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Conceivability

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Abstract:

For various reasons grounded in their articulation and conceptualization, objects and contentions can be inconceivable. Proper conceptualizing requires an adequate apprehension of meaning. But while there indeed are objects and contentions that are inconceivable to given individuals and groups, we (obviously) cannot give any concrete examples of items inconceivable to ourselves.

Keywords: absurdity, conceivability, conceptualization, inconceivability, meaning, possibilities

1. Conceiving facts

For the most part we do not make facts: generally they are just "out there," beyond our reach and control. All that we can do is to think about them. But alike in making and in thinking about them we must have a conception of the facts.

The human mind has two principal cognitive powers: to image possibilities and to adjudge realities, enabling it to deal with fact and fiction alike. In a way possibility-management is the more fundamental. After all if its's not possible then it can't possibly be real, and if it's not conceivable by us then we can't possibly accept it as actual. (All this is not, however, to say that if we cannot conceive of it that it can't be actual—reality and possibility alike can hold very big surprises for us.)

Conceivability is a matter of the possibilities that people are in a position to contemplate given the concepts and beliefs at their disposal. It relates to both facts and fictions. A four-side triangle is inconceivable, one that is small and red is not. The concepts and beliefs at our disposal set our conceptual horizons. They delimit the range of our cognitive domain beyond which there lies what is, for us, mere *terra incognita*.

Epistemologists have focused on our knowledge of the real and have pretty well left possibility to the logicians. But the logicians have left the epistemology of possibility to others: their concern has been with what actually *is* possible, and have omitted concern for how we conduct the applicative business of leaning and reasoning about it. The present discussion will offer some comments on this rather neglected theme.

Conceivability calls for being available as an object of meaningful thought. It is not a matter of imagining or picturing. One cannot picture or imagine thousand-sided polygon but can certainly

conceive in describing it and supposing its possibility. Conceivability is sometimes mis-equated to understandability based on an insufficient knowledge. ("I cannot conceive how she came to realize that he disliked her—he was such a good actor." Here you can certainly conceive of its being so: it is just that you don't know how it came to be.)

Some conceptions have to be formed systematically—they ramify out into related issues whose co-understanding they presuppose. To have a proper conception of a propeller one needs some understanding of the technology of early airplanes; To have a proper conception of an electron one need some understanding of subatomic physics.

As construed here, conceivability is the prospect of entertaining something as a meaningful possibility. Two sorts of items can be inconceivable to a person: things and facts. A thing is effectively inconceivable to someone if its definitive features are wholly outside that person's experience. (A Polynesian cannot conceive of solid water (i.e., ice), Aristotle could not conceive of X-rays.) A fact is inconceivable to someone when they have totally unshakable belief in its contrary. (Pigs that can fly like bats or bees are inconceivable to most of us.) For individuals the personally inconceivable is either (or both) foreign to established experience or contrary to absolutely certain conviction.

The truths we contemplate may well not actually *characterize* reality, but rather be related to its constitution in more complex and indirect ways. For example we can have:

- negative truths ("No cats talk.")
- vague truths ("He looked thirtyish.")
- inexact truths ("It looks something like this.")
- approximate truth ("the table is roughly 32 inches wide.")
- indefinite truths ("She looked pleased.")
- possibilistic truths ("It might rain.")
- impressionistic truths ("They were lucky.")
- metaphorical truths ("It was a veritable bonanza.")

No doubt such truths will be so in virtue of what the facts are. But they certainly do not *characterize* the real facts. Thus truths can be indefinite. But reality cannot; It must be concrete (rather than an abstract), definite (rather than vague, approximate, etc.), and positive (rather than negative), whereas truths need not be any of these. Thus truths do not *correspond* to what the realities are, although their being truths is (loosely) dependent upon it of that. All truths have their "truth-makers" in reality—that is, there is (and must be) a "basis in concrete fact" for every truth—an aspect of reality in virtue of which that truth is true.

To *characterize* reality—to "*agree*" with it—would be to give an accurate representation of it that is correct and complete in all relevant detail. Thus only a detailed (precise, exact, accurate) account of something can actually correspond to the reality of it. And this is something which our

language-framed statements about the real—however true—almost invariably fail to achieve. An account that is vague, imprecise, approximate, fuzzy, or the like may well be *true* but nevertheless not be accurately consonant with it. The truth in general falls well short of the detailed accuracy that would be required here. No doubt the truth is *grounded* in reality, and concurs with it. But it certainly need not and often will not *correspond* to it.

Seeing that our true contentions regarding reality are generally indefinite (vague, ambiguous, metaphorical, etc.) whereas reality itself is always definite (precise, detailed, concrete), it follows that those truths of ours do not—cannot—give an adequate (faithful, accurate, precisely correct) account or representation of reality. It is a merciful fact of life in human communication that truth can be told without the determinative detail of precision, accuracy, and the like, required for an accurate representation of the facts. Reality's detail involves more than we can generally manage. We can achieve the truth and nothing but the truth, but the whole truth about something is always beyond our grasp.

There was a time when it was fashionable for English Hegelian philosophers such as Bernard Bosanquet to say that only the accurate truth is the real truth and that the real truth of things must be altogether exact and fully detailed. But this contention would involve us in critical errors of omission regarding reality. Thus we would not be able to declare the truth that grass is green or the sky is blue. And moreover we would lose the crucial principles that the logico-conceptual consequences of the truth must also be true, seeing that the inference from "There are 48 people in the room" to its vague logical consequence "There are several dozen people in the room" would now not qualify as correct, since the later would not qualify as a truth. The truth is one thing, and the *precise* truth or the *exact* truth quite another.[1] Our truths need surely not convey the detailed nature of the realities that make them so. But in the end we cannot come to cognitive grips with realty save via our true acceptance about it.

2. Inconceivability

Certain considerations may be inconceivable to someone owing to having mistaken ideas on the subject or because certain matters do not fall within the range of their experience. This sort of subjective (person-relative) inconceivability is not at issue here. We are here concerned only with inconceivability relative to meaningful conceptions and correct convictions, matters inconceivable on the basis of correct and adequate information.

And there is also the impersonal or generic conceivability characteristic of the typical and representative members of the group. Generic inconceivability is not a matter of what a particular individual can manage in thought but of what can be managed in rational thought as such. Items that are inconceivable include a greatest integer, a fastest motion, a largest circle—thing whose very identification include a contradiction in terms. But either way personal or generic, conceivability requires experiential access and consonant belief.

We must, however, distinguish between subjectively person-relative conceivability, which is a function of a particular individuals knowledge and objective or culture-relative conceivability which is a function of language and cognitive state of the art. Both alike set limits but they differ in that the former are personal and the latter societal. From the theoretical point of view it is the latter that are paramount, and our focus will be on groups rather than individuals, and principles rather than people.

There are three principal levels of inconceivability/conceivability:

I. *Grammatical*. Meaningless gibberish: having not informative sense ("Twas brillig . . .") Violation: Meaninglessness.

II. *Logico-Conceptual.* At odds with what is to be seen as absolutely necessary. ("A day without hours; a four-sided triangle; a sphere without a center.") Violation: Incoherence.

III. *Factual.* Inconsistent with what is seen as a patent and necessary fact. "A talking tree; a brass banana." Violation: Unacceptability.

Rather different modes of necessity/possibility are at issues with II and III. No. II deals with absolute or logico-conceptual necessity/possibility (□ and ◊). This is the way in which it is necessary for triangles to have vertices or a bird to have wings. By contrast, III is the way in which it is necessary for animals to secure nourishment in order to survive or for fires to have oxygen in order to burn. These envision the sort of necessity involved in accommodating to the workings of the actual world (⊡ and ◈). In this sense of the term the basic laws of nature provides the basis for necessity.

One cannot or course give an illustrative example of something that is in principle inconceivable because presenting it defeats the very purpose.

And inconceivable theses cannot sensibly be maintained as informative truths, they can only be maintained, if at all, as suppositions or hypothesis. In failing to make tenable assertions and convey a meaningful message they fail to fall under the descriptivity of correct/incorrect (and similarly probable, plausible, and the like). Its unintelligibility precludes it from qualifying for those evaluative assessments which—like the proceeding—are applicable only to propositions able to make a coherent claim of some sort. And only meaningful propositions (claims) can have a truth status—be it actually or even by assumption or supposition. Incomprehensible (and thereby meaningless) discourse cannot even be assured to be true or false. Its lack of truth status is unconditional and unavoidable.

In actual fact claims to the realization of something inconceivable are always untenable and false. However here as elsewhere error is possible. Someone ill-informed can certainty think (mistakenly) that something inconceivable is real. It is clear that something can be acceptable to one person and not to another. Thus when one person is better informed than another they can differ

in regard to conceivability—either way. If *x* does not realize that squaring the circle is impossible he mistakenly conceive of someone (perhaps himself) having solved the problem. On the other hand if *x* does not realize that black swans are possible, he may mistakenly regard the prospect of a black-swan dinner as inconceivable.

3. Meaninglessness

Logic deals with the truth-relationships among propositions. But before there is truth there must be meaning. And the *bête noir* in this regard is meaninglessness.

Meaninglessness is a malfunction of communication, something that results when our apparatus of communication does not manage to do its intended job.

There are several importantly distinct ways in which a statement can be meaningless, although all of them are alike in basing what is said on a presupposition that is simply false.

One mode of meaninglessness results from asserting absolute gibberish. "The number three ate yellow." We cannot even begin to make sense of this. This is *assertoric* meaninglessness, the failure to make any intelligible contention whatsoever. The mistaken presupposition here is that meaninglessness can be achieved simply by stringing words together grammatically. The senselessness of such gibberish that one can make neither heads nor tails of is the most drastic mode of meaningless. All of its other modes are at least minimally intelligible in that what is being said is sufficiently intelligible that one can comprehend the senselessness of it.

A prime form of such meaninglessness is *categorial* in nature and consists in ascribing to something a certain type some feature that items of its category simply cannot have, as for example assigning a physical location to numbers (one cannot position the number three at the North Pole) or ascribing a color to obligations (one cannot have a yellow duty toward one's children).

A further form of meaninglessness is *conceptual* in making statements that conflict with the established meaning of words. Thus consider such statements as "John's spouse is unmarried" or "Two's double is an odd number."

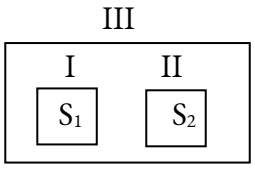
Then too, meaninglessness obtains when any attempt to class a statement either as true or as false results in failure because a contradiction results either way. This is *alethic* meaninglessness, the failure to have any determinate truth status. The classically paradoxical self-contradictory thesis "This statement is false" is an example.

Yet another mode of meaninglessness is the *delusional* which presupposes as existent something that just is not there. Examples are such statements as "The present king of France is bald" or "Noplace is the capital of Antarctica."

A further pathway to meaninglessness is by purporting the existence of something that not only does not but actually cannot exist. "The prime number between five and seven." or "The product of three multiplied by an even divisor of seven" are examples. This is *referential* meaninglessness, rooted in the in-principle unavoidable nonexistence something that the statements purport to characterize.

Why is it that meaninglessness statements can and should be dismissed from serious consideration without much further ado? We do so for reasons of *cognitive economy*. We thereby spare ourselves from any further fruitless effort to deal with the matter.

Are self-contradictory statements meaningless? It all depends. Individually self-contradictory statements are indeed meaningless. There is nothing we can do with such statements as "The pair of them consisted of three items." But by way of contrast consider the example of the three boxes I, II, III:



Now let it be that that S_1 is:

The statement in Box II is true, but some statement in Box III is false.

Suppose S_1 is true. Then so (according to S_1 itself) is S_2. But with S_1 and S_2 both true, all the statements in Box III are true, so S_1 is false. Since S_1-true entails S_1-false, S_1 is self-contradictory and thus false.

S_1's falsity means that not-S_1 will be true. But by the content of S_1 we have:

$\sim S_1$ iff $\sim S_2$ v $[S_1 \,\&\, S_2]$

Since S_1 & S_2 is inescapably false by the reasoning indicated above, we have: $\sim S_1$ iff $\sim S_2$. So the falsity of S_1 constrains that of S_2. That is, S_2 will be false *irrespective of what it is that S_2 asserts*. But this is absurd and we can make no stable sense of this paradoxical situation.

It must be stressed, however, that those individual sentences S_1 and S_2 are not really meaningless. After all, their meaning is essential to the derivation of the paradox. Moreover, if you change one of them, the other can become perfectly meaningful. What is meaningless here is the whole complex—the entirety of what is being asserted. The difficulty of meaningful construal is collective not distributive. Individually regarded the meaningfulness of those statements is incontestable.

A very special sort of purported lack of "meaning" is at issue with the "empirical meaninglessness" purported by the logical positivists of the 1930s. For them, a proposition was "meaningless" in the sense of failing to admit of observational disinformation. In adopting this line, they thought they could demolish traditional metaphysics by dismissing it as meaningless nonsense. Unfortunately, for this program, it came to light all too soon that a whole host of perfectly meaningful scientific statements would have to be classed as empirically meaningless, so that the baby was being thrown out along with the bath water. For it is clear that discursive verification will

be unavailable with statements about the remote past or future, or such generalizations as "*X* will never happen" or "Caesar would have left the Rubicon uncrossed had he wanted to" and many other sorts of statements whose meaning is intelligible and whose truth is plausible.[2]

It is tempting to dismiss as meaningless those claims that we simply do not understand—to blame the message, as it were, for our own lack of comprehension. Many or most of us would not hesitate to adopt this line in relation to the explanation that Chinese adepts of acupuncture use in explaining their practice. And while such an argument may well be appropriate, one should nevertheless proceed with caution in these matters. For it is one of the most fundamental facts of epistemology that to those who proceed at a lesser level of understanding the proceedings of their higher-level interlocations are bound to seem like magic, and that the discussion promising technical experts unable seems gibberish to the uninitiated.

As already noted, meaninglessness is a mode of malfunction. And as such it is a phenomenon that is both inevitable and instructive. It is inevitable because anything that can be used can also be misused. And it is instructive because in looking to the boundaries between the potential pursue of an instrumentality we shed light on the nature of its proper use.

4. The corrigibility of conceptions

It must be stressed that these deliberations regarding cognitive inadequacy are less concerned with the correctness of our particular claims about real things than with our characterizing conceptions of them. And in this connection it deserves stressing that there is a significant and substantial difference between a true or correct statement or contention on the one hand, and a true or correct conception on the other. To make a true contention about a thing we merely need to get one particular fact about it straight. To have a true conception of the thing, on the other hand, we must get all of the important facts about it straight. And it is clear that this involves a certain normative element—namely what the "important" or "essential" facets of something are.

Anaximander of Miletus presumably made many correct contentions about the sun in the fifth century B.C.—for example, that its light is brighter than that of the moon. But Anaximander's conception of the sun (as the flaming spoke of a great wheel of fire encircling the earth) was totally wrong.

To assure the correctness of our conception of a thing we would have to be sure—as we very seldom are—that nothing further can possibly come along to upset our view of just what its important features are and just what their character is. Thus, the qualifying conditions for true conceptions are far more demanding than those for true claims. With a correct contention about a thing, all is well if we get the single relevant aspect of it right, but with a correct conception of it we must gel the essentials right—we must have an overall picture that is basically correct. And this is something we generally cannot ascertain, if only because we cannot say with secure confidence what actually is really important or essential before the end of the proverbial day.

With conceptions—unlike propositions or contentions—incompleteness means incorrectness, or at any rate presumptive incorrectness. Having a correct or adequate conception of something as the object it is requires that we have all the important facts about it right. But since the prospect of discovering further important facts can never be eliminated, the possibility can never be eliminated that matters may so eventuate that we may ultimately (with the wisdom of hindsight) acknowledge the insufficiency or even inappropriateness of our earlier conceptions. A conception based on incomplete data must be assumed to be at least partially incorrect. If we can decipher only half an inscription, our conception of its overall content must be largely conjectural—and thus must be presumed to contain an admixture of error. When our information about something is incomplete, obtaining an overall picture of the thing at issue becomes a matter of theorizing, or guesswork, however sophisticatedly executed. And then we have no alternative but to suppose that this overall picture falls short of being wholly correct in various (unspecifiable) ways. With conceptions, falsity can thus emerge from errors of omission as well as those of commission, resulting from the circumstance that the information at our disposal is merely incomplete, rather than actually false (as would have to be the case with contentions).

To be sure, an inadequate or incomplete *description* of something is not thereby false—the statements we make about it may be perfectly true as far as they go. But an inadequate or incomplete *conception* of a thing is ipso facto one that we have no choice but to presume to be incorrect as well,[3] seeing that where there is incompleteness we cannot justifiably take the stance that it relates only to inconsequential matters and touches notion important. Accordingly, our conceptions of particular things are always to be viewed not just as cognitively *open-ended* but as *corrigible* as well.

We are led back to the thesis of the great idealist philosophers (Spinoza, Hegel, Bradley, Royce) that human knowledge inevitably falls short of "perfected science" (the Idea, the Absolute), and must be presumed deficient both in its completeness and its correctness.[4]

5. A "logic" of inconceivability

The notion of a "logic of inconceivability" would seem to be a contradiction in terms. For logic looks to what must (or cannot) be true if something related is accepted (or rejected) as such. It deals in relationships among claims in the face of their actual status as true or false—be it actual of assumptive. Any discussion which by virtue of inconceivability lacks a definite truth-status falls outside logic as traditionally conceived.

There are, however, some cognate issues. To facilitate our deliberations we shall assume that our person variables *x*, *y*, *z* etc. will range over limited—that is, finite—intelligences at the level of homo sapiens. And we shall adopt the convention that:

Cp abbreviates "*p* is conceivable," that is it is possible for a human of ordinary intelligence to access the meaning of *p*; and *Cxp* abbreviates "*p* is conceivable to *x*."

Given that *Cxp* abbreviates "x's having a meaningful conception of *p*," we will have it that:

Cp = *p* is conceivable = $\Diamond(\exists x)Cxp$

And note that this neither states nor entails $(\exists x)\Diamond Cxp$. The conceivability at issue need not be realizable by some actual person. Also, when one can conceive of *p* one can conceive of not-*p* as well, with the result that *Cxp* iff *Cx*~*p*. (And note, moreover, that by using $\Diamond$ rather than $\diamondsuit$ in equating *Cp* with $\Diamond(\exists x)Cxp$ we take purely theoretical rather than effectively practical conceivability into view.)

An assertion may be made with or without affirmative intent. In the former (deliberately affirmative) case the object is to endorse what the assertion maintains, in the second (merely deliberative) case the object is only to pose the assertion as an item of consideration.

In the context of the present deliberations the assertions represented by the variables *p*, *q, r*, etc. are also to encompass those made in the merely deliberative rather than substantively affirmative mode. An assertion so made is not being stated as a true affirmation, but merely put forward for consideration. And since the range of our assertion-variables, *p*, *q, r*, etc. encompasses conceivable proposition in general, so that assertions come to be coordinate with conceivability rather than actual truth. In the context of the present deliberations we thus do not have the Tarski equivalence:

p iff $|p| = T$.

Instead all we have is:

If *p* then *Cp*, though not always conversely, since we have:

$Cp \leftrightarrow \Diamond(\exists x)Cxp$

There now follows:

$\sim Cp \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall x)\sim Cxp$ and thereby also $\sim Cp \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall x)\sim Cx\sim p$

Accordingly, that which is inherently inconceivable must be so of necessity for anyone.

It transpires that any claims whose prerequisites or consequence are inconceivable will themselves qualify as such. Thus $p \vdash q$ and *Cp*, then *C*(*q*); and also if $p \vdash q$ and *Cq*, then ~*Cq*. (As usual, $\vdash$ here represents logico-conceptual entailment.) Moreover impossible or impossibility-entailing claims are not conceivable:

If $p \vdash q$ & $\sim\Diamond q$, then ~*Cxp*

These principles provide for the rudiments of a quasi-logic of conceivability.

6. Inconceivable possibilities

But are there actually—can there really be—such things as inconceivable objects, facts, or possibilities? Of course one cannot provide examples. But it is clear on general principles that such items must exist. For we humans have to conduct our conceptualizing business by means of language. And more linguistic formulation is a recursive process—explanatory claims for a finite vocabulary via finite grammatical principles—we can realize at most a denumerable number of experience. But there is no good reason to think that items, facts, and possibilities are not similarly limited. So—as in Musical Chairs—when the music of language stops there will yet remain unaccommodated possibilities. The range of what is theoretically conceivable outnumbers the reach of what can possibly be realized.

And so the idea of identificatory vagrancy considered in the preceding chapter comes into play at this point. We can conceive and indeed be convinced *that* there is an integer no-one ever specifically thinks of; but of course we cannot conceive *of* this integer as the specific individual it is.

Moreover actually conceiving of things is something personal and potentially idiosyncratic. But conceivability as such is something impersonal and objective inherent in the nature of the issues involved and the possibilities of conceptual operation. And even as a chasm may be bridgeable without ever being bridged, so an idea or circumstance may be conceivable without ever being conceived of. Conceivability is a matter of the possibilities of conceptualization: what actually happens within the contingent eventuations of the real world is irrelevant. What individuals can manage to conceive of in practice is a fraction of their range of experience. But what is conceivable in principle is something above and beyond the capabilities of individuals.

But would there actually be a bridgeable chasm if no bridge were ever built—and indeed if the very idea of a bridge were never even conceived of? The answer is of course affirmative. The domain of possibility— possibilities of bridging and conceiving included—is independent of and detached from what actually happens in the world. The bridges we build and the concepts we entertain are products of our doings. But the associated possibilities of things are independent of us. Of course the contemplation and entertainment of these possibilities is a matter of reality and actualization. But not so with the possibilities themselves that are at issue. It is noteworthy and significant that we possess a faculty of imaginative thought that enable us to enter a realm of abstract possibilities whose being we do not produce and whose features we discover rather than create. Like the real word itself, the realm of possibility that lies open to our conception is not of our making but is an independent manifold that we can contemplate but not produce. What we *do* conceive of is up to us, but what we *can* conceive of is not.

Appendix

An assertion may be made with or without affirmative intent. In the former (deliberatively affirmative) case the object is to endorse what the assertion maintains, in the second (merely deliberative) case the object is to make it an object of consideration.

In the context of the present deliberations the assertions represented by the variables *p*, *q, r*, etc. are to include statements made in the merely deliberative rather than specifically affirmative mode. An assertion so stated is not being denied as a true affirmation but merely put forward for consideration. In this context the Tarski equivalence

$$p \text{ iff } |p| = T$$

does not hold. For this deliberative contention may turn out to be inconceivable and meaningless.

Any statement that has a definite truth value as *T* or *F* (rather than an indecisive *tertium datur*) must be conceivable, and conversely.

Thus

(1) $Cp \text{ iff } (|p| = T \text{ v } |p| = F)$

But suppose we were to adopt the Tarski Principle that

$$p \text{ iff } |p| = T \text{ (and correspondingly } \sim p \text{ iff } |p| = F)$$

Then of course (1) will come to

$$Cp \text{ iff } (p \text{ v } \sim p)$$

This would entail $(\forall p)Cp$. In view of our determination to accept even meaningless claims as objects of consideration this result is inacceptable. Thus the implementability of this result betokens a determination but it postulates that the present diagram be limited to conceivable propositions. In the context of the present deliberations the Tarski Principle must be put into suspension.

Endnotes:

1. For relevant material see also the author's *Metaphysics: The Key Issues From a Realistic Perspective* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006), pp. 101-104.
2. See C. G. Hempel, "Problems and Changes in the Empiricists Criterion of Meaning." *Révue Internationale de Philosophie*, vol. 4 (1950), pp. 41-63.
3. Compare F. H. Bradley's thesis: "Error is truth, it is partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete" *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), p. 169.
4. The author's *Empirical Inquiry* (Totowa NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1982) discusses further relevant issues.

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Wittgenstein's "Private Language Argument" and the Limits of Language

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Abstract:

After explaining the "private language argument" (PLA) centered in para. 258 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, the paper first clarifies Wittgenstein's notion of criteria. The paper then discusses the irony in Wittgenstein's apparent objection to putative private languages that they have no criteria for the private use of words. It is then argued that PLA, viewed from a logical perspective, is fallacious. The paper then shows how there could be scientific *standards* (not *criteria* in Wittgenstein's technical sense) for the existence of private mental states and argues that Wittgenstein did *not* argue that this is impossible. The paper then argues that the conclusion of PLA is a tautology. The paper then argues that since the conclusion of PLA is a tautology, Wittgenstein would be correctly unmoved by any of the aforementioned objections to PLA. Finally, the paper refutes the objection that there is an inconsistency in the present interpretation and shows how resolving this objection shows that Wittgenstein's PLA is to be understood in the context of his longstanding interest in setting *the limits of language*.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, private language, private objects, criteria, symptoms, limits of language

> Now, what about the language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand?
> *Philosophical Investigations* (256)[1]

A "private language" can *only* be understood by the person who uses it (Kenny 1973, 179; McGinn 1984, 48). One asserts that there is a private language in cases where a person is claimed to have *direct* access, denied to others, to their own mental states (Ayer 1968, 253-54, 258). Descartes (1969 I, 9) appears to be committed to a private language. Dejnozka (1995) sees anticipations of it in Lock and Frege. Fodor (1979) holds that we *must* acknowledge a private language of thought. However, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (hereafter *PI*), the seminal work in his "later philosophy,"[2] argues that private languages are impossible. Call this Wittgenstein's "Private Language Argument" or PLA! The paper argues that PLA is fallacious but that its conclusion is a tautology.

§ I gives a sketch of PLA. § II discusses PLA's notion of "criteria". § III discusses an irony in PLA's objection to private languages. § IV argues that PLA, viewed logically, is fallacious. § V argues that there *can* be objective *evidence* for the existence of private objects. § VI argues that the

conclusion of PLA is tautologous. § VII explains why Wittgenstein would, correctly, be unmoved by the aforementioned objections. § VIII argues that PLA is properly understood in the light of Wittgenstein's longstanding view that there are limits to language.

I. A Summary of Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument

> Wittgenstein's fundamental point is that ... in a putative private language ... there is ... no check on whether the words which only I (the speaker) understand are being employed with a constant meaning .... because [I] only [have] an impression of constancy to go on, which does not entail that any rule is being consistently followed, ...
> McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (48)

One would not normally claim that an ordinary person N's colour-language is a private language because ordinary people live in a community of people who talk about colours. If members of N's linguistic community observe N describe green objects as red, they can correct N. One normally asserts a private language only in those cases in which a person is alleged to enjoy a *direct* acquaintance with their own mental states and unavailable to others. That is, whereas N is directly aware of her own toothache, her friend, M, can only know of her toothache *indirectly*, if at all. Similarly, M is directly acquainted with his own toothache and to which N can only have indirect access. On this view, people share a common world of public objects, like trees, about which they discourse relatively unproblematically, but each harbors a private world mental states with which each alone is directly acquainted. Thus, only N really knows what she *means* by "toothache". Further, since no one other than oneself can be directly aware of one's mental states, each person is the ultimate *authority* on the facts about their own mental states. As Wittgenstein puts it: "Even if no one knows what I call 'toothache', at least I know" (*LSD*, 295; See *Z*, 536). Thus, if N wishes to set up a private language to record the history of her toothaches, she is in the perfect authoritative position to do so.

