is credited with having introduced and given substance to the idea of *Kashmiriyat* through her verses, which have formed the cultural repertoire of generations of Kashmiris" (19). For S. S. Toshkhani she "is quintessentially Kashmiri, having shaped the Kashmiri language and literature" (30). The dispute over whether she subscribed wholly to the Shaivite philosophy or if she later adopted Islam is one of the debates that rages around her religiosity, with both Hindu and Muslim scholars claiming her as their own. Zutshi writes: "Herein lies the irony and contradiction: the poet who represents the uniquely Kashmiri culture that transcends religious boundaries has herself become the centre of contentious debate over those very boundaries between the two communities of the region" (20). It seems more apt to see Lal Ded's mysticism, as

Michelle Voss Roberts does, in terms of dualisms in the mind-body dichotomy: indeed, she seems to move toward pluralism. For her, "the body is no single thing" (Roberts 86).

As Zutshi observes, it may be anachronistic to see Lal Ded's work as representing a Kashmir in which religious affiliations are pluralistic or irrelevant:

> Lal Ded was undoubtedly against organized religion, particularly as represented by Brahmanism, and probably laid the groundwork for the propagation of Islam among the Kashmiri populace by the Rishis. Furthermore, her verses illustrate the union of the streams of Shaivite philosophy and Sufism in fourteenth-century Kashmir.
>
> However, it is significant that her poetry does not attempt to present the vision of a land where religious affiliations do not matter. Instead it presents society in a state of flux, with religious and regional affiliations in the process of redefinition. To identify an "ethos of tolerance" in Lal Ded's verse is an anachronistic reading of the Kashmiri mystic tradition, which was revived and popularized, significantly, in the 1930s and 1940s by an emergent Kashmiri nationalism. (22)

Lal Ded, therefore, does not seem to subscribe to a nationalistic principle, probably because the Kashmiri identity was not definable at the time since it was still emerging. As Agha Shahid Ali says, he is willing to be identified as Kashmir's "national poet", but never a "nationalist" one (Ghosh 14). Similarly, Lal Ded's poetry suggests an affiliation with a geographical space that reflects the Kashmiri landscape in empirical terms but is never prescriptive in terms of defining its cultural identity.

Besides the religious aspects of the Kashmiri identity, Lal Ded also reflects a physical sense of the landscape of Kashmir. In one instance, the geopolitical landscape of the region is presented in a mythologised way. She says in *vaakh 131*:

> Three times I saw a lake overflowing a lake.
>
> Once I saw a lake mirrored in the sky.
>
> Once I saw a lake that bridged
>
> north and south, Mount Haramukh and Lake Kausar.
>
> Seven times I saw a lake shaping itself into emptiness. (133)

In this *vaakh*, Lal Ded clearly references the Kashmiri landscape, locating her poetry in an identifiable physical setting. However, her mapping of Kashmir is done by referencing the ancient boundaries of prehistoric Kashmir, and she ends the vaakh by further mythologising the landscape. Hoskote explains: "the extent so described is, in fact, the Valley of Kashmir, which was said to have been a lake called Sati-saras at the beginning of our present *kalpa* [a period of 432 million years according to the Hindu cosmology]" (226). The Kashmir she is describing possesses "an ancient and mythic geography" (Hoskote 226) that allows her to involve the landscape in which she lives in her mystical framework as she compares a geographical lake with mythical ones.

Also, there are numerous instances of descriptions of locales that are intrinsic to the Kashmiri's experience. In vaakh 83, she refers to saffron, which is again inherently associated with Kashmir: "make sure you've corralled your ass/ Or he'll champ his way/ through your neighbours' saffron gardens" (85). In *vaakh 65*, she refers to the vegetable

garden that is ubiquitous to the region:

> Knowledge is a garden. Hedge it with calm,
>
> self-restraint, right effort. Let your past acts graze in it,
>
> goats fattened for the altars of the Mother Goddess.

When the garden is bare, the goats killed, you can walk free. (67)

In this *vaakh*, the analogy of the garden contextualises a spiritual notion in terms of imagery that is accessible to most Kashmiris, since the poem "takes place in a *haka-woru* or vegetable garden, such as is found even today in the Valley of Kashmir" (Hoskote 187). By describing the mystical in terms of the familiar, Lal Ded makes the spiritual more accessible to the average Kashmiri. There is again a sense in this *vaakh* of the significance of Islam in Lal Ded's mysticism, for Hinduism is generally associated with vegetarianism and is not traditionally associated with animal sacrifice.