Wittgenstein argues that this is an illusion. The core of PLA is stated in *PI* (para. 258),

> I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write a sign in a calendar for every day [when] I have the sensation. ... [A] definition of the sign cannot be formulated. But ... I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. ... I speak or write the sign down, and ... concentrate my attention on the sensation—and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. But what is this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of the sign. Well, this is done by [concentrating] my attention; for in this way I impress upon myself the connection between the sign and the sensation. But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connection right in the future. But in the present case, I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about "right".

Wittgenstein has sensation S, which he calls "S", and determines to record in his diary every later date on which he has this sensation. In order to ensure that he uses this private language

correctly, he *concentrates* on S to make sure that he *remembers* the connection between his sensation and sign "S". If S reappears the next day, he will write "S" in his diary on that date.[3]

PI (258) disparages this procedure for setting up the private language as a "ceremony". His objection is that this method for establishing the connection between the sensation and the sign does *not* establish any *criterion* for the correct use of the sign. For, if he later *misremembers* the sign-sensation correlation, he has no way of determining that his memory is incorrect. This problem does not arise for a public language. Suppose Wittgenstein sees a green patch, which he calls "G", and decides to write down in his diary every time he subsequently sees that same colour. He later sees a red patch and records "G" in his diary. His friend, observing the mistake, can correct him. The possibility of this kind of independent check is what is lacking for a private sensation-language. That is why Wittgenstein concludes that in a putative private language, "whatever is going to seem right to me is right", which means that "we can't talk about 'right'": "The balance on which impressions are to be weighed is not the impression of a balance" (*PI*, 259). Since a genuine language requires standards for the right use of words, and since a private language does not permit such standards, a "private language" is not a genuine language.

II. Wittgenstein's Notion of Criteria

> Philosophers have notoriously found it difficult in making sense of Wittgenstein's remarks about criteria.
> Baker and Hacker, *Scepticism, Rules and Language* (111)

Given the importance of the notion of a criterion to PLA, it is surprising that Wittgenstein takes such little care in defining it. Albritton's account of criteria is discussed in the present section. Cavell's alternative account is discussed in the replies to objections in § VII. Albritton (1968, 232-33) remarks that the only place in Wittgenstein's published work in which he "gives anything like a definition" is in the *Blue Book*, which he did not, apparently, hold in high esteem and which he intended primarily as a set of notes for his Cambridge students (Rhees 1965, vii). The *Blue Book*, together with the *Brown Book*, which latter Wittgenstein preferred, were later published together as The *Blue and Brown Books* (hereafter, *BB*) (Rhees 1965, vii). The definition of a criterion in the *Blue Book* boils down to the view that the criterion of X's being F is "a logically sufficient condition" of X's being F (Albritton 1968, 234). However, there are places in the *Brown Book* which suggest that the criterion of X's being F must be a logically necessary *and* sufficient condition of X's being F (*BB*, 121-122; Albritton 1968, 235).

One can further clarify this notion by reference to *BB's* distinction between criteria and symptoms. If science *defines* angina as an inflammation of the throat caused by bacteria Y, then an inflamed throat is merely a symptom of angina, but the criterion of someone's having angina is the presence of Y in the blood (*BB*, 24-25). That someone with an inflamed throat has angina is only a "hypothesis", but that someone with Y in the blood has angina is a "tautology" (*BB*, 25). *BB* does not mean that it is a tautology like those of formal logic, but in the ordinary sense in which something

is a tautology if it "says the same thing twice over". The connection between the phenomenon and the criterion is "logical" while that between the phenomenon and its symptoms is contingently discovered by experience.

Albritton (1968, 236) stresses that by characterizing *BB's* notion of a "criterion" for X's being F as the notion of "a logically necessary and sufficient condition" for X's being F, *BB* does *not* mean that the "defining criterion" correspond to a *real essence*. Rather, *BB's* (114) criteria are rooted in the fact that people "accept", "adopt" or "apply" certain "conventions" in their uses of words (Albritton, 1968, 236). It is crucial that these criteria are *public*. The *Blue Book* (1-2) *begins* with the discussion how "we" use words and how words are used in "our" language. The *Brown Book* (77) *begins* with the contrast between the way the word "brick" is used in one of Wittgenstein's "language games" and the way it is used "in *our* language [LW's italics]". The emphasis on how "I" view the world in Wittgenstein's earlier *TLP* (5.631), is replaced in *BB* by an emphasis on how "we" use words in "our" public language. That is, *BB* understands "philosophical grammar" as the "grammar" of a *public* language.

Finally, *BB* (9, 61-62, 69, 87, 91, 107-115, 134, 137, 171) stresses that what counts as the criteria for X's being F does so only in certain "contexts" or "circumstances." Wittgenstein's *BB* and his subsequent works are much more sensitive to the *context-dependency* of human language than *TLP* had been. To take one obvious example, X's holding their jaw and writhing on the couch may be a *criterion* of X's having a toothache in normal circumstances, but not if the event takes place in a play or as part of a prank. For *BB*, the criterion of X's being F does not consist in some timeless essence fixed once and for all. Rather, one can only ask about the criterion of X's being F *in certain circumstances*.

Although Albritton's (1968, 243) remark that most of the ways Wittgenstein talks about criteria in *BB* are "almost entirely suppressed" in Wittgenstein's subsequent works is an overstatement, there is some truth to it. Albritton goes in the same passage to explain that the "dominant conception" in Wittgenstein's post-*BB* works is that a criterion for somethings being X is that it is "something by which" in certain circumstances "one may be justified in saying that the thing" is X "and by whose absence" in those circumstances "one may be justified in saying that the thing is not" X. However, *BB*'s talk of *sufficient or necessary and sufficient conditions* is absent from *PI* and replaced by the idea that the criterion of X's having a toothache might, in certain circumstances, simply be a kind of behaviour, like holding one's jaw and writhing on the couch. Although *BB* recognized the importance of the circumstances in which criteria are applied, Wittgenstein's *PI* recognizes that a full appreciation of the *context-dependency* of criteria destroys the idea that criteria for something's being X might consist in necessary and/or sufficient conditions. However, *PI* retains the idea that a criterial connection is "logical" because *PI* still makes a distinction between criteria and symptoms (Albritton 1968, 244). The logically necessary and sufficient conditions for X's being F in *BB* is replaced in *PI* by the notion of someone's being *justified*, on broadly logical grounds, to *say* that X is F, where the "semantic ascent" (Quine 2013, 249ff) from

the idea of criteria for X's being F to the idea of criteria that *justify* one in certain circumstances to *say* that X is F, is crucial to *PI's* new formulation.

It is because Wittgenstein's notion of criteria is constantly evolving that he only comes close to *defining* it in a work that he disparages in a letter to Russell. Since one must glean its relevant meaning in *PI* from a handful of examples, Kripke (1982, 99) wisely declines to attempt to settle "the finer exegetical points in Wittgenstein's notion of a criterion," but only to sketch the key points of that notion that are relevant to his own project. The same strategy is followed here. For what remains constant from the beginning is that these broadly *logical* criteria are part of a *public* language that must be applied in the correct *circumstances*.

III. What Need for a Criterion?

> What is the criterion for the redness of an image? For me, when it is someone's else's image: what he says and does. For myself, when it is my image: nothing.
> *Philosophical Investigations* (377)

Wittgenstein's demand in PLA for a criterion concerning the correct use of his private sensation words is ironic since he regularly chastises philosophers for demanding reasons in many cases. Since he states in the first paragraph of *PI* that "Explanations come to an end somewhere," this general recurrent idea must be of some importance to him. (See also *Z*, 313-315) An analogous theme appears in his philosophy of mathematics (*RFM*, II, 78). But if one can get by without explanations in such very different cases, why should one need a criterion for how one uses words in a private language? One might reply that an *explanation* for how one uses words is not the same thing as a *criterion* for how one uses words—and that is true. However, multiple variations on this theme are pervasive throughout his "later philosophy". At *PI* (211), referring to our reasons for continuing certain patterns as we do, he writes, "Well, how do I know [how to continue the pattern]?—If that means "Have I reasons?" the answer is: my reasons will soon give out. And then I will act without reasons." At *PI* (217), referring to the question how we obey rules, he writes: "If I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'." At *OC* (78, 253, 612) he states that our practice of giving reasons must come to an end. At *OC* (148), in response to a question how he is certain that he can get up from a chair, he answers: "There is no why. This is how I act". At *OC* (164), in response to a question whether one needs to do tests to determine whether objects continue to exist when unobserved, he replies that testing must come to an end somewhere. At *OC* (624-25), in response to a question whether one can be certain that this colour is called "green" in English, he replies that our rules come to an end somewhere and adds that "A doubt that did not come to an end would not be a doubt".

Thus, when Wittgenstein demands a criterion for how one uses one's private words, *why should one not reply that criteria come to an end somewhere*? If Wittgenstein replies that surely one needs a reason for applying private words as one does, why should one not reply that reasons come to an end somewhere? If Wittgenstein is asked how one can be certain that one has identified

sensation S properly, why should one not reply: "There is no why. This is how I act"? When Wittgenstein points out that one can raise doubts about how one applies one's private words, why should one not reply that "A doubt that did not come to an end would not be a doubt"? Wittgenstein admits this himself. When asked what *his* criterion is for deciding whether his own image is red, his answer is "nothing" (see epigraph above). But then why does one require a criterion for how one uses one's private words? Thus, Ayer (1968, 260) points out that on Wittgenstein's own principles, "Verification must stop somewhere". Call this the objection to PLA from the fact that the need for Criteria must come to an End Somewhere or CES!

IV. The Fallacy in the "Private Language Argument"

> I should like you to say [*Ich möchte doch, daß du sagst*]: "Yes, it's true, you can imagine that too, that might happen too"—I wanted to put that picture before him, and his acceptance of that picture consists in his now being inclined to regard that case differently: that is, to compare it with *this* rather than *that* set of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking at things*. (Indian mathematicians: "Look at this!" [all emphasis, LW's])
> *Philosophical Investigations* (144)

The last two crucial lines of *PLA,* that 1.) "whatever is going to seem right to me is right", and that, 2.) "we can't talk about right'," are misleading in several ways. Consider the first of these claims. For, in fact, *PI* (258) does *not* assert that "whatever is going to seem right to me is right". The *complete* line is: "One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right". However, there are many things the present author "would like to say" but cannot say because they are not true. The present author "would like to say" that mass shootings in the US will soon become a thing of the past, but that does not mean that this will become true. Further, Wittgenstein's remark that he "would like to say ..." something is not a casual formulation but is connected with his unusual way of arguing. Referring to one of his arguments about what it means to say something about the learning process (see epigraph above), he explains his way of arguing, namely that he puts a new "picture" before one in order to get one to look at the case in a new way. Thus, *PI* (258) does *not* present a logical argument that in a private language "whatever is going to seem right to me is right". It presents the reader with a new *picture* of language in order to break the grip of the old more rationalist picture that sees more cognitive structure underlying language. If Wittgenstein can *persuade* people to accept his new picture, they will then "like to say", with him, of a putative private language that "whatever is going to seem right to me is right." That is, PLA does *not* aim to *prove* anything, but to *persuade* people, by employing certain *imaginative* techniques, to see language differently.

This is connected to the second oddity in PLA. The entire argument at *PI* (258) is conducted from the first-person point of view ("I want to keep a diary ... To this end I associate ...")—until the last sentence where the "I" unaccountably changes to "We": "And that only means that here we [can't ...". But how can Wittgenstein possibly infer from the fact that I, LW, from my private mental prison, cannot talk about "right," to the conclusion that *we* beings in the real world cannot talk about

right? For, if the entire argument is conducted from his first-person point of view, he is only entitled to infer that "I [LW]" can't talk about 'right'"—and what does that have to do with the much more robust conceptual resources of a public linguistic community? Further, since, as argued above, *PI* (258) never asserts that "whatever is going to seem right to me is right", but only that he "would like to say" this, and since one cannot make inferences from a sentence that is not asserted in the argument, the final conclusion of the argument (that *we* cannot talk about right), *is not arrived at by inference*. Thus, if PLA is judged logically, it is fallacious. Call this the objection from the fact that PLA is Fallacious or PLAF!

Although it sounds paradoxical, Wittgenstein's "Private Language Argument" is not an argument (not an attempt to infer conclusions from premises by means of logical principles). Wittgenstein never describes it as an argument, and numerous commentators have questioned whether it can be called an argument proper (Candlish 2014, §1; Biletzki and Matar 2018, § 3.5). This should be no surprise. Wittgenstein holds that "Philosophy simply puts everything before us and neither explains nor deduces anything" (*PI*, 125). PLA is not a deduction. But if PLA is not a logical argument, what is it? At *PI* (109) Wittgenstein states that "we must do away with all explanation and description alone must take its place". Thus, the proper inference is that PLA is an imaginative *description* to *persuade* "we" beings who live in a public world to *look* at the perennial philosophical idea of a private language in a different way: "Indian mathematicians: "Look at this!" (*PI*, 144). "To repeat: don't think, but look!" (*PI*, 66).

V. Scientific Standards for the Existence of Private Objects

> Using psychophysical ratings to define pain sensitivity and functional magnetic resonance imaging [fMRI] to assess brain activity, we found that highly sensitive individuals exhibited more frequent and more robust pain-induced activation of the primary somatosensory cortex, anterior cingulate cortex, and prefrontal cortex than did insensitive individuals.
>
> Coghill *et al*, "Neural Correlates of Interindividual Differences in the Subjective Experience of Pain" (8538)

The conclusion of PLA is ambiguous. One must distinguish between 1.) the criteria for the use of words that the speakers of those private languages themselves *understand*, and 2.) objective *standards* (not criteria) for the presence of private states from a 3rd person point of view. Kripke (1982, 109) attributes the first of these to Wittgenstein when he defines a private language as one that it is "impossible for anyone else to understand." That is, he rejects the view that some third party could possess "criteria" for the correct uses of N's private words without *themselves* understanding N's private criteria. By contrast, a third-party account lend itself to scientific *standards* for the correctness of N's private uses of words - and one only requires a third-party *standard* (not criteria) to be able to "talk about 'right'" in N's use of private words. That is, a neuroscientist does *not* themselves have to *understand* N's private "criteria" when they attribute a certain sensory state to

N. The present section argues that *nothing in PLA* precludes that there could be objective scientific *standards* for the right uses of private words.

Consider the following example! Wittgenstein writes down the penultimate conclusion of *PI* (258) when he is interrupted by two Cambridge scientists who inform him that he is mistaken when he infers that *we* cannot take about "right" here. They tell him that they have been monitoring his brain, behaviour and physical environment over the past months with state-of-the-art equipment. The findings are that when he set out to write down the name "S" every time he has sensation S, he was staring at a specific kind of green plant and they have a detailed description of all of his neurophysiological and sensory states over that period. There are, they inform him, 34 different shades of green in his environment, but the only thing that exhibits that particular shade of green (call it $green_{29}$) is that plant. Furthermore, they have verified that on all of the occasions in which he wrote down "S" in diary he was looking at that same $green_{29}$ plant in good lighting. In addition, and perhaps most surprising, on 9 occasions over that period, he was observed staring at a different green plant and began to write down "S" in his diary but hesitated and deleted the entry. This is very interesting, they point out, because that colour of that plant, $green_{28,}$ is very similar to that of the $green_{29}$ plant. However, since the two shades, though close, *are* visually distinguishable, they are impressed that though he began to record an "S" in his diary, he ended up deleting it in each case, which shows that he *can* see the difference between these colours. Thus, they are happy to inform him that each time he wrote down "S" in his diary, their scientific data confirms that he was in fact having exactly the same sensation S. Despite his "human, all too human"[4] doubts that his memory might have deceived him about his diary entries, their data shows that he correctly applied "S" to the same sensation S over the whole period and never wrote down "S" for a non-$green_{29}$ object. "You may be right," they tell him, "that *you* don't have any standards for talking about 'right' here, *but we scientists do have them*"[5]

Finally, these scientists add that they do not pretend to "understand" Wittgenstein's private sensation words the way he does inside his private mental prison. What we can say, they tell him, is that your (LW's) neurophysiological and sensory states and relations to the environment display such impressive regularities that we can say with confidence that each time you wrote an "S" in your diary you were in the very same neurophysiological and sensory state that you were in when you first named sensation "S". It is just a happy *contingent* fact that whether you have a private "criterion" or not, your memory is such cases *is* very good—which is not surprising since a reliable memory of one's sensations would enhance survivability and therefore be selected to by evolution. Indeed, Wittgenstein appears to acknowledges the possibility of such correlations between private sensations and physical states himself when he admits that one might discover a "useful" correlation between one's private sensation and a rise in one's blood pressure *PI* (270).

One cannot, therefore, deny that there could be substantial objective scientific *evidence* that Wittgenstein is correctly re-identifying the sensation S when his memory tells him that that he is having that sensation. In fact, although there is much more work to do, neurophysiologists have

documented an impressive set of similar regularities (see epigraph above).[6] However, the present argument does *not* presuppose that these correlations have been definitively scientifically established. It requires only that it is *possible* to establish such correlations. For if *PI* (258) were to provide a convincing argument that privately correctly reidentifying one's sensations is impossible, it would have to rule out that such scientific evidence is even possible. But nothing in the *PI* (258) even addresses the question of possible *scientific* standards and *PI* (270) appears to admit that such correlations are possible. Call this the objection from the existence of an Objective Scientific Model of private criteria or OSM!

It will be replied that the standard view that the moral of *PI* (270), taken in its *entirety*, is the *opposite* of the one drawn here, e.g., Garver (1994, 214-15) points out that this "perplexing" passage seems to take back everything Wittgenstein has been arguing, but that, taken as a whole, it denies that the passage changes everything. For, Garver points out, the last lines in *PI* (270) reaffirms the standard interpretation that the "private sensation" drops out as irrelevant. Thus, what this "useful" correlation really amounts to is only a correlation between writing "S" in one's diary and a rise in one's blood pressure (both public events).

Garver makes a good point, but it does *not* undermine the present argument. First, the present argument is *not* based on an exegesis of *PI* (270). It is rather that when the scientific facts are taken into account, what *PI* (270) gives with the one hand *cannot completely* be taken away by the other. For OSM can be run entirely without an appeal to Wittgenstein's "admission" in *PI* (270). *PI* (270) is useful here because it provides a textual opening to raise OSM. Further, it is argued later (§ VIII) that when the whole series *PI* (270-272) is taken into account, it becomes clear that Wittgenstein *does* make an important admission at *PI* (270) that is often unappreciated.

Consider Garver's interpretation from the perspective of OSM! When Garver says that Wittgenstein's ultimate point in *PI* (270) is that the alleged private sensations drop out as irrelevant to that "useful" correlation, the aforementioned Cambridge scientists will point out that when Wittgenstein said on 13 occasions that he experienced sensation S and wrote "S" in his diary, the scientific evidence shows that he was in a relevantly similar neurophysiological and sensory states. Since Wittgenstein reports his sensations as a result of his *experiences*, not by looking at scientific data, it would be impossible to deny that Wittgenstein was *sensing* the same thing in all the cases when he wrote "S" in his diary. It is, however, crucial to recall that these scientists are *not* claiming to have discovered scientific *criteria* (in Wittgenstein's sense of the word) for the presence of private sensations, but, rather, scientific *evidence* for the presence of private states that correlate with Wittgenstein's overt behaviour. *PI* (258)'s conclusion that "we can't talk about 'right' here" at all is simply too strong.

VI. The Tautologous Conclusion of the "Private Language Argument"

> The problems are solved, not by giving new information,
> but by arranging what we have already known.
> *Philosophical Investigations* (109)

Although PLA is often understood as an argument for the claim that a "Private Language" is impossible, the conclusion of PLA is actually a tautology in the ordinary sense that it just repeats the same thing over again. If Wittgenstein's views are "grammatical propositions" (*PI*, 251, 295, 458), then they are true by virtue of grammatical "conventions" (*PI*, 355). Thus, the conclusion of PLA gives no information but merely rehearses the grammatical conventions of our language.

In fact, Wittgenstein *presupposes* in *BB* and *PI* that he is concerned only with the sense in which words in a *public* language have meaning. *BB* (1) *begins* with the remark that asking how "'*we* [emphasis added] measure length?' helps us to understand the problem 'What is length?'". In *PI* (1) he describes an interaction between a customer and shopkeeper in the purchase of 5 apples, the point being that what is relevant to the meaning of the words is only what goes on in their *public* interaction, not what goes on in the shopkeeper's mind. This theme continues at *PI* (6) where the "purpose" of the word in the block-pillar-slab language is not to produce an image in someone's mind but to get other members of the "tribe" to perform certain actions.

It is evident throughout his "later philosophy" that what interests Wittgenstein is "our [public] language" (*PI*, 51, 497, 230; *Z*, 532, 545). He makes this explicit at *PI* (261),

> What reason have we for calling "S" the sign for a sensation? For "sensation" is a word in our common language, not one intelligible to me alone. So the use of this word stands in need of *a justification which everybody understands* [emphasis added].

Since the criteria for the use of words are "necessarily" public (Khatchadourian 2007, 57), the conclusion of PLA only means that words in a language that only employs criteria for the *private purposes* of the language-user cannot have a public purpose—but that is a tautology. One can put this another way: Since Wittgenstein makes clear in *PI* that he is interested in language as a system of *communication* (See *PI*, 3, 491), the conclusion of PLA is that private words useful only for oneself are not useful for communication with others—but that too is a tautology. Thus, a private language would be of no use whatsoever for the participants in the shopkeeper-customer or block-pillar-slab or "language-games" at *PI* (1-2).

This result provides a different perspective on Kripke's (1982, 109) view that in a private language it is "logically impossible" for anyone other than the user of that private language to understand. Kripke's definition is correct, but easily misconceived. If, for example, one thinks this logical impossibility derives from a mysterious "condition or process of consciousness" (McGinn 1984, 80), i.e., from something *metaphysical*, it is misconceived. The reason it is logically impossible for anyone other than N to understand the meanings of N's private words is very similar to the reason

why it is impossible for there to be "a rod without a length" (*PI*, 251). For both of these "claims" run afoul of our grammatical conventions.

VII. No Thesis, No Debate

> If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them.
> *Philosophical Investigations* (128)

If as argued in § IV, PLA is logically fallacious, and if, therefore, PLA is merely an attempt at persuasion, is this not an admission that it is sophistry? The answer is that *if* the conclusion of PLA were a substantial thesis, the answer would be "yes", but that since the conclusion of PLA is really a tautology, the proper response is not a philosophical argument for a substantial conclusion, but a "reminder" about the grammar of the relevant words (*PI*, 127). People do not generally need such reminders until they have "become calloused by doing philosophy" (*PI*, 348; Malcolm 1986, 160). For no one who has not done philosophy would ever think of saying that they cannot know that their child, who is writhing on the floor from a bad burn, is in pain. A philosopher will entertain such fantastic "theses" in their study, but, like Hume (1967, 264, 269) when they return to their daily life, these alleged "theses" will appear "cold" and "ridiculous".

Since the conclusion of PLA is a tautology, not a *thesis* (see epigraph above), it does not need to be *proved* any more than that the statement "Every rod has a length" needs to be proved. There is therefore no possibility of debating such matters because everyone would agree on them, just as there is no possibility of debating analytical sentences—assuming that people understand the words involved. Thus, for Wittgenstein, a philosophical discussion is not a "debate" about what is true, but an attempt to "clarify" what is being said (*PI*, 125, 133, *CV*, 19). This is why Wittgenstein would be unconcerned with the previous objections to PLA in §'s III, IV and V respectively.

Consider first CES, the objection that since Wittgenstein himself regularly stresses that explanations and reasons must end somewhere, he is inconsistent when he refuses to accept the private language user's claim that their memory is a sufficient criterion for the correct uses of their private words! However, if the conclusion of PLA is really the tautology that a language that only employs words for the *private purposes* of the language user cannot employ those words for a *public purpose*, Wittgenstein can admit that the private language user's criteria can also come to an end somewhere but insist that it is a tautology that *in a language proper* these criteria must come to an end in *public* ways of behaving. The problem with private criteria is not that they come to an end somewhere *but that they are private*. There is no inconsistency.

Consider second the objection from the fact that the Private Language Argument is Fallacious or PLAF. However, since the conclusion of PLA is a tautology, it does not require the sort of proof it would require if it were a substantive conclusion. Since, in this sort of case, one only needs "reminded" of the tautological character of the conclusion, it does not matter if it is logically fallacious. In this kind of case, what is important is only that the "argument" is persuasive. And, in

fact, PLA is precisely, as Wittgenstein states at *PI* (109), a "description" of linguistic behaviour designed to persuade us that the alleged "meanings" of private worlds are not comparable to the meanings of words in a genuine public language.

Consider now the third objection based on the existence of an Objective Scientific Model of private criteria or OSM! Once again, Wittgenstein would reply that when he talks about criteria, he means the sorts of criteria that are found in the *grammatical conventions* of a language, not the *evidence* that might emerge from a scientific laboratory. Wittgenstein's remark that "it's in language that it's all done" (*PG*, VII, 9; *OC*, 3), cannot be overemphasized. For what scientists can discover in their laboratories are correlations between items in the world, e.g., a brain state and a rise in blood pressure, not grammatical conventions *within* the language. Since the scientific *standards* that determine that there is a right and wrong about Wittgenstein's private states resemble what Wittgenstein calls "symptoms" of his sensory states learned from experience rather than grammatical conventions, scientists might discover *evidence* that someone has reidentified a certain private sensation correctly, but it is a tautology that the scientist cannot discover the kind of *grammatical* "criteria" (in Wittgenstein's and Kripke's technical sense) that determine the meaning of a word in a public language.

The final objection is that the present interpretation relies too heavily on Albritton's account of criteria and ignores other accounts, like Cavell's (1999) alternative account. Whereas Albritton and other early scholars interpreted Wittgenstein's notion of a criterion against the background of the skeptical challenge whether one can know that a certain private object exists, Cavell (1999, 16), emphasizing *PI* (373), holds that the criterion for the use of a word determines "what kind of object anything is", which, in turn, determines how the words that describe that sort of object are properly used. In fact, Cavell's account *facilitates* the argument of the present paper. For, on Cavell's interpretation, the criteria for the words "pain" and "coin" determine "what kind of 'objects" pains and coins are, which is to give the "grammar" of those words. But if the criteria give the grammar of such words, Wittgenstein's point in PLA is that the grammar of the words "language" and "meaning" require that a genuine linguistic meaning must be publicly communicable. But that is precisely what is meant in the present paper by the claim that the conclusion of PLA us a tautology.

VIII. Private Objects and the Limits of Language

> The essential thing about private experience [*privaten Erelebnis*] is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people have *this* [LW's emphasis] or something else.
> *Philosophical Investigations* (272)

One might argue that there is a *glaring* contradiction in the present paper. How can the paper consistently claim in § V that there can be objective scientific evidence that Wittgenstein correctly correlates his words with private sensations and yet claim in § VI that the conclusion of PLA, that there cannot be a private language, is a tautology? For if the conclusion of PLA is a tautology, there cannot be scientific evidence that Wittgenstein has one!

There is no contradiction, but one must pay close attention to the specific formulations in § V. What is argued there is that there can be objective scientific *evidence* that Wittgenstein correctly *reidentifies* his private sensation S and this correlates with his diary entries—and that is sufficient to establish that "we" scientists *can* "talk about" a "right" use of words here. That is, although in this case there are no "criteria" in Kripke's and Wittgenstein's technical sense for the correct use of private words, there can be scientific *standards* that determine whether or not Wittgenstein correctly wrote "S" in his diary upon having certain sensations. The tautological conclusion of PLA only requires that Wittgenstein's establishing *such correlations does not constitute a language proper*!

To illustrate this, consider a hypothetical case in which, Lara, hiking in the jungle, encounters a gorilla and the gorilla becomes frightened. The present author assumes that there is something going on in the gorilla's brain or "mind", in whatever sense one can talk about a gorilla's mind, when he encounters Lara for the second time, reidentifies her, and attacks her. Note that nothing in this description of the gorilla's reidentification of Lara implies that it has a private *language*.

Compare this with Wittgenstein's reidentifying his sensation S and writing down "S" in its diary, where Wittgenstein's reidentifying his sensation corresponds to the gorilla reidentifying his experience of Lara and Wittgenstein's writing down "S" in his diary corresponds to the gorilla's attacking behavior. Just as the gorilla reidentified Lara on their second meeting and attacked her, Wittgenstein reidentifies his sensation S on a later occasion and writes "S" in his diary. Thus, there is something "right" about Wittgenstein's behavior just as there is something "right" about the gorilla's behavior. The gorilla did identify the "right" person in his second experience of her. Presumably a neuroscientist, monitoring the ape's neurophysiological states and environment could verify these facts. That is, in both of these cases, one has merely described a biological *mechanism*, not a meaningful grammatical connection.

The critic might reply, however, that § V claims more, namely that science can provide evidence that Wittgenstein correctly reidentifies a *private object* – and this is the case! In order to render this consistent with Wittgenstein's view that it is a tautology that there cannot be a private language, *one must, therefore, show that there is a gap between private objects and private languages*. That seems extreme, but this is precisely what Wittgenstein suggests in *PI* (272) where he admits that, when discussing "*privaten Erelebnis,"* people "can have their "own exemplar," but denies that there can be a private "*this*" that nobody else can know about (where the demonstrative "this" is crucial to the formulation). But why is ok to say that N has a private sensation but wrong to say that no one can know that N has "*this*" private sensation?

At *PI* (380), warning against the tendency to posit a "private ostensive definition," Wittgenstein remarks that it must be possible to ask of any putative "this" "what" it is: "This?—What?". Since that is precisely what is impossible for the private "this" referenced in *PI* (272), *Wittgenstein can admit* "*privaten Erelebnis*" ("one's own exemplar") but deny a private language to describe it. This is a difficult position. There is only one way to resolve it, namely, that PLA is a later installment on Wittgenstein's longstanding interest in setting the "limits of language" (*TLP*,

Preface). Against this background, what PLA actually purports to show is that in the attempt to construct a private *language*, a private system of descriptions of these private "thisses", one "bumps" one's head "against the limits of language" (*PI*, 119), thereby enabling one better to understand the nature of language proper. These "bumps" on one's head enable one to see that one may have one's "*privaten Erelebnis*", but that one cannot put these "*privaten Erelebnis*" into words. But that does not mean that a scientist cannot determine that Wittgenstein is in a private sensory state, so long as that scientist is not themselves required to *understand* what it means for someone to be in "*this*" sensory state (that is, to possess the criteria that would enable them to do so). But why should the scientist be expected to understand such criteria when Wittgenstein, who is in that state, cannot understand them either. For it is a tautology that there cannot be such criteria. Wittgenstein, despite the fact that he possesses his own "*privaten Erelebnis*," does not *understand* anything the scientist does not understand.

Endnotes:

1. Wittgenstein's works are abbreviated as follows: *Tractatus-logico-philosophicus* [*TLP*]; "The Language of Sense Data and Private Experience" [*LSD*], *Philosophical Grammar* [*PG*], *The Blue and Brown Books* [*BB*]; *Philosophical Investigations* [*PI*]; *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* [*RFM*]; *On Certainty* [*OC*]; *Culture and Value* [*CV*], and *Zettel* [*Z*]. References to *TLP* are by proposition number, to *LSD* and *CV* by page number, to *OC* and *Z* by paragraph number, to *PI*, *unless indicated otherwise*, by paragraph number, to *PG* and *RFM*, by section and paragraph number. References to works of other philosophers are, *unless otherwise indicated*, to page number.
2. Although it is difficult to make a sharp distinction between Wittgenstein's "early" and "later" philosophies, Wittgenstein made this distinction himself (Kripke 1982, 78, 120-123), and this is sufficient *for present purposes*. By Wittgenstein's "early philosophy" is here meant *TLP*. By his "later philosophy" is here meant the works *beginning* with *BB* and *PI*. The remarks from *PG* and *CV* cited here are consistent with the later philosophy.
3. Candlish (2014, § 3.3) distinguishes between remembering the meaning of the sign "S" and being able to "apply '*S*'" infallibly "only to *S*'s in the future" and argues that *PI* (258) only requires the former. However, *PI* (258) states that one wants to keep a diary about the "recurrence [*Wiederkehren*]" of certain sensations. This clearly requires being able to correctly record the *recurrence* of that sensation in the future.
4. See Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*!
5. The textual example abstracts from various kinds of differences that could complicate matters, e.g., race, gender, and species differences. The present aim is only to show, employing a simplified example, that scientists could in principle provide objective evidence that someone correctly reidentifies the same sensation over time. See note # 6!
6. For a discussion of the positive results that have been achieved in identifying the neural correlates of sensations, but also a frank discussion of the problems, see Fonteneau and Davidoff (2006)! See note 5!

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Hume, Causation and Counterfactuals

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Abstract:

What is offered here is an interpretation of Hume's views on causation. While it might not be literally Hume's view, it is certainly consistent with Hume, and is probably what Hume should say on causation, in light of recent developments in science and logic. As a way in, it is argued that the considerations that Hume brings against rationalist theories of causation can be applied to counterfactual theories of causation. Since, counterfactuals, possible worlds and modality were not ideas that would have been overly familiar to Hume, some supplementation of Hume's arguments will be necessary.

Keywords: causation, counterfactuals, David Hume, David Lewis

In both *A Treatise of Human Nature* and *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* David Hume famously argues against the then current rationalist conceptions of causation. Hume believes that since there is no impression of a power causal influence or necessary connection, rationalist understandings of causation cannot be correct. Instead, Hume argues, what one does have is the constant conjunction of cause *c* and effect *e* and the expectation that *e* will follow *c*.

In this article I will argue that the considerations that Hume brings against rationalist and powers theories of causation can be applied to present-day counterfactual theories of causation. That is not to say that Hume is right. Rather, if his arguments are effective against the rationalist and powers theories, then they are effective against counterfactual theories. Now, counterfactuals, possible worlds and modality—despite the influence of Leibniz—were not ideas that would have been overly familiar to Hume. Thus, some reconstruction and supplementation of Hume's arguments will be necessary.

Actually, this article serves a larger purpose; I aim to offer an understanding of Hume's theory of causation. By having Hume engage the counterfactual theory of causation, a better understanding of Hume's ideas regarding causation, generally, can be had. The understanding of causation offered here, certainly, might not have been Hume's. Instead it is what Hume should say about causation in light of recent developments in science and logic. One final point should be made clear; the counterfactual theory, which I will suggest that Hume must reject, is a characterization of the view, but I feel this is a legitimate approach sense the rationalist conception of causation, which Hume actually criticizes, is a characterization of that view. Moreover, the subtleties of the counterfactual

theory—such as "centering," and more detailed understandings of pre-emption—are certainly granted, but the more "metaphysics" that is built into the system, would seem, at least prima facie, to be objectionable to Hume. Thus, it is not necessary to do complete justice to counterfactual theories.

This article will progress in the following way. First, there will be a brief overview of the argument that Hume presents in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* against the rationalist/powers notion of causation. Then, there will be a presentation of a generic version of a counterfactual theory of causation. Next, Hume's argument will be restructured in order to show that the counterfactual theory of causation is problematic in a way similar to rationalist and powers based theories of causation, relative to Hume's argument, and potential objections that a counterfactual causation theorist might raise will be addressed. Finally, there will be a discussion of Hume's understanding of causation and how it does relate to counterfactuals, since Hume does at one point "define" causation counterfactually.

1. Hume on causation

Before embarking on a reconstruction of Hume's argument, and its implications for a counterfactual theory of causation, it is important to get clear on what Hume's actual argument against a rationalist/powers notion of causation is. To that end, in this section of the article I will be presenting Hume's argument regarding causation as it was put forward in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Hume's arguments are aimed at particular rationalist conceptions of causation that involve necessary connections, and/or, in Hume's words, "secret powers." It should be noted that Hume does not always clearly distinguish the notion of causation as one based on necessary connections, and one based on causal powers. So, in this article, depending on the context, the terms "rationalist" and "powers" will be used, roughly, interchangeably.

For Hume all objects of human reasoning can be divided into one of two categories, either relations of ideas or matters of fact. The former pertain to analytic and/or *a priori* truths and "are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe" (Hume 1975, 25). Matters of fact pertain to synthetic and/or *a posteriori* truths that are actually about the world and one comes to know them based on sense impressions—whether directly or indirectly. What is important, however, is that "[t]he contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality" (Hume 1975, 25).

So, if one wants to know how one comes to the idea of cause, effect and causation, it must be the case that, for Hume, it is either a relation of ideas or a matter of fact. Hume gives several reasons why the notion of causation cannot be based on a relation of ideas or *a priori* reasoning, but they all boil down to essentially that "[w]hen we reason *a priori*, and consider merely any object or cause, as it appears to the mind, independent of all observation, it never could suggest to us the notion of any

distinct object, such as its effect; much less, show us the inseparable and inviolable connexion between them" (Hume 1975, 31).

Since causation cannot be established *a priori*, if it can be established at all, it must be done *a posteriori*—i.e. there must be some sense impression to establish the relation between cause and effect. Notice, though, that since causation cannot be established by pure *a priori* reasoning a strong rationalist conception of causation has already been excluded. There is hope for something like an Aristotelian/powers theory of causation. However, Hume points out that there is never a sense impression of a power such that would provide the content for the idea of a causal relation. While one does have impressions of "actual motion of bodies ... but as to that wonderful force or power, which would carry on a moving body for ever in a continued change of place, and which bodies never lose but by communicating it to others; of this we cannot form the most distant conception" (Hume 1975, 33).

Hume believes at this point he has successfully argued that rationalist and powers theories of causation fail because one cannot form "an idea of [a] power or necessary connexion" which would underwrite such a theory of causation (Hume 1975, 73). He believes that his point is firmly established by the fact that if one did have an idea of a power or necessary connection then the first time one observed a cause one would be able to anticipate the effect, but the fact is that that is not something that is done. Instead, it is only after repeated instances of "similar" causes followed by "similar" effects that one comes to believe that there is a causal relation between the two.

> All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we never can observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of any thing which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion *seems* to be that we have no idea of connexion or power at all (Hume 1975, 74).

To be consistent with his empiricist theory of meaning, if it is in fact the case that there is not an idea that corresponds to the causal relation, Hume would have to conclude that causal-talk would be meaningless. However, Hume does not draw such a conclusion; rather he tries to figure out what one could mean when using causal-talk. In essence, Hume puts forward his own "theory of causation".

For Hume, causation amounts to the constant conjunction of two events combined with an expectation that one event will follow the other. So, although "[w]e suppose that there is some connexion between them; some power in the one, by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity" it is really just a custom, habit or feeling (Hume 1975, 75). Further, "[t]his connexion, therefore, which we *feel* in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion" (Hume 1975, 75). In other words, it is the feeling that provides the content for the idea of causation. Thus, to Hume's mind anyway, causation has been vindicated, deflated as it may be; at least it is not meaningless.

The purpose of this section of the article was to introduce Hume's arguments against rationalist/powers understandings of causation. There are four important points that need to be taken away from the discussion thus far. First, for Hume, rationalist conceptions of causations are not adequate by the mere fact that one cannot come to an idea of a necessary connection between cause and effect by *a priori* reasoning. Second, since causation is not a "relation of ideas" it must pertain to "matters of fact" and is therefore, radically contingent. By "radically contingent" is meant that for any matter of fact, there is no contradiction in assuming its opposite, or for any matter of fact its denial is always possible. Third, empirically based powers theories of causation are not adequate since there is no impression of any power that would underwrite the causal relation. Finally, Hume presents a deflationary account of causation where the causal relation is understood as a feeling, or expectation, in the mind of the observer that the occurrence of a particular event (cause) will be followed by particular event (effect), and the expectation comes about because of the constant conjunction of similar causes and effects in the past.

2. Counterfactual theories of causation—a characterization

In this section of the article, I will be presenting a rough and generic version of a counterfactual theory of causation. David Lewis is perhaps the best known proponent of a counterfactual theory of causation, so I will be basing my generic version on his work. It is worth noting that Lewis sees himself following Hume based on the fact that in the *Enquiry* Hume states:

> we may define cause to be *an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second*. Or in other words *where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed* (Hume 1975, 76).

Lewis takes Hume to be presenting two different understandings of causation here—a point I will return to below. Those who focus on the first definition—i.e. the part before "Or in other words"—endorse what Lewis takes to be a regularity based theory of causation. A regularity based theory of causation maintains that "a causal succession is supposed to be a succession that instantiates a regularity" (Lewis 1986, 156).

Lewis, however, believes that such regularity based theories run into all sorts of problems, and "that prospects look dark" for these types of theories (Lewis 1986, 160). That is to say, Lewis does not believe that regularity based theories will be able to adequately explain causation. Instead, Lewis believes that a more promising alternative is to take as a point of departure Hume's second definition—if it is a second definition—and defend a counterfactual understanding of causation. So, "we may define a cause to be an object followed by another, and [...] where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed" can be understood to be claiming that where the first object, the cause *c*, obtains and the second object, the effect *e*, obtains, *c* is the cause of *e* just in case if *c* had not obtained *e* would not have obtained—formally: (*c* is the cause of *e*) ↔ (~*c* □→ ~*e*) (Hume 1975, 76). However, it should be noted that if *c* and *e* do not obtain, and one still thinks that there is some

sort of causal relation between *c* and *e*, then *c* is the cause of *e* just in case if *c* had obtained *e* would have obtained—formally: (*c* is the cause of *e*) ↔ (*c* □→ *e*). Lewis goes on to fill out his definition of causation, with the following caveats: 1) he will only be discussing event causation. 2) his analysis is only meant to explain particular cases. 3) he is concerned with causation broadly construed, i.e. what it is to be *a* cause. 4) that he is only discussing causation under determinism, and what Lewis means by "determinism" is that the laws of nature generally obtain (Lewis 1986, 161-163).

The first thing that Lewis needs to do is to give the truth conditions for counterfactuals generally, then explain counterfactual dependence, and, finally, explain causal dependence. To explain the truth conditions for counterfactuals it is worth quoting Lewis at length.

> Given any two propositions A and C, we have their *counterfactual* A □→ C: the proposition that if A were true, then C would also be true. The operation □→ is defined by a rule of truth as follows A □→ C is true (at a world *w*) iff either (1) there are no possible A-worlds (in which case A □→ C is *vacuous*), or (2) some A-world where C holds is closer (to *w*) than is any A-world where C does not hold. [... or more simply] A □→ C is nonvacuously true iff C holds at all the closest A-worlds (Lewis 1986, 164).

Counterfactual dependence, for Lewis, is, roughly, the truth conditions for a particular counterfactual generalized over classes of A-like and C-like propositions. Thus, the class of C-like propositions depend counterfactually on the class of A-like propositions where no two propositions in the A-like class are compossible and where "if all the counterfactuals A_1 □→ C_1, A_2 □→ C_2 ... between corresponding propositions in the two [classes] are true [... or more simply:] whether C_1 or C_2 or ... depends (counterfactually) on whether A_1 or A_2 or ..." (Lewis 1986, 165).

Finally, causal dependence is roughly equivalent to counterfactual dependence regarding particular events. So, whether or not a particular effect *e* occurs depends on whether or not a particular cause *c* occurs—remembering how Lewis has defined counterfactual dependence. To be clear, *c* and *e* are not propositions but they can be paired with corresponding propositions; "[t]o any possible event *e*, there corresponds the proposition O(*e*) that holds at all and only those worlds where *e* occurs [...and] O(*e*) is the proposition that *e* occurs" (Lewis 1986, 166). Therefore, causal dependence "consists in the truth of two counterfactuals: O(*c*) □→ O(*e*) and ~O(*c*) □→ ~O(*e*)" (Lewis 1986, 166-167). More formally, Lewis' point can be represented as: (*e* causally depends on *c*) ↔ ((O(*c*) □→ O(*e*)) & (~O(*c*) □→ ~O(*e*))). Notice that if *c* and *e* do occur, then the left side of the conjunct is automatically true, so whether or not *e* causally depends on *c* depends on the truth of the right side of the conjunct, and similarly regarding the case when *c* and *e* do not occur—i.e. the right side of the conjunct is automatically true, et cetera. However, for simplicity, one can disregard the O-predicate and then (*e* causally depends on *c*) ↔ ((*c* □→ *e*) & (~*c* □→ ~*e*)), which is basically Lewis' take on Hume's "definition", noted above, with the important difference that Lewis is talking about causal dependence, and not causation, per se. However, Lewis does think that "[c]ausal dependence among actual events implies causation [... but not] the converse [, and this is important because, for

Lewis c]ausation must always be transitive; causal dependence may not be; so there can be causation without causal dependence" (Lewis 1986, 167).

Bringing everything together, in a general way, a counterfactual theory of causation can be expressed thusly:

(e causally depends on c) ↔ ((c □→ e) & (~c □→ ~e))
((c □→ e) & (~c □→ ~e)) is true ↔ (c □→ e) is true and (~c □→ ~e) is true
c □→ e is true (nonvacuously) ↔ (for any world w) all the closest worlds (to w) where c is true e is also true
~c □→ ~e is true (nonvacuously) ↔ (for any world w) all the closest worlds (to w) where ~c is true ~e is also true

More simply, and generically, though, the counterfactual theory can be stated formally as (c is the cause of e) ↔ (c □→ e)—irrespective of the possible-world truth conditions.

3. A Humean argument against counterfactual theories

In this section of the article I will present several arguments, on Hume's behalf, that will demonstrate the inadequacy of a counterfactual theory of causation. Most importantly, I will show that the same types of arguments that Hume uses against rationalist and powers theories of causation can be applied to counterfactual theories of causation. Then, I will consider and respond to some possible objections the counterfactual theorist could make.

To begin, Hume argues that rationalist and powers theories of causation cannot be true. First, rationalist conceptions of causation are inadequate by the mere fact that one cannot come to an idea of a necessary connection between cause and effect by *a priori* reasoning. Second, since causation is not a "relation of ideas" it must pertain to "matters of fact" and, therefore, for any matter of fact its denial is always possible—thus, there can be no necessary connection. Third, empirically based powers theories of causation are inadequate since there is no impression of any power that would provide content for the idea of a causal relation.

Now the rough and general version of a counterfactual theory of causation is: c causes e, just in case, c □→ e, but notice that because causation is a matter of fact the denial is always possible. Thus, it is possible that c could obtain, and e would fail to obtain—i.e. if c were to happen, e might not happen, or formally: c ◊→ ~e. It is clear that Hume entertained such a possibility when he discusses billiard balls in the *Enquiry*.

> When I see, for instance, a Billiard-ball moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse; may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from that cause? May not both these balls remain at absolute rest? May not the first ball return in a straight line, or leap off from the second in any line or direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then

> should we give the preference to one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? (Hume 1975, 29-30)

Further, by definition—in fact Lewis' definition[1]—$(\Phi \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \Psi) \leftrightarrow \sim(\Phi \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} \sim\Psi)$, or in the cause and effect language that is being used $(c \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} e) \leftrightarrow \sim(c \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} \sim e)$. Yet, Hume believes that $c \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} \sim e$, and, in fact, because $c \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} \sim e$ is true, the rationalist conception of causation is false. So, if $c \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} \sim e$ is true, then $c \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} e$ cannot be true, by a simple application of biconditional modus tollens. Hence, it cannot be the case that *c* causes *e*, just in case, $c \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} e$, if one wants to maintain causal talk.

Formally, the above argument goes as follows:

1) *c* causes *e* (assumption, one wants to maintain causal talk)
2) *c* causes $e \leftrightarrow (c \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} e)$ (assumption, the counterfactual theory of causation)
3) $(c \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} e) \leftrightarrow \sim(c \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} \sim e)$ (true by definition)
4) $c \mathrel{\Diamond\!\!\rightarrow} \sim e$ (assumption, Hume's argument against the rationalist theory of causation)
5) $\sim(c \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} e)$ (3, 4 $\leftrightarrow$MT)
6) ~(*c* causes *e*) (2, 5 $\leftrightarrow$MT)
7) (*c* causes *e*) & ~(*c* causes *e*) (1, 6 &I)

However, (7) is a contradiction, thus one of the assumptions must be false since everything else follows logically. Both Hume and the counterfactual theorist seem committed to the truth of (1), i.e. they both want to keep causal talk. Hume certainly believes that (4) is true, and the counterfactual theorist must believe so as well since if he or she did not, then there would be no real reason to put forward an alternative—to, for example, the rationalist—theory of causation. Therefore, (2) has to be rejected. So, for the same reason that the rationalist theory of causation is inadequate, for Hume, the counterfactual theory of causation must also be inadequate, for Hume. In other words, if one thinks that Hume's arguments against the rationalist theory of causation are good arguments, then, *eo ipso*, one is committed to rejecting the counterfactual theory of causation. There may be a worry that I am conflating issues of physical and logical necessity/possibility here. However, I address that concern below when I discuss possible objections.

Besides the main argument, just put forward, there seem to be two additional problems with the counterfactual understanding of causation. The first problem is suggested by Jaegwon Kim, and that is that a counterfactual theory of causation is too broad. In other words, counterfactual dependence captures a broad range of non-causal dependencies. Although Kim's concerns are not, necessarily, Hume's, they do illustrate an additional inadequacy of the counterfactual theory, and therefore lend credence to the main arguments contention that, from a Humean perspective, the counterfactual theory of causation is not an adequate theory of causation. The second problem is that the counterfactual theorist, and in particular Lewis, is inappropriately "breaking apart" the definition that Hume puts forward in the *Enquiry*. It is important to draw attention to this second

problem since Lewis uses Hume's definition to motivate his counterfactual theory of causation. If Lewis' interpretation of Hume is incorrect, then he is not justified in appealing to Hume's authority, which, in turn, gives one reason to suspect the adequacy of a counterfactual conception of causation, from Hume's perspective, at least *prima facie*.

As to the first problem, Kim gives four different types of cases where a counterfactual dependence, of the kind that Lewis maintains, cover instances that are not causal, at least not causal in the way that one normally thinks about causation. Of the four types, three seem particularly problematic and these are: (i) cases of logical/analytic dependence, (ii) when one event is a constituent aspect of another event, and (iii) when one event determines another, but not causally (Kim 1993, 205-206). Kim gives the following examples for each: (i) "If yesterday had not been Monday, today would not be Tuesday." (ii) "If I had not written 'r' twice in succession, I would not have written 'Larry'." (iii) "If my sister had not given birth at *t*, I would not have become an uncle at *t*" (Kim 1993, 205-206).

The reason that the overly broad application of counterfactual dependence is problematic is that it requires "piling on epicycles" to make the theory work (Lewis 1986, 160). What is meant here is that not only does an adequate counterfactual theory of causation have to explain genuine cases of causation, but it also has to have something above and beyond the causal explanation that can, in a principled way, distinguish genuine cases of causation from mere cases of counterfactual dependence.

As to the second problem, it is important to be reminded of what Hume's "definition" of causation is. Hume states that "we may define cause to be *an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second*. Or in other words *where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed*" (Hume 1975, 76). Lewis believes that Hume is actually putting forward two distinct definitions, one regarding a sort of regularity principle and one, the part following "in other words", as a counterfactual theory. Lewis does not believe that the latter is a mere restatement, or clarification, of the former; he believes that the latter "propose[s] something altogether different" (Lewis 1986, 160). Yet, it is unclear why that would be the case—i.e. why the latter is something altogether different, and not a mere restatement, or clarification, of the former.

The fact of the matter is that Hume says "in other words". Now it seems fair to assume that Hume would mean what is normally meant by "in other words," which is that Hume is articulating the same principle in two different ways and not putting forward something altogether different, as Lewis maintains. It seems reasonable to assume that had Hume been putting forward two different principles he would have said as much, for example

> we may define cause to be *an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second*. Or [another possible way we could define cause is that] *where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed*" (Hume 1975, 76).

However, one does not need to just split hairs with Lewis over Hume's wording to get the very point under consideration here across—i.e. that Hume is putting forward one definition and a restatement thereof, and not two distinct definitions. Lewis maintains that the regularity theory of causation—a theory based on the first half of Hume's definition—is problematic for at least three reasons. First, a regularity theory cannot adequately differentiate between genuine causes and cases of confusion between cause and effect, where it is not that *c* is the cause of *e*, but where it is actually that *e* is the cause of *c*. Second, a regularity theory cannot adequately distinguish cases of genuine cases of causation and epiphenomenon. Finally, a regularity theory cannot adequately handle cases of preemption (Lewis 1986, 160). The problem is that the counterfactual theory of causation struggles with the exact same issues, as Paul Horwich has pointed out: "What Lewis said about regularity analyses is now a fair assessment of the counterfactual approach" (Horwich 1993, 216). Kim draws a similar conclusion when he states that: If we compare the classical regularity theory with Lewis's account [...] it is by no means clear that the latter fairs better than the former" (Kim 1993, 207).