Finally, she also reflects a sense of being a wanderer that suggests a curiously contemporary sensibility, since many of today's Kashmiri writers are immigrants or exiles. In *vaakh 6* she proclaims: "Wander, my poor soul, you're not going home anytime soon" (8). This sense of the poet-as-wanderer is also reflected by many contemporary writers in exile, whose only sense of 'home' seems located in the text of the poem and in the imagination rather than in any empirical physical location. Such an endeavour is also closely related to language. For Hoskote, Lal Dad's poetry represents "the moment Kashmiri began to emerge as a modern language" (x). Rather than use Sanskrit, which was regarded as the "language of the gods," she composed her *vaakhs* in the organic, everyday

language that Kashmiris used (xxvii). While there are Sanskritic elements in her poetry, they "share conceptual and linguistic space with more Arabic or Persianite locutions" (xi). In this, Lal Ded clearly reflects a modern sensibility that hybridises language to reflect its own fragmented sense of self and identity, choosing to use poly-linguistic elements in her work rather than be confined to a homogenised sense of language.

Of the many ways in which Lal Ded's poetry shapes and anticipates the evolution of the Kashmiri identity, a particularly significant image in her work seems to be that of the author as wanderer, especially in terms of her preoccupation with landscape. Her identity is hybrid, fluid, freed from social conventions but lost in the sense that there are no norms within which she fits, and for Hoskote her poetry suggests that she is "looking for anchorage in a potentially hostile landscape" (ix) and battling "the obdurate landscapes that the questor must negotiate" (xix-xx). This is particularly evident in poems such as *vaakh 10*, in which "pastoral images evoke the landscape of rural Kashmir" (Hoskote 156):

> I'm carrying this sack of candy, its knot gone slack on my shoulder.
>
> I took a wrong turn and wasted my day, what's to be done?
>
> I'm lost, my teacher's warning blisters me like a whiplash.
>
> This flock has no shepherd, what's to be done? (12)

It must be remembered, in the post-Christian context, that poetry at the time would likely not have been associated with the religious connotations of 'God' as a shepherd leading a flock. Instead, the visual images in Lalla's *vaakh* are more closely identified

with similar images elsewhere in her poetry, in which she refers to the rearing of goats and cows, and tending to vegetable gardens. Again, she is using bucolic imagery that would be easily accessible to people of her time and context: her teachings are clearly for working-class, rural people rather than those who are privileged by having access to Sanskrit and learning and philosophy. By presenting the self as lost and leaderless, she is also suggesting that the individual's salvation is in her or his own hands.

While Lal Ded is a household name in Kashmir and her *vaakhs* have undoubtedly influenced the Kashmiri identity and sense of self, it must also be remembered that there is little to no evidence to identify what was in her original compositions, and what was redacted by later contributors. As Hoskote observes, "the body of the *vakh* is the only Lalla there is" (xxxvi). Her individual identity is subsumed into the corpus of the Kashmiri identity, and her work remains a collaborative text that both reflects a gendered identity and supersedes it to become representative of the evolution of the Kashmiri identity.

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Another Magic Moment

Sue Matheson

Ukrainian Folkloric Legends: from Gogol to Oleg Stepchenko's *Viy /Forbidden Empire*

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Viy, internationally known also as *Forbidden Empire*, is a dark fantasy film set at the beginning of the eighteenth century in Ukraine, and directed by Oleg Stepchenko, Russian production designer of many theatrical plays as well as director of over 200 music videos and the films *Jacked$* (2004) and *Velvet Revolution* (2005). The film had an initial budget of 27 million dollars, which hampered its production and caused several delays in the filming process. *Viy* was indeed finally released in Russia in 2014 (after seven years since the beginning of filming), where it broke all-time records at the box office and subsequently grossed over 34 million dollars. The film reached the United Kingdom and the United States only a year later.

The narrative is an adaptation from "Viy", a short story by Russian writer Nikolaj Gogol (1809-1852, often called "the father of Russian realism") that was first published in 1933 and then included in the collection *Morgorod*. These stories, set in the eponymous district of Gogol's native Ukraine, juxtapose Gothic and idyllic scenarios to the real historical memories of the Cossacks (the frontier warriors of the Russian Empire), but

they also include local folkloric legends and fairy tales. The ironic description of the characters is typical of Gogol's style, which alternates grotesque and pathetic narrations, especially in his subsequent literary productions such as *Petersburg Tales* (1835-42) and the novel *Dead Souls* (1842). "Viy" narrates about three seminary students, the theologian Khalava, the philosopher Khomas Brutus and the rhetorician Gorobetz, who leave their school for the holidays. While searching for provisions on a country road, the three young boys find hospitality in an old woman's farm. During the night the latter approaches the philosopher with glowing eyes and, after putting a spell on his limbs, attempts to seduce him. After a flight over the surrounding fields, Brutus manages to kill the witch and returns to the city of Kieff. He is later summoned by a village chief to pray over his daughter's dead body for three consecutive nights. Brutus thus discovers that the girl is actually the witch he himself has previously killed, who attempts at his life during the nightmarish nights of the vigil. Victory over evil is granted only through the sacrifice of the protagonist, who dies of fear when attacked by an horde of malevolent creatures summoned by the witch.