Now, it is by no means decisive that just because a counterfactual theory of causation is left wanting, in the same way that a regularity theory of causation is, leads to the conclusion that Hume is not putting forward two distinct understandings of causation. However, coupling the fact that the two theories are left wanting in the same way with the fact that Hume says "in other words" instead of, for example, "or, alternatively", gives one reason to believe that Hume is not putting forward two distinct understandings.

I now turn to some objections that the counterfactual theorist might have regarding the argument I have presented against the counterfactual theory of causation. First, the counterfactual theorist might contend that the argument fails to appreciate the truth conditions for counterfactuals that Lewis puts forward. Second, that the argument does not take seriously the caveats that Lewis puts forth before he even begins his presentation of a counterfactual theory of causation.

It is not the case that the above argument fails to appreciate the truth conditions for counterfactuals, but the introduction of possible worlds does complicate things. So, even if the truth conditions are granted, it is hard to see how one could make a principled distinction regarding closest worlds. As Alan Hajek has argued "the connection between similarity and the truth-conditions for counterfactuals is far less straightforward than has been widely assumed" (Hajek 2018, 14). His point is that for any ordering for determining similarity of worlds, which are almost always based on intuitions, it is susceptible to counter-examples that lead to unintuitive results. It is for that very reason that the argument put forward here has tried to steer clear of such a potential quagmire.

All that really needs to be granted is the mere possibility that c & $\sim e$ is true for $c \mathrel{\square\!\!\rightarrow} e$ to be false. Further, since the mere possibility that c & $\sim e$ is true is one of Hume's reasons for rejecting the rationalist conception of causation, then the same should hold true regarding the counterfactual theory—that is assuming that one believes that Hume is right on that count. In other words, if one grants that a rationalist conception of causation is false because of the mere possibility that c & $\sim e$,

then, one must accept that there are implications for counterfactual theories of causation based on the mere possibility that *c* & ~*e*. It should be noted that the claim here is a bit more nuanced than Hume's objection to the rationalist conception of causation. There Hume seemed to be talking about the logical possibility that *c* & ~*e*. Here—and this is a reconstruction—it is maintained that it is physically possible that *c* & ~*e*. Thus, even if the counterfactual theorist maintains that the would-counterfactual ($c \Box\!\!\rightarrow e$) is a connection of natural necessity, there is the physical possibility that *c* & ~*e* —i.e. there is a probability greater than zero *c* & ~*e* can naturally or physically obtain—which would make the might-counterfactual ($c \Diamond\!\!\rightarrow \sim e$) true and the argument put forward goes through. This issue, the natural/physical possibility that *c* & ~*e*, will become clearer in responding to the next objection.

It should be noted, Hume's actual argument against the rationalist seems to be making a mistake. Hume seems to moving from an epistemic modal—"for all I know the billiard ball could head in any direction"—to a metaphysical conclusion. What is important here is that, the might-counterfactual is a metaphysical, in some sense, modal—the billiard ball might head off in any direction. Thus, the claims made here, are not only consistent with Hume, but actually improve his argument since they can be applied directly to the rationalist understanding of causation without the modal confusion.

The second objection the counterfactual theorist could put forward is that the argument has not taken into account the fact that Lewis has limited himself to discussing causation in a deterministic world. By determinism Lewis means that "the prevailing laws of nature are such that there do not exist any two possible worlds which are exactly alike up to some time, which differ thereafter, and in which those laws are never violated" (Lewis 1986, 163). Therefore, it is not the case, if the laws of nature hold at all the closest worlds, that it is physically possible that *c* & ~*e*.

The problem is, though, that a Humean understanding of natural laws is, qualitatively, not different from a Humean understanding of causation. Thus, assuming the laws of nature at the outset would appear to be, possibly, question-begging. More importantly, the current best science—quantum mechanics, for example—maintains that the laws of nature as we know them are indeterministic and probabilistic, which again if there is a greater than zero probability that *c* & ~*e* then the might-counterfactual holds. "And it isn't just the canonical quantum mechanical examples—radioactive decay, spin measurements on a particle in a Stern-Gerlach apparatus, and so on—that are indeterministic. The indeterminism reaches medium-sized dry goods (and even oversized wet ones), just less obviously so" (Hajek 2018, 7). Hajek gives a billiard ball example to drive the point home, which is not that different from Hume's for establishing that a rationalist conception of causation is untenable.

> Two billiard balls colliding may approximate a deterministic system, but even they are not immune from quantum mechanical indeterminism. One ball might spontaneously tunnel through the other, to China, or to the North Star—incredibly unlikely, to be sure but possible. Thus I cannot truly say "if the cue ball were to hit the 8 ball, the 8 ball would begin rolling" (Hajek 2018, 7).

Finally, Lewis has argued elsewhere that he believes that the counterfactual theory of causation does function in indeterministic settings (Lewis 1986). Thus, the caveat can be ignored, even by Lewis' own light.

However, it should be noted that even determinism would not eliminate the chanciness that is required to make the might-counterfactual true. Hajek points out that a prime example occurs in statistical mechanics—a deterministic system—with Maxwell's demon, but "[t]he point generalizes to other deterministic systems. For every set of initial conditions in which the cue ball hits the 8 ball and each follows an expected trajectory, there is a nearby initial condition in which the balls behave anomalously" (Hajek 2018, 20). And yet again, these are just the types of reasons that Hume did, or would, give to refute the rationalist conception of causation.

To be clear, I am taking Hume in his most skeptical mood here. Thus, holding the laws of nature fixed runs afoul of Hume's arguments against induction. Second, even granting that the laws of nature hold, because of quantum indeterminism and deterministic chanciness—discussed above—the might-counterfactual still holds, and the argument goes through. The onus would be on the counterfactual theorist to explain why, and in what sense, the might-counterfactual does not hold, in a non-question-begging way.

What Lewis is doing with his similarity-of-worlds truth conditions is to block logically possible outcomes from acting as defeaters for the would-counterfactual. What the claim here is, and in Hume's spirit, is to suggest that the *actual* chanciness of natural laws opens up the modal neighborhood which allows the might-counterfactual to be true, even if highly unlikely. Further, appealing to some sort of nomic dependence that holds between cause and effect, and which would make the would-counterfactual true, is *prima facie*, a response not available to the counterfactual theorist, as understood in this article. Lewis, for example is quite clear that "[i]t is essential to distinguish counterfactual and causal dependence from [...] *nomic dependence*" (Lewis 1986, 167).

Granted, in his less skeptical mood Hume allows for natural necessity, which, for example, plays an important role in his discussion of miracles (Hume 1975, 109-131). But, again, given that "natural necessity," understood as the laws of nature holding, is probabilistic and chancy the might-counterfactual will almost always be true making the would-counterfactual false. Finally, it is not claimed that counterfactual theories of causation are false, or that Hume is right. The point of this article is to demonstrate that the types of arguments that Hume uses against rationalist and powers conceptions of causation can be applied to counterfactual theories. The counterfactual theorist might have responses, just as a rationalist or powers theorist might have responses, but those are issues that extend beyond the scope of this article.

4. Hume on causation—redux

With all the foregoing in mind, the fact of the matter is that causal-talk is used, and that Hume did "define" causation using counterfactual-like language. However, if what has been said to

this point is correct, then it cannot be the case that Hume actually was putting forward a counterfactual theory of causation, as such. In this section of the article I will discuss what Hume is actually doing by suggesting that causation can be "defined" counterfactually.

The first thing to remember is how Hume believes one can form an idea of anything. For Hume all of one's ideas are derived from some impression or sentiment, "and where we cannot find any impression, we may be certain that there is no idea" (Hume 1975, 78). Thus, after Hume has argued that the traditional theories of causation—and by extension a counterfactual theory—have no correlated impressions or sentiments that would make them true, Hume is left with two options. Hume can either claim that all causal language is completely meaningless, or he can try and discover an impression or sentiment from which causal-talk could be derived. Hume opts for the latter and puts forward his definition of causation.

Hume actually words his definition in various ways, the two that have already been discussed, but he also says that one can define cause as "an *object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to the other*" (Hume 1975, 77). It is this final definition that seems to provide the key to understanding what Hume means by asserting, what Lewis sees as, the counterfactual and regularity definitions of causation. So, in a causal situation there is an event followed by another event, and the reason that one claims that the first causes the second is that one has a feeling, or expectation; upon witnessing the first event one anticipates the second. Further, it is the "feeling" or "expectation" or "anticipation" in the mind that is the impression or sentiment that gives meaning to the idea of a cause.

Hume then explains how it is that one comes to have the feeling/expectation.

> In all single instances of the operation of bodies or minds, there is nothing that produces any impression, nor consequently can suggest any idea, or power or necessary connexion. But when many uniform instances appear, and the same object is always followed by the same event; we then begin to entertain the notion of cause and connexion. We then *feel* a new sentiment or impression, to wit, a customary connexion in the thought or imagination between one object and its usual attendant; and this sentiment is the original of that idea we seek for [i.e. causation] (Hume 1975, 78).

Hume's point is that after many uniform experiences of constant conjunction between a cause and an effect, one begins to expect that there is some connection between the two, and it is that feeling of expectation, based on the many uniform experiences of constant conjunction, that provides the content for the idea of causation.

It is the feeling of expectation that helps make sense of the counterfactual definition of causation that Hume puts forward, and why it is not distinct from the regularity definition. So, "*an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second*," is how one comes to have the feeling of expectation, and "*where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed*," helps explain what the feeling of expectation is (Hume 1975, 76).

Now, it seems that a counterfactual theory of causation would seem to make some sense, for Hume. To be clear, it is not the case that (*c* causes *e*) ↔ (*c* □→ *e*), but something more like: "When I say that *c* causes *e*, I basically mean that when I observe that *c*, I *expect* that *e would* follow." Further, the possible worlds semantics can also be explained in a similar way. Instead of saying that in all the nearby possible worlds where *c* obtains, *e* also obtains, it would be something more like: "Based on my experience, if the world continues as I expect it to, then whenever *c* obtains, *e* also does."

So, there is an additional caveat to the original thesis of this article. If a counterfactual theorist does not have anything stronger in mind than this psychological/linguistic explanation of causation mentioned above, then it does not seem that Hume would find it problematic. If they do, then it would seem that Hume would reject those stronger types of counterfactual theories of causation, and he would do so for reasons quite similar to the reasons he has for rejecting rationalist and powers based theories of causation.

5. Conclusion

This article has been an exploration of Hume and counterfactual theories of causation. It was shown that the types of arguments that Hume gives to reject rationalist and powers based theories of causation can be extended to counterfactual theories of causation. The article does not claim that Hume's understanding of causation is correct, or that counterfactual theories of causation are false. The purpose was just to demonstrate that Humean-type arguments are available to critique counterfactual theories of causation. In other words, if one believes that Hume's arguments are *in fact* successful against rationalist and powers based theories of causation, it would seem, then one is committed to a rejection of counterfactual theories of causation, *prima facie*. It may be that there are good reasons for holding the counterfactual theory, or for that matter a rationalist or powers based theory, of causation, but if one does then one needs to be able to answer the Humean type of arguments presented here. Finally, by engaging a more contemporary understanding of causation, a more complete understanding of Hume on causation can be had. While what was offered here might not be literally Hume's view, it is certainly consistent with Hume, and is probably what Hume should say on causation, in light of recent developments in science and logic.

Endnotes:

1. See for example, Lewis (1973).

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Abstract and Concrete

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Abstract:

Philosophical usage of "abstract" to mean "not located in space and time" is (1) an overextension of the ordinary meaning which encourages conflating platonic realism about universals with conceptualism about universals, since (2) "abstract" in its ordinary use is quite appropriate to the traditional conceptualist theory of universals, in which the "abstract general idea" is a standard item. Applied with its ordinary meaning to the platonic theory, "abstract" is incorrect. As appropriated in philosophical discussion, "abstract" does apply truly. That is not a good reason to persist in the misleading use.

Keywords: abstract, concrete, universals, realism, nominalism, conceptualism

1.

Some abstraction is performed on images. An image may be "internal" or "external". A photo, painting, sculpture, or sketch is a physical thing which can qualify as a visual image of some other thing. It may be of an actual person or of, say, a centaur, even though there never was such a thing. A sculpture could also qualify as a tactile image. Sounds could be auditory images. The sound of a passing locomotive could serve as an important image, or go unnoticed and not count as an image, being only a potential image. An introspectable memory image may involve a variety of sensory modalities.

One use of "abstraction" names the process of eliminating some features of an image to focus on others, with the result being an abstract of the original. In some cases, the abstract may be said to be, not of the image but of what the image was an image of. This account is sketchy and thus could be called "abstract" in a negative sense. Some sketches may be highly accurate and praised for that, but they are not then called "sketchy". Photoshop techniques could be used to produce an abstract from a photo, but removing, say, an arm, need not count as abstraction.

Removing features from an image is not only not necessary, but not sufficient, for being abstract. Mark Rothko's "Orange over Red" is considered highly abstract without that implying that it was produced by abstraction from an image. I would say it is abstract but not *an* abstract, to grant that something abstract need not be produced by abstraction, but the distinction is tenuous. x may

appear to be, or function well as, an abstraction from y, without y having figured at all in the existence of x.

An abstract painter may remove the clear boundaries in a visual image, making the shapes of things vaguer than they were while drawing attention to colors. This encourages an association between "abstract" and "vague". Other abstracts, say of a building or a garden layout, or a crime scene may result in a much sharper, less vague, image, so that the association between "abstract" and "vague", which can be observed in general use, can be misleading. A skillful caricature of a famous person is an abstract, but it need not be at all vague.

"Abstract" is also connected with "general". By deleting some features, the requirement for an abstract image applying to a thing is less strict, so that it will apply to a wider range of things. Abstraction can thus be seen as a way of generalizing. This is not specific about what it is for an image to apply to a thing. A 500-word description of a literary character by a skilled novelist may make it difficult to find an actor to fit the description in a film version. An abstract of the description, eliminating some features, could make it easier to find an actor who fits. This is not enough to make clear the idea that an abstract of an image is liable to be more generally applicable than the original image. Whether an abstract caricature of Elvis Presley is applicable to the hordes of Presley impersonators involves more than resemblance. That a signature is a forgery is not determined by weakness of resemblance. I will not attempt to give a generally applicable account of what it means to say that an image x applies to an object y. It is a meaningful way of speaking.

In the uses of "abstract" so far, there is, notably, no obvious contrast with "concrete". Some works of art may be called "concrete" in opposition to "abstract". In application, especially to sculpture, this could be quite ambiguous. To call an image "concrete" does not have a ready meaning. Poems in the "Concrete" style were often quite abstract. An abstract, such as a caricature or building diagram, would be a physical thing with a location in space and origin at a time. In this use, being abstract does not conflict with being a physical object.

Another use of "abstract" does not have abstraction working on an image so much as on a more detailed case, perhaps even an actual case. That case may then be called "concrete". For example, the city of Königsberg was divided by a river with two islands. There were seven bridges connecting the two sides and the islands and there was a famous challenge, to walk around all the bridges crossing each bridge only once. This can be described as a concrete, particular problem. Euler gave an abstract description of the problem, eliminating all but the essential features and an abstract solution proving that all problems of that structure are unsolvable. In this use, there is a contrast between "abstract" and "concrete".

An abstract may be a particular physical object, such as a sketch on paper. We can also see that a concrete case need not be physical. Consider the problem of listing in order the prime factors of 2,786. A more abstract problem would be listing the prime factors of any given natural number. It is easy to describe an algorithm for solving the more abstract problem and to make a concrete application of that algorithm to the concrete case of 2,786. That does not mean that 2,786 is a

physical object. Of course, we would not call it a concrete object either. It is a concrete case relative to a more abstract problem. Pure mathematics can move to increasingly abstract studies in this way without ever starting with physical things, though mathematical problems may also come by abstraction from physics problems which started with specific physical arrangements.

Being more abstract need not conflict with being physical. Two sculptures may represent some famous event, with one being much more abstract and the other being a concrete representation of the event. (We can spare ourselves having both done in concrete---make it marble.) The one sculpture being abstract does not involve its being any less a physical object.

This is not to deny that "abstract" may be used in contrast to "concrete" to emphasize that the latter is a specific physical thing and the former, say, exists "only as an idea". While I do not agree that "Justice exists only in the abstract", the saying is a natural use of "abstract". It is not well interpreted to mean that justice does not exist in space and time. It means that justice does not exist at all---except as an ideal. If that is wrong, and there was, for example, justice at Nuremberg, as many say, it was located in space and time. Most would agree that injustice can be quite concrete.

2.

Philosophical use of "abstract" is notably different, in that it has come to mean something incompatible with existence in space and time (or space-time---not a distinction to be undertaken here). Being abstract may even be defined as existing separately from space and time. Materialist opponents of Platonism hold that nothing exists outside space and time. Lest that be dismissed as tautologous due to "outside", they may put it that everything that exists is located in space and time. Including space and time can be managed with such maneuvers as calling space the ultimate place and time the ultimate occasion, locating them at, or in, themselves. (Whether space is located in time, or time located in space, can be set aside along with space-time.)

The view that everything that exists is located in space and time is worthy of consideration. So is the view that some abstract things would, if they existed, not exist in space and time. But to infer from the premise that if an alleged kind of thing were to exist, it would not exist in space and time, the conclusion that the thing would be abstract is either mistaken or dependent on a use of "abstract" not in keeping with the ordinary meaning. A critic may say "Platonic universals exist only in the abstract" as in the example above of "Justice exists only in the abstract" to mean that the platonic idea is only an idea, and a bad one at that. To use "abstract" to mean "not existing in space and time" is a misuse.

This philosophical use of "abstract" arose in discussing the relation of general terms to universals. Giving a general account of a general term has caused philosophers trouble. The trouble starts with distinguishing a general term such as "dog" from a singular term such as "Fido". To say "dog" applies generally to many animals while "Fido" applies to only one is not a guide to a general distinction. "Trufflehound" could be a general term even if it turned out there never have been any trufflehounds, and "Fido" could be used to name thousands of dogs. Platonism, or more generally,

realism about properties, attempts to answer in terms of idealized grammar, either in terms of the origin of language (the "primary' uses) or in terms of ideal or logically perfect languages. A general term t is introduced into a language, "in the primary case", to "express" a property F which is common to many things. The general term t applies truly to a thing x if x is an instance of the property F. A singular term is introduced, in the primary case, to "denote", "designate", "name" just one thing. A singular term is true of a thing in a different way than a general term. It is true of x if x is the thing the term was introduced to name.

The primary uses are extended by compounding, such as conjunction, disjunction, and conditionalization. Compounding serves a variety of functions which make it logically difficult to describe in a general way, but truth-functional compounds offer a clear picture of how general terms can be formed which apply only to one thing or to none. Such compounds retain the linguistic form signaling generality. A device such as the definite article can modify a general term T to signal the claim or presumption of designating a single thing, "the T", to form a singular term which also expresses a property. Assigning different things the same proper name can be seen as an accident arising from the extension of language use from a small community of users to a larger number with less and less coordination. The "logically perfect language" included the ideal of avoiding this defect of using a proper name to name different things - a "defect" standard in natural languages.

On the property realist view about general terms, they are linguistic expressions with the primary, original purpose, of expressing a property, so that the property can be attributed to a thing x by applying the general term to x. Realists regard one important kind of universal to be a property shared by more than one thing. The original purpose of a general term would be to apply truly to more than one thing by expressing a property common to those things. But logical compounding results in properties and general terms which apply only to one thing or to none. On the realist view, a property is not a linguistic item, and exists whether or not it is recognized by humans. (Whether a property is also independent of instances is a point on which realists are divided.)

In giving examples for general discussion, simple pointing gestures may not work and it is common to use linguistic predicates. We might say that Spot, Rover and Fido are dogs and thus share the common property of being a dog. Nominalists can understand that as a figure of speech, but hold that what the three dogs have in common, the universal, is the term "dog" or predicate "___ is a dog" or related linguistic items. Realists hold that the universal property is not a linguistic item and could have existed before there was language or language users. There are properties not expressed by any linguistic terms and there are now grammatically correct linguistic general terms which do not express properties at all, retaining only the misleading grammatical form of general terms.

This latter feature means that a realist cannot rely generally on identifying a property by such a device as putting a general term T in the blank of "the property of being a _____" or "what it is to be a _____". "Scientific" realists may deny that such a term as "dog" expresses a property common to those things x such that a majority of competent English speakers would agree that "dog" applies truly to x. Even if there is the scientifically testable property of being such that properly interviewed

speakers would agree "dog" is true of x, that property could not be what causes those speakers to so agree and thus would not be the property expressed by the term. No doubt, some property of x must explain why competent speakers generally apply T to x. This need not, in general, be the property, if any, which is expressed by T.

For example, assume, strictly for purpose of discussion, that there is such a property as being a cocker spaniel. "Cocker spaniel" has problems similar to "dog", but the pretense should be clear---the phrase expresses being a cocker spaniel. Now consider an x such that competent speakers agree that "dog" applies truly to x. How this would be proven is important---we assume it is true. If asked "What would you call x?" most of the competent speakers might reply "It's a cocker spaniel". That, which we are assuming is a property, would be the one causing the acceptance of "dog" (the testers would not include "cocker spaniel" among the options). But it is not the property expressed by "dog", even if "dog" expresses a property and being a cocker is a property. This is just one way in which a property causing application of a term may not be a property expressed by the term.

On the nominalist view, the most natural account of truth would be pragmatic, agreement in usage which leads to generally satisfactory consequences in guiding scientific practice. Natural language tends to be unreliable by this criterion, since general satisfaction among users is badly lacking in uniformity and may also be a very low standard. Pragmatic nominalism is most practical (pragmatically successful) in reference to idealized scientific language. Nominalism and property realism are two opposing accounts of what a universal, a commonality, is. The realist says it is a shared extra-linguistic property, the nominalist says it is a commonly applicable general term.

In natural language, ambiguity is a major problem for nominalism. The set of things to which "junk" applies truly share the common property of having "junk" apply truly to them, but that is a logically and scientifically trifling commonality, unlike the boats, narcotics and junk store items. A nominalist might reply that some commonalities are trifling and some are not, and the sorting is determined by pragmatic considerations. That does not answer the point that the sorting is not being accomplished by "junk". The status of nominalism on this problem is not the concern here.

Neither of those accounts of the nature of a universal provide a basis for answering the question as to what justifies applying a general term to a previously unobserved candidate. If an animal is seen for the first time and a speaker is challenged to justify calling it a dog, neither the reply "That's what most people would call it and that usage works well" nor "It is an instance of the property of being a dog" would be adequate. (This is not to assume that the question, either in the particular case or in general, is a good question.)

It might seem that, if it is a fact that applying T to x is a pragmatic success, this would serve to answer a request to justify the application. That is false. Claiming the application is a pragmatic success begs the question. Proving it is a success would be an answer, but that is a different matter. Let us grant for purpose of discussion that for "A is guilty of fraud" to be true is for the attribution to be a pragmatic success. Then to say "Guilty" is true because it is a pragmatic success is no better than saying it is true because it is true, or a success because it is a success.

The fact that the attribution will be a success cannot justify, nor can it explain, why I made the attribution. Believing that the attribution will be a success cannot properly explain my attribution because the belief is too close to the attribution. Believing it is true that x is T does not explain believing that x is T. Neither the pragmatic nominalist nor the property realist accounts of a general term applying truly are a basis for either justifying application as correct or explaining what causes application. This is not a criticism of those views, just a warning against misconstruing what they are attempting to do. There are three distinct projects---(I) explaining what, if anything is common to the things to which a general term applies, (II) explaining what, if anything, justifies applying a general term to a candidate and (III) explaining what, if anything, causes the application of a general term by an agent (correctly or incorrectly). This brings us back to the idea of abstraction.

3.

Besides the nominalists and the property realists, there are the conceptualists, who hold that a universal is an idea and thus a mental item. The essence of the conceptualist theory of universals is that a universal, in the simplest case, is an idea or "concept" which is created by a process of abstraction. The person experiences a sufficient number of instances and abstracts from these sensory images to form an abstract mental image which can be recognized as somehow sufficiently depicting each of the cases. Stated in this way, the theory is an easy target for ridicule, as Berkeley shows in his discussion of Locke. It is almost enough for Berkeley to cite Locke's own words. Locke says that even such a relatively easy case as the general idea of a triangle "must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once...In effect, it is something imperfect, that cannot exist; an idea wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together".

That is a very unpromising formula for a theory. Trying to form a triangle image which is neither right, nor obtuse nor acute is what Locke would call combining inconsistent ideas. On a common use of "idea", there is no difficulty at all in combining inconsistent ideas--- attending to the compound property of being, for example, a triangle which is both acute and obtuse. Similarly, the idea of a natural number which is both prime and composite is just as easy and clear as either of its components. It is equally easy to see that the idea is inconsistent. It was more difficult to see that the idea of a rational square root of 2 is inconsistent. In any case, seeing an idea to be inconsistent is no reason to find the idea itself at all difficult to grasp. Seeing it to be inconsistent is just understanding it better. But Locke is taking the ideas to be images, which is quite another matter. Forming an image of a triangle which is both acute and obtuse is not a likely project.

It may be unfair to Locke to characterize him as holding that the general idea of a triangle is a person's introspectable mental image, since he says that such an image "cannot exist". The characterization may be the penalty for his ironical style. When we say that someone understands the general idea of a triangle, this is merely to convey that the person applies the term "triangle" sufficiently in conformity with general use of the term. That cannot explain why the person applies

the term as they do. The conceptualist theory goes beyond the innocent observation about usage to offer the "concept" as a mental item which has a causal role in that usage.

Of the three historical theories as to what it is to be a universal, the conceptualist theory is the least plausible. This is in spite of the fact that most proponents of introspectable mental images as providing meaning for general terms do not claim one image per term, but rather, think of the "connotation" or "sense" of a term as a range of images linked by similarity. This makes the images achievable, but at the cost of losing universality. The fact that an obtuse triangle "matches" one mental image filed under "triangle" and an acute triangle matches another image in that file does not qualify either image or the whole file as the mental image constituting the commonality, the universal.

Mere similarity is not what unites the set of images into one concept. One can draw a long obtuse triangle and snip off a tiny piece from one end to form a quadrilateral. That quadrilateral will be perceived as more similar to the original triangle than either is to some acute triangle. What unites the triangle images is that anything matching either one of them is a triangle. That does not supply a candidate for the entity common to all triangles. Furthermore, the conceptualist candidate for a universal leads into subjectivism and private language, because the concept, as a mental item, cannot be the same entity from one agent to another. The idea that communication depends on similarity of concepts rather than identity can make some sense in a different context, but there is no hope for the idea that the one thing common to a number of things is a number of similar things.

The platonic realist answer to the question what is common to a number of things to which a general term T applies truly, is that, in natural language, there may be nothing of logical importance beyond the property of being a thing to which T applies truly. That commonality can be trifling due to ambiguity, among other things. However, T may apply by virtue of expressing a property common to the instances, and that property is something independent of having instances and independent of minds. Independence from instances can be hard to discern in the case of properties which necessarily have instances, such as being a prime number. Giving examples of properties is profoundly difficult on the realist theory due to the very independence of properties from predicates, since philosophers are so dependent on predicates for communication in general discussion from separated locations.

The other property realists, the "scientific" realists, are distinguished primarily by insisting that everything is located in space and time. This raises the question as to where a property, such as being a triangle or being a hydrogen atom (if those are examples---a scientific realist could say, consistently with their position, "hydrogen atom" is still a loose term not adequately tied to a definite property) is located. The main hope for an answer is that the property is located wherever its instances are located in space and time. (How this relates to locating atomic particles will not be undertaken here.) This leads to denying that there are uninstantiated properties, since, by that standard of location, they would fail to be located in space and time. That is quite awkward logically, because, if F and G are properties, the material negation of either and the material conjunction

should be properties. Properties should be closed under logical compounds. The physicalism of scientific realists causes them to lose the Platonist idea of the independence of properties from their instances and also to resist clear logical rules as if they were "metaphysical". The two realisms still agree about independence from minds.

Each of the platonic and the scientific realist accounts of universals could be described as a "no-account" account. They mainly emphasize what a universal is not---not dependent on minds or language. "Property common to a number of things" is positive, but if three people pool funds to buy a sailboat, it is a property common to each of them but would not be acceptable to the realists as a universal. In a polygamous society a spouse is common to many but not a universal for the realists. How to disambiguate? The boat cannot be predicated truly of the common owners, the spouse cannot be predicated truly of the other spouses. How is a property predicated? This can be done by social animals including humans, without language, but not in communication from separated locations. We rely on predicates and are thus back to general terms.

The nominalist account is admirably clear. The universal can be pointed out on a page or written out on a blackboard. There is, of course, the possibility of ontological confusion about the term, involving type versus token. But a sensible discussion in terms of tokens is manageable. The main problem is ambiguity. But idealization about that is equally attractive to realists. Nominalism is the most forthcoming and simple answer for project I, as to the nature of universals. Neither the nominalist nor the realist account for project I have direct implications for project II, what justifies attributing a universal or III, what causes attributing. The conceptualist's attempt at project I offers a candidate for the universal which is not just bland, but weighted with obvious defects.

4.

However, the conceptualist answer to project I can look better than the others when we move on to project III, since it implies a clear answer for that, explaining what causes application. This is assuming there are such events as "Agent A applied T to x", either in their own thinking or in assertion to others. Some might prefer to eliminate in favor of such as "A produced a token of T in the relevant way while in the appropriate sort of proximity to x" (or has a disposition to do that). I assume that applying happens, and then, like every event (setting aside quantum phenomena) is caused.

Consider a cognitive robot stationed along an assembly line to monitor passing widgets. Regarding the robot as a cognitive agent can be questionable. The robot is assigned to determine whether a widget is defective. If defect is being over 12" high, the robot might extend an arm at just over 12", so that unsatisfactory widgets are knocked off. That earns no credit for cognitive achievement. If there is one simple feature that determines acceptability, the robot may be a one trick pony. But there may be a complex range of disqualifying features and a high success rate for our agreeing with the robot's rejections, which makes it natural to count the robot as a cognitive agent.

This calls for explanation and a reasonable possibility is that the robot can take in images of the candidates and compare them with templates stored in the robot's "mind". For example, the robot might get a photo image, or brush the widget to "feel" its texture, or "listen" to its resonance, "smell" it or "taste" it (that is, detect signs of chemical or other composition which would produce in humans images with such sensory names), etc. for a variety of perceptual images. These images could then be compared by various means with stored "templates". That there were numerous templates would not count against their constituting one complex template as the robot's concept of an acceptable widget. Alternately, the complex template could be a concept of an unsuitable widget. It would not be what is common to all the defectives or to all the acceptables, the universal "defective widget" or "acceptable widget".

The concept of a concept sketched here could be precisely illustrated in an actual working robot. It is reasonable to suppose that something similar would explain much application of general terms by people in simple perceptual cases. (That the idea makes sense does not prove it is correct.) The idea that agent A recognizes x is F by taking in an image of x and comparing it with a stored F concept breaks down for more complex cases. If a robot is asked to determine whether this semi-trailer can drive under this bridge, with the road dipping under the bridge, the question can have the logical form, is x (the semi) an instance of F (able to drive under this bridge). "Taking an image of the semi to compare with a concept for being able to pass under that bridge" is liable to badly describe the operation of the robot in solving the problem. That would be true also for an abstract version of the problem. Computation involving the length of the truck and the length and shape of the curve of the road bed, etc. is not a matter of comparing an image with a stored "concept" to see if it "fits". To view the computation involved in solving the problem as construction of a concept is quite forced.

The difference between a concept constructed by the agent and one somehow built in was behind controversy about "innate ideas". Descartes and Kant held the concept of substance to be innate. For Kant this amounts to an agent needing a built in (innate) capacity to collect distinct sensory impressions together to form a compound which is taken by the agent as one unitary image, which may then be regarded as caused by some object perceived. This concept cannot plausibly be regarded as formed by abstraction, and even for derived concepts, Kant does not rely on abstraction. Some commentators can even depict Kant as seeing "concept" in a deflationary way, as a matter of competence in applying a general term. Locke's vigorous (though not rigorous) rejection of innateness, and his skepticism about the respectability of "substance", suggests that, in spite of his irony, he was committed to the view that the meaning of a general term is an idea arrived at by a process of abstraction.

Even for the easiest cases, conceptualism as a theory of justification of application, project II, has been well criticized by Plato in *Theaetetus*. To justify a verdict of "defective widget", it begs the question to say it matches your defective widget template or fails to match your acceptable widget template. "How do you know it's a defective widget?" "It meshes with my template for defective

widgets." How do you know that template is the one for defective widgets?" Such regress does not count against the theory as an account of what causes application, project III. On question III, property realism and nominalism are nonstarters. Conceptualism is a serious starter, even if the start leaves a very long way to go. It would not be inconsistent for realism or nominalism to turn to conceptualism for an answer to project III. The difference is that conceptualism's answer to I is essentially also an answer to III (and much more plausible there). The realist and nominalist answers to I do not imply an answer to III.

5.

Although conceptualism is a failure as a theory about the nature of universals (I), it clearly justifies describing a universal as an "abstract entity". On the conceptualist theory, a universal would be an abstract entity in a clear meaning of the term "abstract" following the common use of that term. To say that conceptualist universals are abstract entities is a justifiable section heading for an outline about universals. But philosophical usage describes a universal according to the platonic view, as an abstract entity, and means by this an entity not located in space or time. This is a gratuitous new use of "abstract" applied so as to conflate platonic realism and conceptualism. Platonism does not regard universals as resulting from a mental process of abstraction. It regards them as existing independently of minds and language.

Platonic realism does differ from scientific realism in regarding universals as not having locations in space or time, which would make them abstract entities on the gratuitous philosophical use. There is an important platonistic argument for the view that the soul is eternal. The soul is causally influenced by forms, properties. Contemplating the property of being a square root of 2, can cause the thought that it is impossible for there to be an instance. The property is not in space or time and is eternal. So what it causally influences, the mind or soul, is also not in space or time and is eternal. That crude formulation makes the argument highly vulnerable to criticism, and I do not endorse it or attribute it to Plato. But the popular criticism of platonic universals, that they must be unknowable, since they are not in space or time and humans cannot be causally influenced by anything not in space or time, begs the question against that argument. The argument does connect the platonic view with the idea that universals are not in space or time.

It is nonetheless a bad mischaracterization of the platonic view of universals to treat it as making not being spatiotemporal a defining characteristic of a universal. The position that a universal is located at all places and times where any instance is located is needed by a scientific realist in order to avoid having to admit the existence of anything not in space and time. That is confusing location with instantiation. Most importantly, defining location that way makes it impossible for uninstantiated properties to exist and thus rules out the closure of properties even under just material conjunction. Assuming property realism, the Platonist version that properties are not located in space and time is the one supported by logic. Nonetheless, that is very badly described by identifying

being abstract with not being in space and time and thus encouraging conflation of Platonism with conceptualism.

Furthermore, it is not obvious that even the crude conceptualist picture of a universal as a mental item requires regarding the universal as not in space and time. There is no obvious inconsistency in a mind-brain identity theorist being a conceptualist. And we can recall Locke's famous comment that when he travels from Oxford to London, his mind accompanies him on the entire journey.

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A New Standard to Discuss Ancient Philosophy

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Abstract:

The connection between ancient philosophy and modernity has to be facilitated via the elaboration of a new standard to discuss ancient philosophy. The philological work on ancient texts has to become complementary to a philosophical study of ancient wisdom which gives back to the subject its identity as source of innovations. To unveil the modernity of ancient philosophy is necessary that interdisciplinarity is accepted as part of the subject. More than this, humanities have to envisage themselves not in antithesis with science but as science, the science which studies what being human is.

Keywords: Traditional and Modern; Standards Reformed; Philological and Philosophical; Interdisciplinarity; Humanities and Science; Science of the Human

I. A new standard to discuss ancient philosophy

It is usually required that researchers specialized in ancient philosophy are able to read the texts in which they have to work in the original language in which they were written. Surely, the idea of a human being who discusses the shade of meaning of an ancient Greek word, trying to contextualize the word in the line in which it is used, and the line in the specific passage where it occurs, can generate in the modern reader many interrogatives; easily, a large part of these interrogatives are brought about by the curiosity to know how a human being can genuinely be interested in a dead language, in a world which already imposes to know so many alive languages. Moreover, how can a person who *enjoys* discussing the meaning of a dead word can look like? Here the image of the researcher in ancient philosophy, in the mind of the modern reader, becomes that of the mummy, whose bandages are used as bookmarks. This individual can be a good company for a Halloween party but there is no other use for him or her in our real, modern, world.

I guess that many researchers in ancient philosophy have experienced a moment in their career in which they felt the need that their sarcophagus was opened; that said, we, as researchers in ancient philosophy, do know the importance to start our investigations from an accurate examination of the primary sources thus, we are fully aware of the importance of a thorough analysis of the words which compose these sources. How can we convince the modern reader that we are a good company also when the Halloween party is over? First of all, and this will be a recurrent concept in this piece, we have to make an effort to connect our studies with ideas which are familiar to the modern reader.

Contemporary readers create a new language constantly, they coin new terms, and these terms contribute to the evolution of the language. The evolution of the language, tells us the story of the evolution of humanity.

When we debate the meaning of an ancient Greek word, we are trying to render it in the most accurate way. The philological examination of the ancient texts, gives us the chance to captivate their essence; the choice of the words, the patterns that they construct, or that they do not construct, sheds light on the meaning of the text that we are taking into consideration. This helps us to render with more precision the philosophical message of the ancient Greek text. The research on ancient philosophy is interlaced with its philological consideration. Philological and philosophical studies are both essential in ancient philosophy. They are necessary, complementary, steps in the examination of a philosophy whose heritage is vital not only for modern philosophy but also for modern science and, as we will see, is very interesting for the wider public, too.

A good example of ancient Greek philosophy whose merits are important not only for modern philosophy but also for modern science is given by the atomic theory elaborated by Leucippus and Democritus in the 5th century B.C:

> Galen, *On the Elements according to Hippocrates* 1.2:
> 'For by convention colour, by convention sweet, by convention bitter, but in reality atoms and the void' says Democritus, who thinks that all the perceptible qualities are brought into being, relative to us who perceive them, by the combination of atoms, but by nature nothing is white or black or yellow or red or bitter or sweet. By the expression 'by convention' he means 'conventionally' and 'relative to us,' not according to the nature of things themselves, which he calls by contrast 'reality,' forming the term from 'real' which means 'true.' The whole substance of this theory is as follows. People think of things as being white and black and sweet and bitter and all the other qualities of that kind, but in truth 'thing' and 'nothing' is all there is. That too is something he himself said, 'thing' being his name for the atoms and 'nothing' for the void. All the atoms are small bodies without qualities, and the void is a space in which all these bodies move up and down for ever, or somehow get entangled with one another or collide or rebound, and in these contacts they separate and combine again, thus making all combinations including our bodies and their states and perceptions. They think that the primary bodies are incapable of being affected (some, such as the followers of Epicurus, taking them to be invulnerable because of their hardness, others, such as the followers of Leucippus, to be indivisible because of their smallness), and incapable of any change in those qualities which all men, taught by their senses, have believed in; thus they say that none of them becomes hot or cold, or dry or wet, much less turns black or white or suffers any qualitative change of any kind. (Translation by Taylor 1999, 143-144)

In these lines Galen summarises a crucial concept in the atomism: all the qualities that we perceive are just a convention because the truth is that the only existing elements are the atoms and the void. The subject of this article is not the atomism, thus I am not going to illustrate how atomism is treated by Leucippus, Democritus and Epicurus; for the scope of this piece it is sufficient to know

that they agreed in the recognition that the reality is given by atoms and void. This is an intuition which is utterly brilliant; in fact, its value has been openly acknowledged during numerous conferences given by physicists that I attended. Strangely, when I listened to researchers in ancient philosophy who were presenting the atomism, they rarely highlighted the extraordinary value that the intuitions of the atomists have, in contemporary science and philosophy. Surely, you can think that I do not know the right researchers in ancient philosophy. This may be the case, but both when I listen to researchers in ancient philosophy and when I read their studies, I realize that most of the research in ancient philosophy, even when it presents characters which are shockingly modern, as in the case of atomism, tends to begin and end within the boundaries of ancient philosophy. If there is a connection with modern science or philosophy, this connection is merely mentioned or, at most, developed in few lines. This is a tendency which should be radically changed. As researchers in ancient philosophy, we should encourage the dialogue with researchers in other fields. In this way, we would draw attention to the fact that not only ancient philosophy has philosophical merits as other philosophical fields, but that it can also be an active part in the establishment of a fruitful dialogue among fields of inquiry, as I will illustrate in the next section of this piece, treating the subject of interdisciplinarity.

There is one last point concerning the quotation from Galen cited above that I want to take into consideration: Galen explains that Democritus, when he wants to draw a contrast between what is believed by convention, what appears to the senses, and what really is, he uses the opposition between convention defined as *nomos* and nature defined as *eteē*. Normally, the distinction between convention and nature would have been defined in terms of a contrast between *nomos* and *phusis* (on this point see Taylor 1999, 9 and DK 68 B 49) but Democritus has coined a new term, *eteē*, to indicate the reality. When we point to the coinage of a new term by Democritus to define reality we are doing a philological work which potentially could make us come back to the Halloween mood that I mentioned at the beginning of this piece. But the risk can be avoided if we focus on the *function* of this philological work: Democritus wants to underline that he, for the first time, has understood what our world is. He wants that this discovery is highlighted by the birth of a new word. At the beginning of this piece I observed that contemporary readers create a new language constantly. They can coin new words in connection with the development of new technologies, as it happens with the use of the term YouTuber. Democritus, with no advanced technology at his disposal, coined a new term to let us know what our *reality* is. He understood that the real is given by atoms and void in the 5th century B.C. This intuition has never ceased to be a bright star of thought. The light of this star is so bright that it gives us the chance not only to stress the importance of ancient philosophy for the current philosophical debates but also to stress the crucial role of ancient philosophy in the development of a dialogue among different fields of inquiry and with the wider public, as will be emphasized in the next sections of this work.

2. Ancient philosophy and interdisciplinarity

The atomism is only one of the many examples which can be taken from ancient philosophy to show the philosophical significance of the subject. As I emphasized in the previous section of this piece, the importance of the subject is not limited to the progress of the subject itself but it is related also to other fields of inquiry. Thus, ancient philosophy should take advantage of the possibility created by its investigations, and should start a dialogue with other branches of philosophy and other fields of inquiry, too. In the first part of this article, I have used the atomism to show the relevance of ancient philosophy to contemporary science. Now I want to utilise an example taken from my own work, because it gives me the chance to discuss not only its final result but also the stages, and the difficulties, which characterized its development. In my book, *Plato and Intellectual Development: A New Theoretical Framework Emphasising the Higher-Order Pedagogy of the Platonic Dialogues*, I present my theory according to which

> Platonic texts promote rational development through a higher-order pedagogy: Plato has not written a textbook whose content can merely be summarized by the readers. He has created a text to which they are required to respond and the act of responding to the text is as important as the text itself: the two of them taken together complete Plato's task. If we want to use an image to express this concept, we can compare a textbook to a "bidimensional" way of conveying thoughts, in which the only two dimensions accepted are given by the author's thinking and the words that he uses to express it. Plato does not want to convey a static description of how things are. He has created a text that calls out for completion by the readers' further contributions. This does not mean that Plato's words are incomplete in the sense that they communicate thoughts which have not yet reached a good degree of elaboration. On the contrary, it means that the words written by Plato are so well mastered by their author that they are able to stimulate the reader to overcome them... In this way, Plato is adding a further dimension to his texts: they are not only composed by words which have the goal of expressing the thinking of their author but they comprise the thinking of their users, too. The readers of Plato's texts occupy a third dimension which adds rational volume to Plato's work. (Saracco 2017, 16)

We are not here to discuss this theory and, obviously, the scope of this piece is not to present in an exhaustive way my research thus, there will not be in this article sufficient elements to criticise the weaknesses, or appreciate the strengths, of my work. As I said, here I want to present the stages of development of an intuition that I had, in order to create an occasion to discuss the necessity that ancient philosophy opens up itself to the collaboration with other subjects. At the beginning of my investigation about Plato's words used as intellectual stimulations of the reader[1], I took into consideration the fact that Plato chose to convey his thinking exclusively by writing dialogues. I emphasized that for Plato that was not a mere formal choice but a philosophical decision, a specific *request* for *collaboration* from the writer to his reader (Saracco 2017, 13). In order to clarify the nature of this request for collaboration, I relied on the theories of modern pedagogists. Of course, doing so, I was not trying to demonstrate that Plato could foresee these developments of modern

scientific debates. I was using modern science because what Plato was doing was pertinent to modern science as well as what the atomists discovered in the 5th century b. c. is pertinent to modern theories about atoms and void. Obviously, the atomists in the 5th century b. c. could not foresee the modern scientific discoveries centred on the atoms; similarly, Plato could not foresee what Vygotsky and Kohlberg discovered about pedagogy. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no plausible connection between the atomists of the 5th century b. c. and modern scientists or that there is no plausible connection between Plato's pedagogy and modern theories about pedagogy. In fact,

> Vygotsky highlights how cooperation allows learners to work with people who know more than they do (Vygotsky 1986, 189). When we, as learners, are challenged by someone who knows more than we do, this stimulation makes us gradually leave what we are able to do to move in the direction of a successive phase of rational development. When this kind of cooperation takes place the person who knows less does not merely absorb notions transmitted by the person who knows more. The person who knows more uses her intellectual maturity to stimulate intellectually the learner, offering in this way a rational guidance which is not compulsion to be the same rational entity that the person more intellectually developed is. This exposure to the reasoning of someone who has reached a high level of intellectual development is, according to Kohlberg (Kohlberg 1981, 27), well portrayed by the Socratic questioning, in which the interlocutors of the philosopher are challenged by a more refined reasoning than theirs. In fact, Socrates' methodological sophistication is informed by his capability of recognizing ignorance. Socrates has acquired a clear awareness of how partial one's knowledge can be, even though it may seem that it possesses no deficiency (Apology, 21 d). This intellectual maturity is not utilized to transform Socrates' interlocutors into rational copies of the philosopher. As Kohlberg notices, if teachers used Socratic questioning, they would stimulate their "students in such a way as to arouse disagreement and uncertainty as to what is right" (Kohlberg 1981, 27) and this would "stimulate stage growth": (Kohlberg 1981, 27) the involvement in a dialectical exchange with someone intellectually more sophisticated than we are, opens up a cognitive horizon characterized by a controversiality that has to be analysed using our critical skills. (Saracco 2017, 13-14)

When I was doing the research which gave me the chance to write the passage quoted above, I was astonished to realize how much the learning sciences are indebted to ancient philosophy. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of the existence of a cooperation between a learner and a person who knows more than we do. This importance is not given by the fact that a learner has to merely absorb the notions presented by the person who has reached a superior stage of intellectual maturity. On the contrary, the person who possesses a superior level of cognitive refinement, challenges the learners so that they realize that what they had the habit of accepting passively can be criticized. In this way, the learners are able to overcome the intellectual stage in which they are, growing intellectually. Kolhberg, as indicated in the excerpt above, explicitly ascribes to the Socratic questioning the capability of promoting the intellectual maturity of his interlocutors. Socrates' interlocutors are stimulated by the philosopher to recognize a fact that is very clear in Socrates' mind: ignorance is the distinctive trait of *everyone*'s knowledge. Kolhberg recognizes the crucial importance

of the Socratic questioning, related to its capability to create a controversiality whose exploration is crucial to grow intellectually. In fact, he explicitly invites the teachers to use the Socratic questioning to promote the cognitive development of their students.

Only few considerations taken from Kohlberg's work are sufficient to show that it is possible a dialogue between ancient philosophy and other disciplines. But those few words point at much more than that: ancient philosophy *already* has a place in modern debates, there is an *existing* dialogue in which modern science and ancient philosophy actively exchange their knowledge. So, the problem does not seem to be the recognition by other disciplines of the value of ancient philosophy. The problem is a tendency *within* the field of ancient philosophy to *not* communicate with experts in other branches of philosophy or in other fields of inquiry. I mentioned the fact that contemporary scientists acknowledge the value of the intuition of the atomists and thus they explicitly acknowledge their debt to ancient philosophy. Again, in the excerpt quoted above, we see an explicit recognition of the value of ancient philosophy, not only in contemporary *theories* of education but also in their *practice*, since Kohlberg explicitly encourages the teachers to utilise the Socratic questioning to stimulate intellectually their students.

When I spoke with experts in the learning sciences, they were conscious of the contribution of the Socratic dialogue within the field but, strangely, experts in ancient philosophy are usually resistant to collaborate with researchers who work in other fields of inquiry. This leads to the paradoxical situation, that I have already mentioned when I took into consideration the intuitions of the atomists in relation to modern physics, in which experts in ancient philosophy are not aware of the relevance of the field across the disciplines. This tendency to make the research on ancient philosophy begin and end within ancient philosophy does render extremely difficult for the researchers to develop new perspectives to analyse the work of ancient philosophers. Nevertheless, these new angles to appreciate ancient philosophy are vital for the establishment of the role of the subject *today*. Thus, it is necessary that ancient philosophy updates the standards on which researchers can operate *within* the field: being part of the field cannot mean no communication with other branches of philosophy or with other fields. On the contrary, the communication with other fields of inquiry has to be promoted, as a good means to highlight the relevance of ancient philosophy to the progress of contemporary knowledge.

3. Science of the human

I have just taken into consideration Kohlberg's acknowledgment of the value of the Socratic dialogue and his explicit suggestion that teachers employ this kind of dialectic interaction to favour the rational development of their students. I have utilised the learning sciences, to develop my theory about a higher-order pedagogy, devised by Plato to stimulate the epistemic capacities of his readers via the written words. This research is not the subject of this piece. Nevertheless, as in the previous part of this article, I want to use my work, because it gives me the chance not only to present an example pertinent to my argumentation but also to describe the hurdles related to the elaboration

of these theories. These difficulties can be helpful as a starting point for a reflection on whether and how the standards within the field of ancient philosophy have to be reformed.

In the previous sections of this article I have focused my attention on the importance that ancient philosophy be in dialogue with other fields of inquiry. Now I want to take into consideration the necessity that ancient philosophy be in dialogue also with the wider public. I have developed a project for children 8-12 years old. These young students will be the protagonists of an online dialogue in which children who attend schools in upper class, middle class, and under resourced communities will work together to face the challenges presented by learning units that I have elaborated beginning from Plato's philosophy[2] (Saracco 2017, 125-138; Saracco 2016 a; Saracco 2016 b). One of these units starts from the considerations about justice elaborated in the first book of the *Republic* by Polemarchus: he claims that it is just to give benefits to friends and harm to enemies but Plato invites the reader to reflect on the possibility that mistakes can be made and you can believe that someone is your friend but actually he or she is not[3]. Thus, if you think that just people can harm their enemies and you make a mistake judging who the enemies are, you will harm someone who was not unjust. Children are invited to reflect on this possibility, using an example taken from their everyday life:

> Imagine having a friend since starting school. When you begin school you are in the same class with him, and you have the same teachers. Over the years you have become very good in Math while he has problems understanding it. He is your friend so you try to help him by explaining Math but when you realize that he cannot understand, you give him the permission to copy your homework. The homework is correct; there is only a minor error. But that error is the same for you and your friend and the teacher notices. When the teacher asks for explanations you are sure that your friend will tell him what happened but, on the contrary, he states that you copied the homework off his paper when he wasn't looking. If he had seen that you were copying he would have stopped you. Another schoolmate, who was present when you were trying to explain Math to your friend but with whom you have never talked, raises his hand and explains everything to the teacher so you are not blamed for copying. The person you thought it was just to help because he was your friend turned out to be an enemy and an unknown person behaves as a friend (Saracco 2017, 131-132)

In another unit, children have to face the challenges related to the concept of justice presented by Thrasymachus in the first book of the *Republic* according to which justice is the advantage of the stronger[4]:

> In a class there is a student who is physically very strong, and he constantly beats another student to steal his snacks. He thinks that it is very advantageous having all those snacks for free, and you think that it is very advantageous for you to help him to steal the snacks of the weak student. That way you keep on the good side of the bully. But one day both of you discover that the weak student is very strong in science, but, of course, he will never help the two of you to understand that subject, and you constantly get Fs.

> Do you think that it is always easy to distinguish what is advantageous from what is bad for you or who is stronger from who is weaker? It can happen, as in the situation I have just described, that what seemed advantageous turns out to be bad for you, and the person who seemed very weak has his own type of strength. What is your opinion? Do you think that we can always know what is advantageous for us or who is weak? (Saracco 2016 a, 473)

The two examples that I have just cited are only *parts* of the learning units that I have devised. As I said, this article does not offer enough elements to judge my work; in fact, here my goal is not that of presenting my work to give the readers the chance to evaluate its strengths or faults. Rather, I am using my work because I know what were the difficulties related to its development. These difficulties may be helpful to begin to reflect upon the need to change the standards on which a research within ancient philosophy is usually developed. Moreover, I am using my work as an example of the possibility that ancient philosophy, in dialogue with other fields, in this case the learning sciences and philosophy of technology, can reach the wider public. As I discussed in the previous section of this article we, as researchers in ancient philosophy, should be more open to the dialogue with other fields of inquiry because this would help us to develop innovative perspectives to work on ancient philosophy. These perspectives could demonstrate that philosophy can have a leading role in the dialogue between the academy and the wider public, reinforcing in this way the importance of ancient philosophy within the field of philosophy.