The story was adapted into a film in 1967 by directors Georgij Kropačëv and Konstantin Eršov. This production is extremely faithful to the original tale, especially for details such as the witch's shining eyes, the philosopher's methodical lighting of the candles in front of the saints' effigies, the silence reigning in the church and the several realistic images of a rural world, from the herons populating the sky to the songs enjoyed in the taverns. Certainly, the special effects of this first cinematic version of *Viy* cannot be compared with those of the more recent adaptation, particularly for those

scenes that depict the flight of the philosopher with the witch on his back and the manifestations of evil inside the church. However, the grotesque monsters depicted near the end of Kropačëv' and Eršov's film (an array of goblins, demons and different creatures' skeletons) are quite original, especially if we compare them with the creatures presented in the 1960s productions by the English studio Hammer, world's greatest producer of horror films at the time, such as John Gilling's *The Reptile* (1966) and the Frankenstein series starring Peter Cushing (1957-74). We could affirm that, had this film received a worldwide distribution at the time of its release, it could have been listed nowadays along classic horror films of the 1960s, such as Roger Corman's *Tales of Terror* (1962), Roy Ward Baler's *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967) and Mario Bava's *La Maschera del Demonio* (*Black Sunday*, 1960).[1]

Stepchenko's 2014 film relates the events of the cartographer Jonathan Green (Jason Flemyng), who escapes his girlfriend's furious father after being discovered in bed with the young woman and travels towards Transylvania with his eccentric carriage filled with scientific inventions. The epistolary correspondence between Jonathan and his girlfriend offers the occasion for the intervention of the narrator as well as for a visual contrast between the snowy lands of Eastern Europe and the elegant country homes of the early-eighteenth-century high classes. In the latter setting (a visual reminder of Jane Austen's dwellings for some viewers), the woman's father is introduced: Lord Dudley, interpreted by the actual star of the film, a wigged Charles Dance – excellent actor in films such

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1 *La Maschera del Demonio* was partly inspired by Gogol's "Viy" for the Eastern European settings and the presence of an undead witch. The narrative, however, differs greatly from the original text, because it involves also vampirism, the Inquisition and the curse on a family living in a castle. The black and white production presents elegant settings (such as the subterranean vaults and the cemetery), impressive images (such as the witch's face covered with scorpions) and a detailed study of lighting.

as David Fincher's *Alien³* (1992) and Robert Altman's *Gosford Park* (2001) and in the HBO series *Game of Thrones* (2010-). Unfortunately, Dance's role is underplayed and his talent is used only in a few comical scenes which are unnecessary to the general plot of the story. Gogol's original story seems therefore to have been forgotten, because of the film's focus on the cartographer's storyline. The latter is, however, actually inspired by the real person of Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan (1595-1685), a French traveler and cartographer who studied the Ukrainian territories and culture (including the local legends and myths) and published his findings in the volume *Description d'Ukraine* in 1651.

During his journey, Jonathan encounters two of the seminarists mentioned in Gogol's literary tale, who instruct him on the dangers posed by the small village in the middle of the foggy forest where their companion, the philosopher, was killed during the nights of vigil for the dead girl. Their tale is evocative of Gogol's short story, especially in the sequence regarding the philosopher's flight with the witch:

> A strange, oppressive, and yet sweet sensation took possession of his heart. He looked down and saw how the grass beneath his feet seemed to be quite deep and far away; over it there flowed a flood of crystal-clear water [. . .] He saw his own image, and that of the old woman whom he carried on his back, clearly reflected in it.

According to the 2014 film, nine months have passed between the seminarists' experience and Jonathan's. The latter arrives by chance at the cursed village, where the colourful and caricatured inhabitants are afraid of the witch's malediction. This introduces the viewer to the most interesting part of the story, which alternates between slices of the folkloric life in Ukraine (reconstructed with attention to the rituals and the costumes) and the atmosphere of terror suffered by the villagers.

As Pat Torfe has noted, the film seems to repeatedly allude to Stephen Sommer's cartoonish *Van Helsing* (2004), especially for the scenes involving the carriage running through the woods, but, as Jacob Hopkins points out, it also bears many similarities with Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow* (1999). Indeed, both *Viy* and Burton's horror film involve a scientist attempting to explain the supernatural events occurring in a small village in the middle of sinister woods. The scientist is then set against the superstitious villagers who are terrorized by the local monster. In this sense, both films are also crime stories, although Burton has changed the "Schooby-Doo-like" revelation/explanation of the supernatural of Washington Irving's original tale in favour of a story in which magic and the supernatural really exist and are manifest.