There is an ongoing international debate about the role of the University in a time of international socio-economic crisis. Researches are funded by governments via the money of citizens who need to know whether the researchers are developing ideas which can be solutions to their problems. The project for children that I have elaborated is one example of how ancient philosophy can prove to be helpful also in everyday life. Young students who come from different socio-economic backgrounds are in dialogue with each other. They cooperate to elaborate reflections on themes whose critical evaluation will help them to make decisions in their everyday life. In fact, it is important that students evaluate critically the possibility that you can make mistakes when you judge a person; thus, you have to pay a lot of attention when you think that it could be just to harm someone, because it could be the case that this person will be the one who will help you when you are in difficulty. In the second example taken from my research, the students will reflect on a very actual issue, the problem of bullying in schools: they are invited to reflect on the notion of strength, to recognize that physical strength is not the only possible kind of strength; in this way young students will have the chance to reflect critically on their behaviour with the other classmates. I have only presented *sections* of the learning units that I have elaborated, but these few excerpts can give an idea of how ancient philosophy can be in dialogue with non philosophers. Ancient philosophy can be a good example of how philosophy can sharpen the critical skills of the wider public: it shows that the same situation can be evaluated from different perspectives, helping the non philosophers to experience the fact that different points of view are important resources, when a challenging situation has to be faced.

Ancient philosophy can be used to present difference as a resource rather than an obstacle (Saracco 2016). In this way this branch of philosophy can display to the wider public the importance of our cultural heritage. When we realize that the past can be helpful to recognize the mistakes that we make in the present we can also start a reflection of what we, as the past of future generations, want to leave as our heritage. Thus, ancient philosophy can be a precious resource to develop in the youth the conscience of the importance of the trace that they are leaving. This is crucial for a generation whose words, thanks to technology, have immediate resonance.

A use of ancient philosophy that proves its effects in everyday life contributes to underline its importance within the field of philosophy; more than this, when ancient philosophy reaches with efficacy the wider public confirms that humanities *are* science, the science whose subject *is* the human. This is a further stimulus to be in dialogue with *every* field of inquiry that can be helpful to render the extraordinary innovative power of the thoughts of the ancient philosophers. Ancient philosophers prove that history and tradition have not necessarily to be in contrast with innovation and modernity. On the contrary, the courage of the researchers of the past has a lot to teach today. We, as researchers in ancient philosophy, have the challenging task to demonstrate that we have learned from the brave innovators of the past.

Endnotes:

1. About this aspect see Susanna Saracco, "The Symposium and the Role of Literature for Epistemic Development." *Athens Journal of Humanities and Arts, Special Issue on 'Ideas of Plato in the Philosophy of the 21st century'* 5. 1 (2018): 61-81.
2. In this article I am not going to enter the debate about whether or not Plato can be considered an elitist. Nevertheless, I want to quote few significant lines taken from the *Republic*: "education is not what some people declare it to be, namely putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes… the power to learn is present in *everyone*'s soul… education… isn't the craft of putting sight into the soul. Education takes for granted that sight is there but that it isn't turned the right way or looking where it ought to look, and it tries to redirect it appropriately." (*Republic*, VII 518 b5-d7. My emphasis).
3. *Republic,* I 334 b7- d6.
4. *Republic,* I 339 a3.

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Descartes and Skepticism

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Abstract:

In this paper, I present an interpretation of Descartes that deemphasizes his skepticism. I analyze a selection of remarks from Descartes' correspondence in which he makes judgments about the skeptics. I argue that such remarks display Descartes' attitude of contempt for skeptical philosophy. Since Descartes associates the skeptics with the activity of constant and total doubting and yet presents scenarios that seemingly arise from extreme doubt—like the malicious demon hypothesis—I look at what Descartes says in the correspondence about his own use of doubt in his published works. Descartes distances himself from the skeptics because he claims that whereas they doubt everything and, in so doing, act heretically, he uses doubt for a noble purpose. I suggest that although Descartes is influenced by skeptical ideas and considers skeptical argumentation to be useful, his strategic use of such argumentation should not lead us to believe that he condones skepticism. Quite the contrary, most of his remarks on the subject show that Descartes is highly critical or dismissive of skeptical ideas. Therefore, I argue that it is more accurate to characterize Descartes as a philosopher generally opposed to skepticism.

Keywords: Descartes, skepticism, doubt, Montaigne, Cicero, Academic, Pyrrhonism

The opening line of Bernard Williams' essay, "Descartes's Use of Skepticism," reads, "Descartes was not a skeptic. One has to take a distant and inaccurate view of his writings to suppose that he was." (Williams 1983, 337) I agree with Williams. Descartes was not a skeptic. However, though he acknowledges that Descartes was not a skeptic, Williams believes that skepticism was of fundamental importance to both Descartes' reasoning and his philosophical approach. Skepticism, Williams says, was first "the extreme dramatization of uncertainty, an uncertainty which, largely independent of any philosophical discipline or exercise, already existed, and which Descartes felt he had to confront. It was, second, part of his method for overcoming uncertainty and attaining knowledge." (Williams 1983, 338)

There are many Cartesian scholars and historians of early modern philosophy who accentuate the role of skepticism in Descartes' thought. For example, in his classic book on early modern philosophy, *The History of Scepticism*, Richard Popkin argues that Descartes realized the danger of skepticism "to the cause of both science and religion" and, as a result, attempted to "set in motion

his philosophical revolution by discovering something 'so certain and so assured that all the most extravagant suppositions brought forward by the sceptics were incapable of shaking it.'" (Popkin 2003, 144–145) Popkin argues that Descartes was deeply concerned with skepticism and, in fact, that his philosophical project was primarily motivated by a skeptical threat.

It is understandable that Descartes' skepticism should be a topic of such pronounced scholarly engagement. Descartes' skeptical method of doubt in the First Meditation is often viewed as having been revolutionary for its time—a highly original means of turning inwards in order to arrive at the discovery of a self-evident and internally intuited first principle of philosophy (the *cogito*). Cartesian scholar Roger Ariew questions the historical accuracy of such an account. Through an exposition and an analysis of the writings of two other well-known seventeenth-century thinkers, Jean de Silhon and Antoine Sirmond—both of whom also make use of *cogitos* in their works—Ariew shows this type of portrayal of Descartes to be misleading. "That image of Descartes," he says, "does not mesh very well with some of what Descartes says about the *cogito* or with the reality of the reception of his philosophy in the seventeenth century." (Ariew 2011, 313) Ariew argues that most of the seventeenth-century critiques of Descartes focus on his metaphysical claims and their incompatibility with Scholastic and Aristotelian principles as well as Church doctrines. Even so, Ariew is perfectly aware of the current and prevalent view that Descartes' philosophical endeavors are closely connected to skepticism. He says, "Descartes' attempt to answer the skeptic by establishing that he exists as a thinking thing is often considered emblematic of modern philosophy." (Ariew 2011, 312)

In her article, "Descartes and Skepticism," Marjorie Grene points to the numerous differences between Descartes and the ancient skeptics in order to argue that Descartes was not a skeptic. Yet, Grene also recognizes the tendency for today's philosophers to associate Descartes with skepticism. "The hyperbolical doubt of the First Meditation," she says, "is often taken for the epitome of skepticism." (Grene 1999, 553) I argue that too much is made of Descartes' skepticism, but it is apparent that Descartes was influenced by skeptical ideas. To say otherwise would exhibit a misinformed view of his writings. Descartes utilizes hyperbolic doubt in the First Meditation, and he uses skeptical arguments and reasoning in both the *Discourse on Method* and the *Principles of Philosophy*. I would suggest that in the *Discourse* he echoes the language of Michel de Montaigne, who was well known during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for his skeptical writings, and the ideas of both Sextus Empiricus, a Greek Pyrrhonist from the second century A.D., and Cicero, a Roman Academic philosopher from the first century B.C.

Montaigne, Sextus, and Cicero in the *Discourse on Method*

It is not my view that Michel de Montaigne was a skeptic. Although Montaigne praises the intellectual attitude of the Pyrrhonists in his essay, the *Apology for Raymond Sebond,* such admiration does not justify characterizing him as a Pyrrhonist or as a skeptic. Some of Montaigne's motivations are non-skeptical. Much of his writing in the *Apology* is intended to admonish man for

his intellectual arrogance and to point him towards faith in, and reliance on, God. In addition, many of Montaigne's *Essays* aside from the *Apology* point to the influences of non-skeptical traditions, including Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Christianity.[1] Nevertheless, Montaigne was known in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for his use of skeptical reasoning in the *Apology* and, insofar as his discussions about—and approval of—Pyrrhonism in that work are concerned, we can say that he was certainly influenced by skeptical ideas.

There are no clear-cut or foolproof indications from Descartes' writings to support this view, but I would suggest that in the beginning of the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes' choice of words demonstrates the impression made on him by the writings of Montaigne.[2] He opens the *Discourse* with the following reflections: "Good sense is the best distributed thing in the world, for everyone thinks himself to be so well endowed with it that even those who are the most difficult to please in everything else are not at all wont to desire more of it than they have." (Descartes 2000, 46) Compare this to what Montaigne says in his essay, *On presumption*: "It is commonly held that good sense is the gift which Nature has most fairly shared among us, for there is nobody who is not satisfied with what Nature has allotted him." (Montaigne 2003, 746) There is no hint of skeptical reasoning in either of these statements, but Descartes' phraseology is strikingly similar to that of Montaigne, and it seems to suggest Montaigne's influence on him.

In Part Three of the *Discourse*, Descartes explains the reasons why, in practical life, he chose to live by a certain "provisional code of morals," the first two maxims of which, respectively, are quite similar to some of Sextus Empiricus' statements from the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and Cicero's remarks in the *Academica*. (Descartes 2000, 56) In Part One of the *Discourse*, Descartes explains the specific method he had used "to conduct his reason well" as well as his delimiting of that method to the search for—and attainment of—scientific and philosophical truth. (Descartes 2000, 47) Where such kinds of truth are concerned, Descartes argues that only certain knowledge is acceptable and that there can be no room for opinions or probabilistic reasoning. "Concerning philosophy," Descartes states, "considering how many opinions there can be about the very same matter that are held by learned people without there ever being the possibility of more than one opinion being true, I deemed everything that was merely probable to be well night false." (Descartes 2000, 49) However, while he shunned probability, accepted only certain knowledge, and diligently practiced his method in search of philosophical truth, in everyday life Descartes says that he chose to settle on probabilistic reasoning and follow commonly accepted opinions.

Descartes describes the pragmatic reasons for his decision to adhere to a provisional code of morals while pursuing philosophical truth. "In order not to remain irresolute in my actions," he explains, "while reason required me to be so in my judgments, and in order not to cease to live as happily as possible during this time, I formulated a provisional code of morals, which consisted of but three or four maxims." (Descartes 2000, 56) The first of these maxims is "to obey the laws and customs of my country, constantly holding on to the religion in which, by God's grace, I had been instructed from my childhood, and governing myself in everything else according to the most

moderate opinions and those furthest from excess—opinions that were commonly accepted in practice by the most judicious of those with whom I would have to live." (Descartes 2000, 56) Compare Descartes' first maxim to Sextus' description of how the ancient Pyrrhonian skeptics chose to live according to the customs and laws handed down to them: "Attending to what is apparent, we live in accordance with everyday observances, without holding opinions – for we are not able to be utterly inactive. These everyday observances seem to be fourfold and to consist in guidance by nature, necessitation by feelings, handing down of laws and customs, and teaching kinds of expertise." (Sextus 2000, 9) Just as Descartes governed himself in public life according to commonly accepted opinions, the Pyrrhonists followed, "by the handing down of customs and laws...from an everyday point of view," common opinions including, for instance, the opinion that "piety is good and impiety bad." (Sextus 2000, 9)

Descartes' second maxim of his provisional morality is "to be as firm and resolute in my actions as I could, and to follow the most doubtful opinions, once I had decided on them, with no less constancy than if they had been very well assured." (Descartes 2000, 57) With regard to how he would practice this rule in his practical life, Descartes expounds on and defends his decision to rely on probabilistic reasoning. He says, "And thus the actions of life often tolerating no delay, it is a very certain truth that, when it is not in our power to discern the truest opinions, we must follow the most probable; and even if we notice no more probability in some than in others, nevertheless we must settle on some, and afterwards no longer regard them as doubtful, insofar as they relate to practical matters, but as very true and very certain, because the reason that made us decide on them appears so." (Descartes 2000, 57) Parallels can be drawn between the reliance on probability encouraged by Descartes' second maxim and the views of the Academic skeptics described by Cicero in his *Academica*. Cicero characterizes the Academic philosophers as remaining firm in their conviction "that nothing is apprehensible" and yet also admitting that some accounts or arguments seem more likely than others. (Cicero 2006, 40) "While there are no impressions allowing for apprehension," Cicero says, "there are many allowing for approval. It would be contrary to nature were there no persuasive impressions." (Cicero 2006, 58) Though they deny their ability to know with certainty the truth of accounts or arguments, the Academic skeptics approve of or assent to them based on persuasiveness or probabilistic reasoning.

In addition to these commonalities between Descartes and the skeptics, it can be argued that both Descartes and the Pyrrhonists are aligned in their desired goal: tranquility. For the Pyrrhonists, there can be no doubt that the end or aim of their pursuits is tranquility. Sextus says that such peace of mind, or *ataraxia*, is that for the sake of which the Pyrrhonists philosophize in a particular manner: "The causal principle [of Pyrrhonism] we say is the hope of becoming tranquil." (Sextus 2000, 5) In Part Six of the *Discourse*, Descartes describes tranquility as that which he "esteem(s) above all things." (Descartes 2000, 80) However, Descartes and the Pyrrhonists hold different views concerning what leads to tranquility. The Pyrrhonists argue that equipollence and the suspension of judgment naturally lead us to tranquility whereas Descartes says that the "perfect peace of mind I

am seeking" can possibly be attained through his forthrightness with the public about the motivations for his philosophical work. (Descartes 2000, 80) Of course, whereas the Pyrrhonists posit tranquility as their ultimate goal, there are many places in Descartes' writings that show he had several different goals in his philosophical and scientific pursuits. For example, in a letter to the Marquess of Newcastle, from October of 1645, Descartes says, "The preservation of health has always been the principal end of my studies." (Descartes 1991, 275) Additionally, it goes without saying that Descartes often repeats the refrain of a desire to seek after and attain truth above all else.

There are similarities between Descartes, on the one hand, and both the Pyrrhonian skeptics and the Academic skeptics, on the other. Descartes' provisional morality hearkens back to the attitudes of both the Pyrrhonists, as evidenced by Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines*, and the Academics, as understood through Cicero's *Academica*. In addition, although they held different views about what exactly would lead to it, both Descartes and the Pyrrhonian skeptics sought after tranquility. Besides the *Discourse*, Descartes' other published works, including the *Meditations* and the *Principles of Philosophy*, present skeptical arguments that remind us of some of the characteristic Pyrrhonian "modes" of reasoning.[3] For example, in the Third Meditation, in order to challenge our claims to knowledge based on the senses, Descartes compares our two ways of thinking about the size of the sun. He argues that whereas our sense perception (in this case, eyesight) shows us that the sun is of approximately one size, astronomical reasoning reveals the sun to be, in fact, much larger.[4] In the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Sextus also presents arguments to show how our senses are inadequate for providing us with certain knowledge. However, Sextus' views in this regard are different from those of Descartes. Concerning objects in the world, including the sun, and how they appear to us, Sextus says, "We shall be able to say what the existing objects are like as observed by us, but as to what they are like in their nature, we shall suspend judgment." (Sextus 2000, 17) Although there is common ground between Descartes and the skeptics, it can only indicate so much when it comes to the influence of skepticism on Descartes' thought.

The instances of a skeptical reasoning and argumentation in Descartes' writings do not provide adequate or sufficient evidence to claim that Descartes held a favorable view of the skeptics. Nor do such skeptical marks in his works imply that Descartes was seriously concerned with skepticism. The respective projects of Descartes, on the one hand, and both the Pyrrhonian skeptics and the Academic skeptics, on the other, are patently dissimilar. Whereas the Pyrrhonists and the Academics provide particular modes of reasoning that display our ignorance about claims to knowledge, Descartes presents skeptical arguments to show that the senses are deceptive but that the understanding—when properly utilized—is more reliable than sense perception for acquiring knowledge. In fact, Descartes argues not only that certain knowledge can be attained, but also that he has attained it. Unlike the Pyrrhonists, who suggest that equipollence and the suspension of judgment—both of which result in reaffirming our ignorance—lead to tranquility, Descartes suggests only that frankness with the public about the motivations for his philosophical project might bring about such peace of mind. The Pyrrhonian skeptics lived in accordance with the

customs and laws handed down to them, but they did so because despite the fact that they were unwilling and apparently unable to make claims to knowledge about anything, they were "not able to be utterly inactive." (Sextus 2000, 9) Descartes' provisional code of morals, which is similar in spirit to some aspects of the Pyrrhonian and Academic ways of life, helped him to live day to day "as happily as possible" by accepting the most moderate and most commonly accepted social customs. (Descartes 2000, 56) Yet, unlike the Pyrrhonian skeptics, he lived in this manner while practicing a method of philosophical inquiry that would in fact lead him to certain knowledge.

Descartes' Views on Skepticism: The Correspondence

Descartes mentions skepticism several times in his correspondence. He discusses doubt even more. Based on the indications from his writings, Descartes seems to have believed that the activity of doubting was the primary characteristic of skepticism. In the *Discourse*, he distinguishes his method and his goals from what he considered to be those of the skeptics. Descartes says, "I...rooted out from my mind all the errors that had previously been able to slip into it. Not that, in order to do this, I was imitating the skeptics who doubt merely for the sake of doubting and put on the affectation of being perpetually undecided; for, on the contrary, my entire plan tended simply to give me assurance and to cast aside the shifting earth and sand in order to find the rock or clay." (Descartes 2000, 59)

In a letter to Hyperaspistes from August 1641, Descartes explains why his use of a particular kind of hyperbolic doubt precludes him from being called a skeptic, and he both characterizes the skeptics as doubting everything and criticizes them for doing so disingenuously: "You cannot have a sceptic saying, 'Let the evil demon deceive me as much as he can,' because anyone who says this is by that token not a sceptic since he does not doubt everything...It is only in name, and perhaps in intention and resolve, that [the skeptics] adhere to their heresy of doubting everything." (Descartes 1991, 196–197) These examples reveal Descartes' view that skepticism is typified by incessant and total doubting as well as his desire to distance or disassociate himself from the skeptics. Instead of examining every reference to skepticism or doubt in Descartes' correspondence, in the following sections I will focus on statements Descartes makes that carry judgments about the skeptics, skepticism, and the use of doubt. In so doing, I will show how Descartes' stated views reveal that he had a dismissive and contemptuous attitude towards skeptical philosophy.

Where Descartes writes on the subject in his correspondence, it is usually within a context in which the main topic of exchange is not skepticism but other aspects of his work. In some of these letters, Descartes responds to specific questions asked of him and objections made against arguments in his published works, whereas in others he defends himself for what he thought were unfair or slanderous charges brought against him. As a result, in some of his letters Descartes' tone is cordial whereas in others it seems guarded or even antagonistic. Readers of the correspondence can gauge distinct differences in attitudes and personal likes or dislikes between Descartes and his correspondents. With regard to our understanding of Descartes' views on skepticism, these

differences are significant. In most of the correspondence where skepticism is mentioned, whether Descartes is writing to a friend or foe, there is consistency in Descartes' judgments: his opinions about skepticism are consistently negative.

To get a sense of the contrast in attitudes just mentioned, take one example: two letters that show two different sides of Descartes. The first of these letters is from May of 1637 and was written by Descartes in response to his friend, Jean de Silhon. Descartes begins his message with acknowledgement and agreement: "I agree, as you observe, that there is a great defect in the work you have seen, and that I have not expounded, in a manner that everyone can easily grasp, the arguments by which I claim to prove that there is nothing at all more evident and certain than the existence of God and the human soul." (Descartes 1991, 55) Descartes answers Silhon's questions by providing an explanation as to why, in the recently published *Discourse on Method*, he did not more clearly explain to the reader the arguments that demonstrate God's existence and the existence of the human soul. "I did not dare to do so," Descartes says, "since I would have had to explain at length the strongest arguments of the sceptics to show that there is no material thing of whose existence one can be certain." (Descartes 1991, 55) Descartes closes his relatively brief letter to Silhon, "As for intelligent people like yourself...they will come to the same conclusions as I did. I shall be glad, as soon as I have time, to try to explain this further. I am pleased to have had this opportunity to show you that I am, etc." (Descartes 1991, 56) It seems plain enough from the tone of this letter that there is a feeling of mutual respect and a sense of civility between Descartes and Silhon.

However, such professional courtesy cannot be observed in the letter from Descartes to Voetius from May of 1643. In this letter, Descartes seems clearly offended by his correspondent. At the start of it, he says, "Even if the philosophy at which you rail were unsound, which you have failed to show at any point, and never will manage to show, what vice could it possibly be imagined to contain great enough to require its author to be slandered with such atrocious insults?" (Descartes 1991, 220) Cordiality and mutual respect are nonexistent. Instead there is a sense of indignation on Descartes' part brought on by the belief that Voetius had made insulting remarks about him and inaccurate statements about his work.

The contrast in attitudes that comes across in this example is to some extent indicative of Descartes' correspondence in general. Because of such interpersonal differences between Descartes and his correspondents—his friendliness with some and defensiveness towards others—and, even more so, the consistency in his opinions about skepticism nonetheless, I would argue that the correspondence provides us with an authentic representation of Descartes' views on skepticism. The correspondence as is presents a more realistic picture of Descartes' opinions on skepticism than we would have, for instance, if all of his correspondents were well-liked colleagues.

On the Pyrrhonists, the Skeptics, and Skepticism

In the letters where Descartes shares his opinions about the Pyrrhonists and the skeptics, he does so by describing such philosophers as ineffective, disingenuous, or heretical. Judgments like

these provide clear indications that Descartes did not view skeptical philosophy in a positive light. We can get a sense of Descartes' disdain for the skeptics' way of life from what he says about them in the Reply to the Fifth Set of Objections to the *Meditations*. "For when it is a question of organizing our life," he says, "it would, of course, be foolish not to trust the senses, and the sceptics who neglected human affairs to the point where friends had to stop them falling of precipices deserved to be laughed at." (Descartes 1984–1985, 243) Descartes seems to be referencing the stories told not only about the Pyrrhonian skeptics but also about Pyrrho, the *de facto* founder of Pyrrhonism. In the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, which was written sometime between the second and fourth centuries A.D., Diogenes Laertius describes Pyrrho as having led his life in the following manner: "going out of his way for nothing, taking no precaution, but facing all risks as they came, whether carts, precipices, dogs or what not, and, generally, leaving nothing to the arbitrament of the senses; but he was kept out of harm's way by his friends who...used to follow close after him." (Diogenes 1995, 475) Descartes could not see the virtue in both choosing not to trust the senses and deliberately adhering to no beliefs in the course of one's practical life. He did not find anything laudable about this way of life. In fact, Descartes thought that the Pyrrhonian skeptics should be mocked for behaving in the ways described.

In a letter to Reneri for Pollot, from April or May of 1638, Descartes answers questions and responds to criticisms about his recently published *Discourse*, a text in which he showed nascent signs of the hyperbolic doubt that was to come later in the First Meditation. In part of his response to Reneri, Descartes criticizes the Pyrrhonists for perpetually doubting and, as a result, never arriving at any certainty. For Descartes, to be constantly lacking in certain knowledge akin to the Pyrrhonists would not be a state of affairs to be content with but rather an obvious reason to aspire to knowledge. However, "although the Pyrrhonists reached no certain conclusions from their doubts," Descartes says, "it does not follow that no one can." (Descartes 1991, 99) In the Second Meditation, after implementing his skeptical method and reflecting on his agonizing doubts, he presses on: "Great things are...to be hoped for if I succeed in finding just one thing, however slight, that is certain and unshaken." (Descartes 2006, 13) Descartes was after certain knowledge in philosophy and the sciences, and he recognized that Pyrrhonian or skeptical doubt could be strategically used and presented to support his claims to such knowledge.

In the same letter to Reneri from 1638, Descartes continues along these lines by suggesting that Pyrrhonism (which, according to him, is primarily characterized by doubting everything) might in fact be used to arrive at certain knowledge. He says, "I would try now to show how these doubts [of the Pyrrhonists] can be used to prove God's existence." (Descartes 1991, 99) In this letter, then, Descartes indicates what would later appear in the *Meditations*, where he indeed uses Pyrrhonian or skeptical arguments—in conjunction with his method of hyperbolic doubt—to support his demonstrations of the existence of the soul, God, and the material world.

To return to the letter to Hyperaspistes from August of 1641: in addition to characterizing the skeptics as disingenuous, Descartes implies that they are atheistic and describes them as heretical.

The skeptics, according to Descartes, "would not have doubted the truths of geometry if they had duly recognized God, because since those geometrical truths are very clear, they would have had no occasion to doubt them if they had known that whatever is clearly understood is true." (Descartes 1991, 196) Yet, according to Descartes, such skeptics did in fact doubt obviously true propositions, including geometrical demonstrations, "even though they clearly understood them." (Descartes 1991, 196) Thus, Descartes concludes, "It is only in name, and perhaps in intention and resolve, that they adhere to the heresy of doubting everything." (Descartes 1991, 196–197)

In the previously referenced letter to Voetius from May of 1643, Descartes points out the faulty reasoning of those skeptics who would deny the self-evident *cogito*:

> You deny that anyone can rightly conclude, from the fact that he is thinking, that he exists; for you want the sceptic to conclude merely that he *seems to himself to exist* – as if anyone using his reason, however sceptical he might be, could seem to himself to exist without at the same time understanding that he really exists, whenever this seems to him to be the case. Thus you deny what is the most evident proposition there could possibly be in any science. (Descartes 1991, 222)

In this passage, Descartes points to a generally accepted and well-known characteristic of the Pyrrhonian skeptics: their willingness to state how things seem to them (or what is apparent to them) but their unwillingness to make claims about reality. In the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Sextus puts it this way: "What [the Sceptics] investigate is not what is apparent but what is said about what is apparent." (Sextus 2000, 8) For instance, the Pyrrhonian skeptics would not deny that sunlight seems to give warmth. What they disputed were claims that the dogmatists would make as a result of that apparent warmth—for example, the claim that the sun actually does possess, produce, and provide heat or warmth. Descartes implies that such reasoning, when it concerns the question of one's own existence, is self-deceptive, disingenuous, inane, impossible, or all of the above. No one can honestly say to himself, "I seem to exist," without admitting that, in fact, he necessarily exists. This selection from the letter to Voetius, then, provides clear evidence of Descartes' dismissive attitude towards skeptical philosophy.

In a letter to Chanut from November 1, 1646, Descartes expresses his extreme dissatisfaction with critics who misinterpret his work and slander him. He laments the fact that "a certain Father Bourdin thought he had good reason to accuse me of being a sceptic, because I refuted the sceptics." (Descartes 1991, 299) In this letter, Descartes suggests that having his words twisted by people like Bourdin has given him enough reason to stop publishing his works altogether. "The best thing I can do henceforth is to abstain from writing books," he says. "I shall pursue my studies only for my own instruction, and communicate my thoughts only to those with whom I can converse privately." (Descartes 1991, 300) Based on such remarks about the skeptics in his correspondence, we can see that Descartes expresses his desire not to be associated with them. Descartes denies that he is a skeptic, and he explains why his particular use of skeptical reasoning absolves him from the charge of being

a skeptic. In addition, Descartes' statements on the subject in the correspondence reveal his slighting views of—and his contempt for—skepticism.

On the Use of Doubt

I have drawn attention to the judgments about skepticism and the skeptics that Descartes expresses in his correspondence. At this point it should be fairly clear that Descartes disapproved of skeptical philosophy. He held negative views about the skeptics, believing them to be disingenuous, ineffectual, foolish, and even heretical. As far as I can tell, Descartes has not written a single word about skepticism or the skeptics to suggest any kind of approbation on his part. However, unlike his opinions about skepticism, his views on the use of doubt are not so one-sided or straightforward.

As previously discussed, one of Descartes' views about the skeptics is that they primarily doubt everything—even those things like the self-evident certainty of the *cogito* for which, according to him, doubt would be inconceivable. However, Descartes does utilize doubt in his published works, and in the *Meditations* he even presents an extreme form of hyperbolic doubt through the malicious demon hypothesis. What Descartes says in the correspondence about his use of doubt reflects the fact that although he looked down on the skeptics for incessantly doubting everything, he recognized the value of using doubt strategically.

The correspondence that best presents Descartes' opinions about what he considers to be the proper use of doubt is his letter to Buitendijck from 1643. In this letter, Descartes responds to a question regarding "whether it is ever permissible to doubt about God." (Descartes 2000, 212) Descartes explains how the answer to this question would depend upon one's reasons for doubting. "For if someone takes as his aim to doubt about God in order to persist in this doubt," Descartes says, "he is sinning gravely since he wishes to remain in doubt on a topic of such importance. But if someone proposes to himself doubt as a means to pursuing a clearer knowledge of truth, he is doing something altogether pious and worthy, since no one can wish the end without also wishing the means." (Descartes 2000, 212) In this part of the letter, Descartes implicitly refers to the skeptics. Though many of those who were of a skeptical bent would disagree with his characterization of them, Descartes' view of the skeptics is that they doubt "merely for the sake of doubting." (Descartes 2000, 59) Unlike the skeptics, who "sin gravely" by doubting in their particular manner, Descartes claims to be using doubt in the *Meditations* and other published works for a noble purpose: to seek and attain "knowledge of truth." According to Descartes, the motivations or intentions behind one's doubt are highly significant factors that must be considered in order to determine whether or not the use of doubt is permissible.

Descartes responds to another question posed by Buitendijck concerning "whether it is ever permissible to assume something false in matters that concern God." (Descartes 2000, 212) This question contains an implicit reference to the malicious demon hypothesis from the First Meditation. In the First Meditation, Descartes supposes "not a supremely good God, the source of truth, but rather an evil genius, supremely powerful and clever...has directed his entire effort at

deceiving me." (Descartes 2006, 12) In response to the question about the permissibility of positing the possible existence of an evil genius or a malicious demon, Descartes says this:

> A person who invents a deceiving God (or even the true God, but not yet clearly enough known to himself or to others, for whose sake he is setting up his hypothesis) and who is not misusing this fiction for a bad purpose, in order to persuade others of something false concerning the diving power, but only in order to better illuminate his intellect, so that he may come to a better knowledge of God or show him more clearly to others, such a man, I say, is not really sinning, but acting so that good may come. For there is no malice in this; he is rather doing something absolutely good, and he cannot be reproached for this, except by slander. (Descartes 2000, 213)

We can see that Descartes provides a similar answer to the question about inventing a deceiving God as the one he gives in response to the question about doubting God's existence. To fabricate a false, deceptive, or malicious God would be acceptable as long as the purpose in doing so was noble: to increase one's knowledge and to know God better. Descartes defends his unique use of skeptical doubt because he doubts as a means rather than as an end. "We must make a distinction," Descartes says, "between doubt as an end, and doubt as a means." (Descartes 1991, 229) According to Descartes, the skeptics pursue and use doubt as an end in itself—they doubt "merely for the sake of doubting"—which is foolish and ineffectual because it keeps them in a state of uncertainty (or the appearance of a state of uncertainty). (Descartes 2000, 59) However, as a means, Descartes would gladly utilize skeptical doubt in order to show how certain knowledge can be attained and, as a result, that such doubt is unfounded. Just as the motivations for doubting must be examined in order to determine whether or not the use of doubt is permissible, so the recognition that doubt should only be used as a means and never as an end is equally important.

In a letter to Princess Elizabeth from May 10, 1647, Descartes expresses more than a little disconcertment over charges of atheism and heresy brought against him for his use of doubt in the *Meditations*. Descartes seems especially troubled by one theologian in particular, Jacobus Revius, who had been spreading inaccurate interpretations of his work: Revius would "make people believe that I said some things in [the *Meditations*] which are quite absurd and are contrary to the glory of God – for example, that we must doubt that there is a God. He would even have it that I want people to deny absolutely for a while that there is a God, and things of that sort." (Descartes 1991, 317) Descartes' response to Revius' accusations indicates that his use of doubt in the *Meditations*, though strategic, is not sincere. The doubting of God's existence is not necessary for Descartes, and it is certainly not advised. Nor is Descartes' doubt meant to be taken seriously. To genuinely doubt or deny God's existence, according to Descartes, would indeed be "contrary to the glory of God" and is not what Descartes intends for his readers to do. Rather, Descartes' use of doubt in the *Meditations* is meant to show his readers how following exaggerated or hyperbolic doubt eventually reveals the absurdity of such doubt.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have explained my interpretation of Descartes' association with skepticism. By beginning with a discussion of the similarities between the writings of Montaigne, Sextus Empiricus, and Cicero, on the one hand, and the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes' first published work, on the other, I have shown that Descartes was influenced by skeptical ideas. However, although he was influenced by skepticism, on the whole he regards the skeptics with contempt. In his correspondence, Descartes trounces the skeptics for their inanity and disingenuousness. He calls them heretical for constantly doubting everything even when it would be absurd and impious to do so. Yet, Descartes also recognizes the value of using doubt as a means rather than an end. His use of doubt in his published works is strategic.

The things that Descartes doubts, at least insofar as the way in which his doubts are presented in his published works—for example, the way in which he appears to be uncertain about whether or not we are awake—are not things that are *actually* doubted by Descartes. In a letter to Mersenne from October 16, 1639, Descartes says, "For my part, I have never had any doubts about truth, because it seems a notion so transcendentally clear that nobody can be ignorant of it." (Descartes 1991, 139) If there were no need to doubt things that are obviously true, such as the certainty of our own existence, then why would Descartes utilize doubt in his published works? I suggest that the kind of doubt Descartes presents in his published works helps him to reveal the self-evident certainty of such truths as the *cogito*, particularly for those readers who find it difficult to realize those "transcendentally clear" truths. In the same letter to Mersenne, Descartes says that his criterion of truth is the "natural light," and that although everyone has this natural light, "hardly anyone makes good use of that light, so that many people – perhaps all those we know – may share the same mistaken opinion. Also," Descartes continues, "there are many things which can be known by the natural light, but which no one has yet reflected on." (Descartes 1991, 139) In a letter to Colvius from November 14, 1640, Descartes says, "In itself it is such a simple and natural thing to infer that one exists from the fact that one is doubting." (Descartes 1991, 159) Yet, most people do not reflect on this truth. Descartes' method of doubt, then, is presented for the benefit of his readers—for their instruction—so that through such a method they may better realize the truths that are, or should already be, so plain to them: that they are thinking things who necessarily exist, and that God exists and is not a deceiver.

Unfortunately for Descartes, his use of doubt caused some of his contemporaries, including Pierre Bourdin, to peg him as a skeptic. Whether we describe skepticism according to Descartes' one-sided characterization or understand that tradition more comprehensively and accurately, it is clear that Descartes was not a skeptic. Not only was he not a skeptic, but in the correspondence he also makes it clear that he is fundamentally opposed to skeptical philosophy. Descartes derided the skeptics and attempted to distance himself from any association with them because he thought that his motivations were quite different from theirs, and more admirable. Whereas the skeptics were constantly in doubt, Descartes was not. The Pyrrhonian and Academic skeptics may have denied

that they had access to certain knowledge about reality, but Descartes both sought after such knowledge and claimed to have attained it.

Endnotes:

1. See Montaigne 2003. Included among Montaigne's essays are *To philosophize is to learn how to die*, *On virtue*, *Observations on Julius Caesar's methods of waging war*, and *On three good wives*.
2. There are only two places in the correspondence that I know of where Descartes mentions Montaigne by name, both of which are in a letter to the Marquess of Newcastle, from November 23, 1646, and deal with claims about human and animal intelligence. Descartes explains his disagreement with the "opinion of Montaigne and others who attribute understanding or thought to animals." (Descartes 1991, 302) Later he says, "Montaigne and Charron may have said that there is a greater difference between one human being and another than between a human being and an animal; yet there has never been known an animal so perfect as to use a sign to make other animals understand something which bore no relation to its passions; and there is no human being so imperfect as not to do so, since even deaf-mutes invent special signs to express their thoughts." (Descartes 1991, 303)
3. On the skeptical modes, see Sextus 2000, 11–46.
4. See Descartes 2006: "I find within myself two distinct ideas of the sun. One idea is drawn, as it were, from the senses...By means of this idea the sun appears to me to be quite small. But there is another idea, one derived from astronomical reasoning...through this idea the sun is shown to be several times larger than the earth. Both ideas surely cannot resemble the same sun existing outside me; and reason convinces me that the idea that seems to have emanated from the sun itself from so close is the very one that least resembles the sun." (Descartes 2006, 22)

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God and the Grounding of Morality

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Abstract:

There is a classic mantra amongst many theists that divinity is the origin and fountain of ethical norms and only God can weave the warp and weft of the web of moral values. There has also recently been a concerted effort to rehabilitate religion in the field of philosophy in general and the subdiscipline of ethics specifically by harking back to this type of ethical grounding. Although the trend under the rubric of theistic ethics has as much claim to recognition as any other branches of applied ethics, its proponents and practitioners appear to harbor the higher ambition of underwriting ethics *in toto* and thereby furnish the fundamental foundations for moral judgments. The contention seems to be that without theism ethics will be rudderless and devoid of its proper footing and focus. It is, therefore, the purpose of this paper to see how far this ambition can be sustained in view of a significant number of issues that theism faces in its liaison with ethics specifically and philosophy in general. The hope is that such a survey will allow a more measured approach to the interaction between religion and ethics that would ultimately benefit both parties in this transaction.

Keywords: Abraham's Sorites, Divine Command Theory, Epistemology of Morality, Ethical Theism, Metaethics, Normative Ethics, Theistic Ethics

To a good number of historical attestations and accounts, the nineteenth century seems to have been intellectually a tremendously trying time for religion in Europe, if not on a wider scale all over the globe. Apparently, more than anything else, religious thinkers and intellectuals were predominantly preoccupied with how to keep the ark of religion afloat in the turbulent ocean of theoretical and practical criticisms and censures by rebuilding and restructuring religion to meet the new milieus and mandates. On the oriental side of Europe, for example, Fyodor Dostoyevsky pleads in his influential novel, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879), that without God there is no virtue and everything is permitted. And likewise, on the occidental side of Europe, Matthew Arnold attempts to resurrect religion in his *Literature and Dogma: An Essay Towards a Better Apprehension of the Bible* (1873) by drawing on the very concept of morality that religion is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling. For Arnold, the passage from morality to religion is made when emotion is applied to morality, and the true meaning of religion is thus not simply morality, but morality touched by emotion. In fact, Arnold audaciously argues that God is really a deeply moved way of saying conduct or righteousness.[1]

However, historically speaking since at least the inception of the Abrahamic or Semitic religious tradition in the antiquity, there has been a consistent common conception that religion is the sole source or the foremost fountain of moral values, and thereby giving rise to the early forms of the divine command theory in ethics. Often than not the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments as narrated in the book of *Exodus* in the *Hebrew Testament* is taken to be the best exemplar of this perspective. These commandments 'written with the finger of God' (*Exodus* 31:18) are then followed by *another* set of normative regulations commonly referred to as the Book of the Covenant whereby the relationship between the divine being and the people with whom the covenant is made is placed under a covenant fidelity.

A more imaginative and fabulous portrayal of this type of ethical theism – in this specific case, ethical monotheism – is presented in the book of *Proverbs* in the literary style of *Wisdom Woman* calls. "Lady Wisdom" – a personified call of conscience and measure of moral rectitude that seems to be a (mysterious allegorical) combination of goddess, prophetess, and angel[2] – makes her appearance bemoaning humanity that

> Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: "To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live. O simple ones, learn prudence; acquire intelligence, you who lack it. Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right; for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. They are all straight to one who understands and right to those who find knowledge. (*Proverbs* 8: 1-9; New Revised Standard Version)

Then, after a few more admonitions and advices, she swiftly moves on to stamp her authority and establish her credentials by reminding her audience that,

> The Lord created me at the beginning[3] of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. (*Proverbs* 8: 22-23; New Revised Standard Version)

And, with this declaration emphasising the genesis and source of moral precepts and percepts prior to other divine creations including humanity, one more time the reader is reminded of the true *authorship* of ethical values and norms, namely, the ultimate divine being.

Despite the intellectual and philosophical vicissitude of the foregoing ethical theism over the past several millennia[4], one may set the *upshot* of this theistic outlook on morality against the statement of one of the most preeminent ethicists of the twentieth century where the chapter on the relationship between morality and religion is concluded by the comment that the 'trouble with religious morality comes not from morality's being inescapably pure, but from religion's being

incurably unintelligible."[5] Furthermore, in a later work, he renews his criticism of religious ethics by remarking that 'the development of the ethical consciousness means the collapse of religion' not because a religious ethics (even a crude one) 'is logically debarred from being ethical' but rather for the dialectical reason that 'if the self-understanding of religion is not to be left behind by the ethical consciousness, it has to move in a direction that will destroy religion.'[6]

Notwithstanding Williams' pessimism and in view of the recent rise of intense interest in the relationship between morality and religion, it may not be amiss to explore the prospects of theistic ethics by charting out the contours of its territory where it might run afoul of the development of our ethical consciousness. This will obviously provide an opportunity to forestall possible pitfalls and problems that might render theistic ethics, in Williams' word, 'unintelligible'.

To chart out this conceptual cartography, one may start by first recognizing that the concept of theistic ethics is multivocal in the sense of being subject to two broad types of scrutiny. *First*, the idea of theistic ethics may be examined through two different *approaches*: (A) theistic ethics as *a set of moral values* whereby a type of normative ethics based on God and religion is being offered, and (B) theistic ethics as *a source of moral values* whereby a type of metaethics founded on Divine Command Theory is being offered. *Second*, one may examine the idea of theistic ethics from two *perspectives*: (a) theistic ethics from an internal (*ab intra*) or "within the community of believers" perspective, and (b) theistic ethics from an external (*ab extra*) or "without the community of believers" perspective thereby involving the community of "all". There are thus four possible combinations of examining the content and character of theistic ethics as follows:

(I) theistic normative ethics from an internal perspective (Problems (i) and (ii) below),
(II) theistic metaethics from an internal perspective (Problem (iii) below),
(III) theistic normative ethics from an external perspective (Problems (iv) to (viii) below), and
(IV) theistic metaethics from an external perspective (Problems (ix) to (xv) below).

To sketch the first stage of this four-fold schema, one may look at theistic ethics by applying the internal perspective to the two foregoing approaches: that is, probing the problems and issues arising from taking theistic ethics as a normative theory and then as a metaethical theory. From an internal perspective, the normative interpretation of theistic ethics faces two central concerns: (i) the phenomenon of moral difference and disagreement among believers in terms of what ethical values are sanctioned by the scriptural sources creates a problem of consistency and authenticity. Patently the fact of moral difference and divergence – possibly as a consequence of the variety of scriptural interpretation due to, for example, context sensitivity of understanding – is not in itself a critical cause of concern until one appreciates the *absence* of a relevant *decision procedure* to resolve such conflicts and clashes. Moreover, the problem is heightened if, as the result of the development of our

ethical consciousness, we come to subscribe to the doctrine of ethical conflict-regulation whereby it is stipulated that moral requirements must be capable of authoritatively regulating ethical conflicts.

(ii) A related, though separate, second problem in the same category is what may be called *Abraham's Sorites* where the prophet presented God with a sorites series in his intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah when God was intent on destroying the *whole* cities and Abraham posing the question: 'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?' (*Genesis* 18: 20-33). Abraham thus sets up the sorites by asking God: 'Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it?' God's response to Abraham is: 'If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.' Immediately Abraham unleashes the sorites by asking God: 'Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?', to which God says, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.' Abraham seizes upon this and pushes the number of righteous down to forty and thereby engages God in a sorites of highest ethical proportion! In the extant text, Abraham goes as far as ten righteous people with the same response from God and then suddenly the conversation is brought to an end without a clear indication of what if, for example, there is only one righteous person in the city. Wittingly or otherwise, what is very significant about this sorites by Abraham is to highlight the complexity and intricacy of the *epistemology* of making moral judgments. How does one make a moral judgment?

(iii) This concern conveniently connects to the third issue arising from the application of the internal perspective to theistic ethics not as a normative theory but as a metaethical theory when Abraham in his pleading with God says that it 'is impossible' for God to 'kill the innocent with the guilty'. In other words, Abraham is setting a *constitutive constraint* on the nature of divinity by requiring that the 'judge of all the earth *has to* act justly' (emphasis added), thereby implying, if not declaring outright, the independence of a significant *source* of morality from God. In fact, it is not surprising that historically one comes across sects of, for example, various Abrahamic or Semitic religions that explicitly impose the condition of justice on divinity such as Karaites in the Jewish tradition and Motazalites among Muslims.

To pursue the second stage of the four-fold division, one may look at theistic ethics by applying the external perspective to it as a normative theory and then as a metaethical theory. From an external perspective, the normative interpretation of theistic ethics faces the following five interrelated issues: (iv) Problem of Universality: how universal are the moral values emanating from a theistic normative theory? This issue obviously overlaps with a family of positions centered around the idea of *moral particularism* according to which there is substantial doubt about understanding morality in principled terms. (v) Problem of Compatibility: how compatible are the moral values of a theistic normative system with non-theistic moral values? (vi) Problem of Partiality: how does a theistic normative theory account for the *partiality* promised and presumed in such frameworks towards certain "chosen" or "favoured" people? (vii) Emergence of New Moral Values: how does a theistic normative account handle and regulate the advent of new moral values? (viii) Problem of

Incompleteness: how does a theistic normative theory explain one of the lessons of the process of what Williams calls 'the development of the ethical consciousness' that our moral outlook is ultimately incomplete?

Lastly, in covering the final step of the four-fold permutations, the external perspective as applied to theistic ethics in the form of a metaethical theory draws our attention to the following six subjects: (ix) Euthyphro Dilemma: modernising the terminology of Plato's Socrates in the dialogue *Euthyphro* for our contemporary purposes, the issue can be stated as, 'Is what is morally good, morally good because God approves it, or does God approve it because it is morally good?' (x) Abraham's Sorites: in this incarnation, the sorites can be used to sow the seeds of moral scepticism and consequently to cast doubt on the viability of any theistic ethics. The idea here is predicated on the use of sorites by sceptics of both ancient and contemporary eras to undermine a variety of epistemological as well as ontological realisms and objectivist outlooks. (xi) Problem of Subjectivity: can God know what it feels like to be a non-divine moral agent and thereby questioning the fairness or justness of God's sitting in judgment on such moral agents? This problem has an interesting connection with a variant of the paradox of omnipotence, *viz.*, the paradox of sin: can God commit sin? (xii) God's Command of Moral Values and Omniscience: does God really know what moral commands to make in light of the occurrence of *divine regret*? Having observed 'how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time,' God laments that 'he was *sorry* that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. He was so filled with *regret* that he said, "I will wipe out these people I have created, and also the animals and the birds, because I am *sorry* that I made any of them."' (*Genesis* 6: 5-7, emphasis added) Generally, there is a tremendous tension between omniscience and regret, especially in the context of a divine being authoring moral mores for "creatures" that will belie them by their beliefs and deeds. (xiii) God's Existence and Moral Motivation: can the existence of God provide motivation for acting morally? This question actually manifests itself in three different forms: (1) the Socratic version in the form of Euthyphro Dilemma, (2) the Kantian version in the form of Categorical Imperative, and (3) the Humean version in the form of "is/ought" or naturalistic fallacy. (xiv) God's Creation of Moral Agents: can God create moral agents that freely always choose the good? Obviously, the question has an important overlap with the traditional problem of evil. And, finally, (xv) Problem of Moral Luck: if, as part of the development of the ethical consciousness, we have come to realize the significance and impact of moral luck on our actions and inactions, how does a theistic ethics deal with *this* pervasive trait of our lives?

To summarize the upshot of the discussion, by having identified a number of crucial conceptual, logical and empirical challenges in both normative and metaethical components of theistic ethics from an internal as well as external perspective, one may cautiously conclude: without some satisfactory grip on these problems, the theoretical and practical tenets of theistic ethics seem unable to account for the profoundly human phenomenon of ethical consciousness.

Endnotes:

1. Among the most recent incarnations of this approach of grounding morality or a significant aspect of it through God or religion is C. Stephen Evans's *God and Moral Obligation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). However, somewhat ironically or should one say modestly, the monograph is peppered with such disclaimers as it 'is not quite right to say that there would be nothing left of morality if God did not exist' (p. 1), or 'people who do not believe in God, and thus do not realize that moral obligations are divine commands, can still have reasons to behave morally that are sufficient to motivate moral behavior' (p. 33), and even skepticism about moral obligation 'cannot be proven to be wrong' (p. 24).
2. Historically speaking, there is an interesting predecessor of the biblical Lady Wisdom in the character of the ancient Egyptian goddess *Ma'at*, daughter of the creator god *Amun Re*, where she personifies *justice* and *equity*.
3. Or *me as the beginning*.
4. Compare, for instance, the very first statement of Francis Macdonald Cornford – one of the foremost authors of his generation on ancient Greek philosophy at the turn of the twentieth century – in the preface to his *From Religion to Philosophy* in 1912 (New York: Harper Torchbooks/Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957): 'The words, Religion and Philosophy, perhaps suggest to most people two distinct provinces of thought, between which ... there is commonly held to be some sort of *border warfare*.' (p. v; emphasis added)
5. Bernard Williams, *Morality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 86.
6. Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, London: Fontana Press/Collins, 1985, p. 33.

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Virtues and the interested "self" in Confucius and Adam Smith

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Abstract:

This paper examines to which extent Confucius and Adam Smith can be read as virtue-ethicists. The goal of this paper is to show that, despite all differences, the concept of the "self" performs similarly in Smith and Master Kong. Although Confucius condemns the sole pursuit of self-interests, he still accepts that it is the interested self that cultivates itself and behaves according to the rites. Adam Smith highlights the value of virtues as an orientation for the individuals on how to develop their self-interest without harming others, ideally strengthening society. This paper shows that moral self-cultivation is important to both. In questions of philosophical anthropology and ethics, Master Kong and Adam Smith share many convictions. There are however two specific differences between them: First, each developed a social philosophy against a different social, political, and institutional background. Second, while ritual propriety and political leadership are important for Confucius, in Adam Smith, they are addenda. Nothing differentiates the leader from the "gentleman".

Keywords: Confucius, Adam Smith, virtues, self-interest, roles

For Confucius (551-479 BCE; also: Master Kong, Kongzi; 孔子), a petty person, "xiaoren" (小人), is "the thief of virtues", "the root of resentment", and a "source of evil". When people pursue (solely) self-interest, they leave the path of moral self-cultivation and virtue. The enlightened "junzi" (君子) is a self-cultivated person following a code of behavior determined by benevolence (rén, 仁) and ritual (lǐ, 禮), fulfilling one or different roles in society. Adam Smith (1723-1790), on the other hand, has a much more sympathetic view of self-interest. This is because he associates virtues with self-interest and differentiates between self-interest and selfishness. In "The Wealth of Nations" (WN, 1776) and "The Theory of Moral Sentiments" (TMS, 1759), he argues for a specific sort of self-interest that, in association with other "moral sentiments", makes people willing to follow higher ethical standards. At first sight, Confucius and Adam Smith seem to be irreconcilable.

However, this paper explores the similarities in the thoughts of Confucius and Smith. It focuses on the idea of the "self" as an element in both philosophers' ethics, pointing out that the self performs similar functions in their respective thought. This reading is based on an understanding of Master Kong and Smith as virtue-ethicists. On the other hand, this reading identifies an important differentiator between Master Kong and Smith, even if both are understood as virtue-ethicists: ritual.

The goal of this paper is to uncover similarities in the function of the "self" against all the differences between Master Kong and Smith. Exploring these similarities is important, because it shows, on the one hand, that Smith's self is not egoistical if nurtured in a proper way and, on the other hand, that Kong's self is interested in itself, too. In both philosophies, the self performs a practical and epistemic function. Thus far, this aspect has been under-valued in the comparison of these philosophers. This paper will conclude by showing that while Smith's "gentleman" is not a Confucian "junzi", the concept is still very far away from a "xiaoren".

This paper will begin characterizing Confucius' philosophy, will then describe Adam Smith's, and will finally conclude by elaborating what unites them but also what the specific differences between both philosophers are. This paper will go back to the texts of Adam Smith and the *Analects* attributed to Master Kong.

Virtue and Self-interest in Confucius

Confucius was more than a philosopher; he was also a statesman. His philosophy envisaged unifying ethics, actions, and statecraft in a holistic body. If people cultivate their selves, they will develop virtuosity that will enable them to perform their roles in society and will lead to a good society. The idea of leading a good life and creating a good society is essential to Confucius. His aim was to overcome the chaos of his time and to restore order (Li 2013).