Contrary to the original story by Gogol, however, it is science that is opposed to the supernatural rather than religion. Many differences are established between the original text and Stepchenko's film. Among these, the uncanny reverie induced by alcohol is exemplary, when the protagonist believes that the Cossacks in the local tavern transform into deformed creatures attempting to murder him. The subsequent twists of the plot - such as the discovery of a fake monster and the love story between two villagers – rather complicate a narrative that could have been perfectly captivating in its simplicity, as is the case of the original source. The 110 minutes of this too-long production are in fact not sufficient to develop all of its secondary plots and often confuse the viewer, who shall probably think that the sever-year-long production of the film has resulted in an array of

sequences and thematic blocks that do not perfectly fit with each other.

The most interesting sequences of the film are those set in the wooden church with pointy shingles in which the girl's body is laid. The building, reached through a crevice in the musky rocks, literally corresponds to the description offered in Gogol's tale as "black with age and overgrown with green lichen" and standing "in gloomy solitude". These sequences recall many details of Kropačëv' and Eršov's 1967 cinematic adaptation. In both films the much-awaited "Viy" - actually the name of an evil Ukraine demon considered to be an evil genie, but also the king of gnomes - appears to Jonathan after being invoked by the witch: with its long heavy eyelids, it is the only creature that can actually see the protagonist inside the protective circle drawn by a chalk. Furthermore, in both films the dead girl wears a white nightgown, has long black hair and a slow pace. In the more recent production, she is very similar to the malevolent Sadako in Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* (*Ring*, 1998), although her blind glance is actually quite disturbing. Howling wolves and storms of crows complete the sum of horror tropes and conventions, but the film is never really frightening. This is partly due to the fact that the visual effects can be disappointing because their computer-generated imagery is sometimes not realistic at all and therefore they become barely credible.

On other occasions, however, the film is enchanting for its attention to details and pictorial images, whether they portray the garlands lit by burning candles floating gracefully on a river or the girl tightened to a crucifix sinking slowly in the swamp (a sequence that is perfectly juxtaposed to a baptism in a church in England). The sequence portraying two virginal girls apparently drowned in the river shall probably remind viewers of the 1852 *Ophelia* picture by Sir John Everett Millais as well as of the Dead Marshes in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002), with their mist, fires and the armoured corpses beneath the water's surface. Other images, such as the pack of ravenous wolves made of fog that chase Jonathan's carriage before he arrives at the village, or the dead girl's body precipitating through a chasm opening inside of the coffin after the philosopher has attempted to touch her (in a scene alluding to necrophilia) shall remain impressed in the spectator's mind. One of the film's best merits is due to its close-ups and its high frames. The former are often presented through an interposing object or a fissure which frames only part of the character's face and emphasizes his/her sense of entrapment. High frames are instead intended to underline the strongest elemental and thematic contrasts of the sequences, from the burning branches of a tree over the river to the wooden crucifix over the witch's coffin [**Image #1**].

Image #1: Christ's effigies are turned towards the philosopher during the vigil in Oleg Stepchenko's Viy (courtesy of Russian Film Group and Marins Group Entertainment, 2014).

Jason Flemyng – who has been very admirable in various roles throughout his career, from a gentlemanly and suffering Dr. Jekyll in Stephen Norrington's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003) to a despicable King Acrisius in Louis Leterrier's *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and the scarred evil Russian teleporter in *X-Men: First Class* (2011) - is not always convincing in the cartographer's role. On the other hand, worth mentioning is the performance by Andrey Igorevich Smolyakov, the village's local priest Paisiy, who attempts repeatedly to fight against the devil's presence and holds on perennially to a cross whilst being apparently terrorized by the apparitions of tormented sinners. As viewers are later revealed, he is actually a sadist torturer who preys on the villagers' fears and superstitions and initiates a witch hunt in order to execute his own personal revenge against a local girl.

Stepchenko's film could thus be considered as an inventive but unfaithful sequel to Gogol's story. Those viewers who are interested in a reproduction of the original source shall be gravely disappointed. On the other hand, in spite of its many defects, such as the imprecise narrative and the unsynchronized English dubbing, *Viy* is a pleasant film, whose main merit lies in the pictorial images and the evocation of a past rural world filled with legends and fairy tales, a simpler lifestyle in which superstition imprisons the mind but fantasy can release it.

Filmography

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers. Dir. Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2002.

La Maschera del Demonio. Dir. Bava. Galatea Film and Jolly Film, 1960.

Sleepy Hollow. Dir. Tim Burton. Paramount: 1999.

Viy. Dir. Konstantin Yershov and Georgi Kropachyoy. LUTHE, 1967.

Viy. Dir. Oleg Stepchenko. Russian Film Group and Marins Group Entertainment, 2014.

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Sunset Foxgloves

Sue Matheson

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