Confucius was a social reformer. This becomes more understandable against the background of his time: the Chinese states were in a dire situation, wars were the norm, hunger was not uncommon, clannism, corruption, self-indulging rulers and ministers lost in selfishness and palace intrigues were day-to-day situations. Many different ideas of social reform emerged in this context. Some wanted a more spiritual life, others detachment from that saddening reality, yet other groups concentrated on realism for reforming statecraft. Master Kong took a different way (Chin 2007).

Confucius believed that the basis for reform of the state(s) and of society lay in the ancient times of Zhou (1050-771 BCE), in its virtues and rituals. He interpreted the former not as religious or esoteric sacrifices, asking for the blessings of spirits, but as ceremonies performed by human agents and embodying the civilized and cultured patterns of behavior developed through generations of human wisdom. For him, they embodied the ethical core of (Chinese) society. Moreover, Confucius applied the term ritual to actions beyond the formal sacrifices and religious ceremonies to include social rituals: courtesies and accepted standards of behavior. At the same time, he did not want people just to perform rituals. He stressed the character of the person's motivation: In order to be fully virtuous, a person must follow the rituals for the right reasons, from an understanding and acceptance of how they contribute to human flourishing. Master Kong's reform goal was bottom-up. By reforming people, especially the ruling elite, Kong wanted to reform society and the state (see also Wilson 2002).

How do virtues and rites interrelate? In the *Analects*, there is no definite catalogue of virtues. From the onset, it is evident that Master Kong prefers benevolence, integrity, righteousness, filial piety, and the rituals as such, with a virtue relating to them, ritual propriety. Much later, in Han (206 BC - 220), institutional Confucianism systemized the wǔ cháng – sì zì (五常- 四字, five constants, four elements). The five constants are rén (仁, benevolence, humaneness), yì (義, righteousness or justice), lǐ (禮, ritual propriety), zhì (智, knowledge), and xìn (信, integrity). And the four elements are zhōng (忠, loyalty), xiào (孝, filial piety), jié (節, contingency), and yì (義, righteousness). There are still many other elements, such as chéng (誠, honesty), shù (恕, kindness and forgiveness), lián (

廉, honesty and cleanness), chǐ (恥, shame, judgement and sense of right and wrong), yǒng (勇, bravery), wēn (溫, kind and gentle), liáng (良, good, kindhearted), gōng (恭, respectful, reverent), jiǎn (儉, frugal), and ràng (讓, modestly, self-effacing) (see Hu 1929). The rites transform people into good members of society (Eno 1990), members who know how to behave and how to play a respective role. Li (2007) calls the rites a "common grammar for everyday situations".

While this system might not be original to the *Analects*, the virtues enumerated above are all present in Master Kong's teachings. Even if they are not systematized by the Master in such a way, the Han-era list, according to Eno (1990) and Li (2007), depicts what is important to Confucius and, at the same time, revolutionary in his philosophy. These character traits, or virtues, are not exclusive to some people, neither are they natural to all humans. Rather, they have to be discovered and nurtured by each person. The cultivation of these virtues strengthens the moral character of a person. By expanding the possibility of moral self-cultivation to all, Kong is at the same time claiming that virtues, rites, and roles are not the privilege of the elite.

By stressing that the ancient sage-kings were "normal" people, Confucius asserts three factors. First, he does not dismiss the possibility of self-cultivation being open to all people. Second, he makes a strong claim about human nature. Because the ancient sages were "normal" people, because they succeeded in self-cultivation, and because they should be emulated, what follows is that all people share the predisposition of moral self-cultivation. And third, Confucius admits that his concepts of human nature and the morally self-cultivated being are tied to a thick understanding of human nature itself. The sage-kings of the past are not only examples to emulate but also represent human nature.

As the *Analects* state in IV, 23, "Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors", i.e. virtue is by definition a relational propriety and belongs therefore to the realm of acting in society. People are never detached from society, according to the philosophy of Confucius, and that is why the roles are important. Cultivating the virtues and rituals are not only central because they turn people into civilized people but especially because they enable people to perform their respective roles in society. There are five typical role-pairs: ruler to ruled, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother, friend to friend. Specific duties are applicable to each of the participants in these sets of relationships and the characteristics of these relationships can be expanded by analogy to practically all types of social interactions (Hwang 2000). Virtues and rites enable people to be role-bearers and act ethically.

Hansen (2000) explains the broad context of person, virtue, role, and the cultivation of the self, "To Confucius, an isolated individual means that some disaster has occurred; the natural, healthy state of humans is in social structures (60)." And what is a social structure? "Society consists of a ritual structure, of a system of roles. Society is the sum of its roles not the sum of its individuals (62)." Performing the roles leads to having and gaining merit. But merit is not completely or mainly a given, it is something that has to be developed by the "junzi". "He (Confucius) stressed that we appoint by merit based on 'de'. Merit does run in families but is presumably the result of nurture not nature (63)." Moral self-cultivation has, therefore, two dimensions. First, it is the internal-sided development of rationality and sentiments. And second, this development always happens in the context of the roles one plays in society.

In short, virtues are the necessary but not sufficient intensional aspect of behavior. Following the rites (out of good motives, which in turn, is a virtue) is also necessary but not sufficient extensional aspect. Both come together and are made complete in the sufficient aspect of Confucian

philosophy, which is performing the role(s) that is partly socially, partly naturally, and partly context-dependently bestowed upon the self. The cultivation of the self brings these aspects into balance. Of course, this characterization only applies to the intensional and extensional aspects of morality. Master Kong, since he was also developing a practical philosophy, also regarded other necessary aspects such as education, abilities, knowledge – which fall outside the scope of this paper – that focus on the investigation of the ethical part of the argument. All these aspects are brought together by self-cultivation.

What is, now, the basic difference between the "junzi" and the "xiaoren"? In the *Analects*, Master Kong presents different juxtapositions of them; for example: "While the "junzi" cherishes respect for the law, the small man cherishes generous treatment (IV. 11)." "The "junzi" understands what is moral. The small man understands what is profitable (IV. 16)." "The "junzi" is easy of mind, while the small man is always full of anxiety (VII. 91)." "The "junzi" helps others to realize what is good in them; he does not help them to realize what is bad in them. The small man does the opposite (XII. 16)." "The "junzi" agrees with others without being an echo. The small man echoes without being in agreement (XIII. 23)." "The "junzi" is at ease without being arrogant; the small man is arrogant without being at ease (XII 26)." "The "junzi" gets through to what is up above; the small man gets through to what is down below (XIV. 128)." "What a "junzi" seeks, he seeks within himself; what a small man seeks, he seeks in others (XV.21)."

These thoughts not only denote that the "junzi" and the "xiaoren" are fundamentally different; they also show how each is preoccupied with different aspects. While the "junzi" has the action, with its outcomes and its motivations in mind, the "xiaoren" only cares about the outcomes that are directly pertinent to him or her. The "junzi" has more developed rational capabilities – the "junzi" questions others, seeks and has knowledge, is self-critical –, cultivates sentiments – the "junzi" is calm, harmonious, respectful –, and is capable of acting on the grounds of this combination of rationality and sentiments. The "xiaoren", on the other hand, is neither fully rational (at least in a sense of objective rationality understood as pursuing what in desirable in the long term) nor has developed sentiments. Therefore, the "xiaoren" acts not on the basis of a framework of reference but on basal instincts directed at envisaging specific outcomes.

While petty people understand the world only in relation to their own wants and needs (i.e. they are self-centered), the "junzi" understands his role in a set of social interrelations. While the only question that the "xiaoren" are capable of asking is "how will this affect me", the "junzi" possess both the desire and the ability to see the entire context in which they are situated. The "junzi" can see a community, a family, a state as a living organism with multiple, conflicting, and equally valid wants and needs. The great strength of the "junzi" is the ability to make decisions for the sake of the entire social organism. For this reason, "junzi" should lead others (Kim 2009).

Chow (2011) thinks that while the "xiaoren" are the common people, i.e. the masses, the "junzi" are the leaders (implying that they necessarily come out of nobility). Chow comes very close to saying that these elite are a stratum of society set apart from society. This might be the closest reading of the "junzi" in the *Analects*. There might be two reasons explaining this idea in the *Analects*. First, since Kong was writing as a statesman, he was targeting statesmen of his time. He wanted to show them what a person in the public realm has to do in order to become an extraordinary leader. Second and more philosophically, while everyone can become virtuous, can follow the rites, and can perform roles, Confucius wanted to make it clear that becoming a "junzi"

is a necessary moral goal for every member of the nobility, since only the "junzi" would be able to lead the community and the public affairs.

So, the virtuous and especially the "junzi" are those who know how to behave in society, i.e. what roles to play and how to play them. Virtuous people and the "junzi" decide which course of action to take in regard to the roles involved in the making of a decision and the effects the decision has. Furthermore, the virtuous and the "junzi" nurture those feelings and virtues that make it more possible for them to play the roles they have – but not only that, they also acquire their education, abilities, and knowledge while keeping their roles in mind. Because the virtuous and the "junzi" not only see beyond their self-interest but primarily focus on roles in society, the virtuous and especially the "junzi" are exemplary and able to lead (Ivanhoe 2000).

Does this all entail that the virtuous and the "junzi" have no self-interest? Master Kong despises those that act selfishly and out of self-interest alone. However, Confucius acknowledges the worth of the self. In *Analects* II, 12, he states, "The junzi is not a utensil." This can be read as the "junzi" never being a means to an end but a presence, a person, something bearing self-worth. This presence has intrinsic worth, and this value is not only valid because of the role but because the "junzi" as such is able to perform his role. As such, the "junzi" knows of his worth. The "junzi" has an interest in progressing towards an ethically complete person. However, this implies some self-interest on the side of the "junzi". In addition, people having specific characters, and character being something different from a role, is also acknowledged in *Analects* II, 10: "See what a man does. Mark his motives. Examine in what things he rests. How can a man conceal his character? How can a man conceal his character?"

The motives individuals have when acting are important in Kong's thinking. He does not want plain adherence to the rites. He does not want plain performance. He wants the person to think, examine the world, and adhere to the role this person is supposed to play, concluding that it is the right thing to do. Master Kong wants good performance for the right reasons. This process that goes beyond just doing what one is supposed to do relies on self-interest interpreted as the interested self, thinking about her or his own motives to act. The self that is interested in analyzing her or his own virtues, role-performance, and character is a self-interested self; a self that has interest in the self. Confucius seems to presuppose this epistemic version of self-interest, since without an interest in the self, the self cannot cultivate the self.

Confucian self-interest might go even further. In *Analects* IV, 12, it says, "He who acts with a constant view to his own advantage will be much murmured against." The problem here does not seem to be the person acting out of self-interest but only out of selfishness. The person that is interested in the self does not necessarily consider the self the only or central focus of attention. On the contrary, a critical reflection of the self is a facet of self-interest. The self-cultivating person must have an interest in the self. Contrast this with the selfish person, who only is interested in the self and only acts because of the self. The effect is not even that pure selfishness is per se blameworthy but that the relational conditions of the agent will be affected and will affect him or her negatively. In fact, this saying is an appeal to the self-interest of agents not to act selfishly, because selfishness is detrimental to the long-run self-interests of the agent. Similarly, the Confucian virtuous and the "junzi" are not other-worldly entities but have a fully developed psychology, including needs, pleasures, and sadness. In *Analects* VI, 23, Master Kong is clear about the wise and virtuous pursuing their self-interest: The Master said, "The wise find pleasure in water; the virtuous find pleasure in hills. The wise are active; the virtuous are tranquil. The wise are joyful; the virtuous are long-lived."

In Master Kong's thinking, through self-cultivation, all – or at least most – people could become virtuous and some even "junzi". The interested self could even be the argument that allows him or her to be optimistic. If all, the "junzi", virtuous people and the "xiaoren" share some sort of self-interest, what differentiates them is the horizon of self-interest. The self-interest of the "xiaoren" is directed only to attaining objects for the self without any recognition of a necessary relation of the self to other selves. Master Kong, however, thinks that the roles people have to play might provide objective guidance, including to the "xiaoren". The virtuous or the "junzi" could argue with the "xiaoren" that reducing self-interest to egoism makes the self worse off. Instead, extending self-interest to include the necessary relation of the self to the community would make the self better off. In this case, it would be in the interest of the self to expand the horizons of self-interest. Recognizing the error of egoism is in the self-interest of the person.

In summary, Kong's philosophy wanted to reform society by reforming people first. It was based on virtues and ritual propriety, because the first enables an ethical mindset and the second makes it possible to behave ethically. Both – and all virtues – join the inner aspect, motivation, with the outer aspect, action. They – together with a person's education, abilities, and knowledge – enable people to perform roles in a community. All these aspects must be nurtured through self-cultivation. Those who succeed in the cultivation of their selves, the virtuous and the "junzi", can also lead people. Self-cultivation, however, does not entail the negation of the self. Quite the contrary. The self-that self-cultivates needs at least an epistemic self-interest. So, it is possible to reconcile virtues, rites, roles, and self-cultivation with the advancement of self-interested goals.

Virtue and Self-Interest in Adam Smith

Adam Smith, too, was a social reformer. His definition of the good life has three components, the eradication of poverty, moral cultivation of the self, and social immersion of the self. Like Master Kong, Smith never separated people from the organization of society. But unlike the Chinese Master, Smith embraced the advantages of his commercial, proto-industrial time using some of its merits as groundwork of political, social, and ethic philosophy. One of the merits on which he relies is the virtues, which he sees as constitutive in such a "merchant society" (Muller 1993).

In the TMS, Smith states that the "gentleman" acts according to the "rules of perfect prudence, of strict justice, and of proper benevolence" (TMS, X, 1). This formulation seems convoluted. Smith seems to appeal to a rule. Yet he does not. In the length of the TMS and the WN, it becomes clear that, for Smith, it is the virtues of prudence, justice, and love as well as courage and temperance that are essential to the "gentleman". Virtues are crucial for Smith's ethics and philosophy of action, since he believed that people behave on character traits and depending on the context. The context, albeit a given, has a constitutive and normative character. Behaving in a certain context does not mean that the agent self judges the context alone but calculates how a particular course of action might meet approval or disapproval from peers. The agent self, through prudence, strikes a balance between interests and alternate courses of action. This will be developed in this section.

Smith establishes that acting on virtues has an internal and external component. The internal component is discussed when Smith elaborates the virtue of prudence – "the character of the individual in its bearing on his own happiness" – in the TMS (VI, 1) and in the entire WN. It is not that only prudence has an internal component, but Smith chooses it for clarifying how this component works. According to him, there are three different mechanisms at the same time. First,

the interest of the concerned person, be this an interest for the self, for the immediate relatives, or for the other person. Second, there is a set of moral sentiments telling people what to do under a certain circumstance. And third, there is the "impartial spectator", which will be discussed below. Furthermore, when Smith refers to the individual, he also means the social context of that individual, especially her or his family and friendships.

The external component is regarded when he inquiries about benevolence – "the character of the individual in its bearing on the happiness of other people" – in the TMS, VI, 2, which he takes to comprise the virtues of justice and love, or what he calls "beneficence". Benevolence, for Smith, is a virtue that enables the self to develop empathy – in his words: sympathy – towards other selves and recognize that they all belong to the same community. Being benevolent, in Smith's terms, is asking how one impacts other people's life and the community's life. While benevolence, as a virtue, addresses the internal, intensional aspect for dealing with external, extensional side, Smith develops the "impartial spectator". It makes consequences of one's action clear. In a relationship, if there are intensional virtues and an extensional "impartial spectator", then self-command is what brings them together in human action (TMS VI, 3). Self-command itself requires the acting self to use the virtues of prudence and benevolence (love and justice) as well as the virtues of temperance and courage. In a conclusion of that part of the TMS (VI, 4), Smith states: "Concern for our own happiness recommends to us the virtue of (1) prudence; concern for the happiness of other people recommends to us the virtues of (2) justice, which restrains us from harming their happiness, and (3) beneficence, which prompts us to promote it."

Smith begins to stress the impartiality of the spectator only when he comes to theorize about the effect of the reactions of spectators on the agent. Smith's spectator is first called impartial in the chapter that distinguishes between the amiable and the respectable virtues, the virtues of humanity on the one hand, and self-command on the other. Humanity is a more-than-average degree of sympathetic feeling and is the result of an effort by the spectator to heighten his or her sympathy in order to match the experience of the person principally concerned. Self-command is conversely a virtue of the "person principally concerned" and is the result of an endeavor to restrain natural emotion and to lower its pitch to that which the ordinary spectator feels through sympathy.

Empathy, or sympathy, keeps people in their own orbit and in harmony with others (general theory of morality paralleling Newton's general theory of physics). Sympathy occurs through the objective part of man that Smith calls the impartial spectator. Sympathy is an emotion, a moral sentiment, that is made objective, or at least intersubjective, by the impartial spectator and by rationality. Whereas one person can judge one agent, how is the person to account for his/her own action? The agent has to "divide" himself into two: an agent in its proper sense and a supposed spectator, which is called impartial, since it is the self-judging part. Impartiality, however, does not rule out sympathy. It is indeed sympathy that allows us to judge as an impartial spectator, since this is a common feature of all members of the community. By using the impartial spectator to examine one's own and others' actions, a person separates him or herself into two: the examiner and the examined.

The impartial spectator is the operationalization of the moral "senses" of approval and disapproval. The topic of sympathy is brought up in the TMS I, 1. Sympathy is an aspect of the "sense" of propriety, and propriety entails how to properly behave. Behaving properly means behaving in such a way that meets approval from one's peer; and therefore, behaving improperly meets with disapproval. In the TMS II, 1, Smith discusses that sympathy is related to the senses of

approval and disapproval, but it is not the same thing as these senses. In fact, approval and disapproval are reflections upon and judgments about the level of sympathy people feel with one another. Sympathy and propriety stand therefore as a double link to each other. In the WN, Smith returns to this relationship, treating it as a series of balances in judgement. These balances are guided by the virtue of "prudence".

For Smith, being a "gentleman" is acting properly in a social context. It might be an overstatement claiming that the Smithian self is essentially a relational self, but the self surely is always in a social context. This context is not defined by roles, as in Master Kong's approach, but by relationships of empathy. Behaving as a "gentleman" essentially means taking society seriously and measuring one's actions by the social effects of that action and by the degree of approval or disapproval by the peers of the acting self. How, then, can the acting self be a self-interested agent? The simplest answer, in a Smithian sense, is: being a "gentleman" depends on how the person handles self-interest.

In "The Wealth of Nations", there is a famous quote in which self-interest is pictured as the center of one's action. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages (WN, I, 2, 2)." How can this idea be interpreted in the light of what was said above?

Note first, that the claim is not normative but descriptive. Smith is not saying that agents should or have to act self-interestedly but only saying that, in that particular context, the agents pursue self-interest. Second, there is no claim that economic agents act purely based on their self-love. They are self-interested but not selfish. It is quite the contrary. In the cases exemplified in the quote above, all parties are interested in exchange, because exchange corresponds to the way to act in that specific context and is met by approval by all participating. Third, Smith is making a point about the necessary conditions for market exchanges to take place; after all, it is the chapter addressing the division of labor. Among these conditions there is the self-interested nature of a baker in being a baker and not a butcher. Self-interest here refers to "the self" being interested in her or his own interests or talents in order to find out which profession one wants to take up. The discussion about profession and talents takes place in the exact same chapter (WN, I, 2, 5). Much as Master Kong discusses the education, abilities, and knowledge of agents – not always in the moral context but guided by moral self-cultivation – Smith discusses the same here but let it be guided by self-command and the impartial spectator, too.

The WN is an application of the virtue of prudence; even the self-interest depicted above is not free from other applications of that same virtue. There is the self-interest of the baker to produce and sell bakeware and not to give them away. But why? It is not only out of selfishness but also in regard to other duties the baker has to perform such as caring for his family and paying taxes (WN, IV, 2). After all, the baker acts prudently; part of this prudence is to provide for others and for oneself in order to be able to play an active role in society. Taking care of one's self, one's family, but also one's duty towards other institutions are tasks that demand prudence.

Because of this, there is an even wider-ranging concern in the WN. The claim of self-interest goes as far as to say that every person is worth something and that it is legitimate to see one's life not just as a means to an end. Self-interest enables the person to think for her and himself and not just to subordinate under the commands of landowners, aristocracy, or the church. Smith was writing for merchants, but he didn't even want their servants to be subordinates, but rather to show self-interest

and self-command. This also explains why Adam Smith devoted several chapters of the WN (e.g. III; IV, 3; IV, 5) to inquiring about inequality, thinking that free exchange decreases inequality between people.

The WN also serves to lay out the design of an ideal society (WN IV). This is shaped by free exchanges in free markets because of two reasons. First, markets contribute in eradicating poverty, and poverty is a massive impediment in the establishment of an ethical society. Second, free exchange in free markets is an important equalizer. It is in this freedom that every person can act prudently and benevolently if in possession of sufficient self-command. And so, self-interest for Adam Smith is, in its positive sense, always a function of prudence and always applied in combination with benevolence guided by self-command. Prudence, on the other hand, resembles Kong's virtues of filial piety and justice as well as his preference for partial care of one's own family. On the other hand, Smithian goes beyond the reading proposed above of Confucius by taking self-interest as an epistemic criterion. For Smith, self-interest – not selfishness – is part of at least one virtue.

How, then, can one be sure that the self-interested person acting on the virtue of prudence does not degenerate and become an egoist? In this reading, Smith's answer is twofold. First, one does not act on one virtue alone. It is always prudence, justice, love, courage, and temperance that belong to the strength of character of the person, and a constant cultivation of these is necessary. The second answer is that performing one's actions is always a relational matter. One's actions must be seen in the context of itself, its motivations, and its outcomes, including its impacts on society.

In "The Wealth of Nations", Smith is clear that any exchange, even one guided by prudence, needs an institutional setting as well as trust. Trust, on the other hand, develops on the basis of empathic mindsets, and those are by necessary relational terms. And even the appeal to the self-interest of the economic agent is a relational contention. Smith thinks that no society can be flourishing, moral, and happy when the greater parts of its members are poor and miserable. In order to escape poverty, members of society are urged to find out what they can do better than others, and the epistemic tool by which they find it out is self-interest. So, self-interest is an epistemic postulate and not a moral norm for Adam Smith. The epistemic postulate serves in finding out a place in the economic value chain or, to put it in Confucian terms, a role. The moral dimensions of acting according to virtues and the impartial spectator turn the self-interested person into a moral being, a gentleman. For Smith, there is no market and no society without social empathy. In the TMS, he states: "No matter how selfish you think man is, it's obvious that there are some principles in his nature that give him an interest in the welfare of others, and make their happiness necessary to him, even if he gets nothing from it but the pleasure of seeing it (I, 1, 1)."

It seems that Adam Smith knows that the self-interested individual, even if guided by a self-interested virtue, like prudence, is still incomplete. While self-interest is prudence's pre-requisite, it alone cannot guide the actions of people. Surely, according to the TMS, prudence establishes that an individual upholds certain relationships, is trustworthy, loyal, and even filial. But on the other hand, the individual does not transcend the self when acting purely on prudence. The "gentleman" knows how to act on prudence combined with love and justice intermediated by self-command, which is the combination of courage and temperance. He or she knows that not only because she or he has some moral inclinations of doing so, but because she or he learned how to act on the virtues by self-control. Self-control is the constant nurturing of the virtues in which a "gentleman" has to act.

In summary, Smith's philosophy is based on five virtues: prudence, love, justice (these two grouped in benevolence), temperance, and courage (these two grouped in self-command). These virtues are not valid on their own. They also have a relational character, since every action has an inner aspect shaped by virtues and an outer aspect shaped and measured by the "impartial spectator". If people do not necessarily play roles, they always interact in society. The Smithian self is interested in her or himself, but the "gentleman" maintains this interest as epistemic guidance. Smithian self-interest encompasses caring for one's family and friends and is meant also as a motivator for equality. So are many of the institutions he had in mind, geared at making it possible for people to interact as equals. Self-command is the way people reconcile the virtues they act upon with society and the "impartial spectator". Self-command needs a constant cultivation of the self. The "gentleman" is the person that masters self-command and, therefore, combines virtues in social relations.

The Self and the Virtuous

This last section discusses the similarities and differences between both philosophers. It will establish that while the Smithian "gentleman" is no Confucian "junzi" – lacking ritual propriety and the moral task to lead other people – the "gentleman" isn't automatically a "xiaoren" either. The Smithian gentleman can be Confucian "virtuous". In both cases, it is a question of how to nurture the interested self.

It is easy to recollect what unites both philosophers: In Adam Smith, as well as in Confucius, there are moral agents acting on virtues and always in a relational – social – context. These moral agents strive (or should strive) to become "gentlemen", or "virtuous", or "junzi" through self-command or self-cultivation. These agents are not only moral agents. They have other resources, too, for example education, abilities, and knowledge – but these practical resources also have to be nurtured and managed by self-cultivation and self-command. In both philosophies, the ideal society can only be achieved if a reasonable amount of people strive and succeed in becoming "gentlemen", or "virtuous", or "junzi". In Smith's case, this ideal society is economically prosperous; in Kong, it is a well-ordered state. This different focus is influenced by the particular problems each's society was facing. Smith wanted to eradicate poverty in a novel type of society, and Master Kong wanted to institute order modeled on past experience.

In Adam Smith, as well as in Confucius, self-interest and the virtues play an important role, albeit not the same. The Smithian "gentleman" needs to be self-interested in order to act on the virtue of prudence. However, the "gentleman" needs to act on justice and love, too, which is achieved by using the "impartial spectator". Training one's self in acting on prudence as well as on benevolence – guided by self-command – is also part of the Smithian program. For Confucius, on the other hand, virtues, rites, and roles define the moral actions of the self. The "virtuous" and the "junzi" cultivate their own self in order to be able to play their roles. However, with the "virtuous" and the "junzi" having to cultivate the self, an interested self is presupposed. This interested self has the self-interest necessary to recognize the virtues and relationships and act on them. In particular, it has enough interest in the self to cultivate it. In Adam Smith, the self-interested agent is a given. Self-interest, if guided by the virtues, enables the self to recognize what to do but also, and even more importantly, the social desiderata of the self's action. In Confucius, the role of self-interest is a different one. It is primarily an epistemic criterion by which the self discerns how to self-cultivate.

There are however important differences between Adam Smith and Master Kong. These differences occur at several different levels.

The first is the level of virtue itself. Adam Smith has a conception of virtue grounded in a general notion of human nature that focuses on aspects of human psychology. His conception describes the virtues in terms of dispositions conducive to smooth, agreeable, and beneficial interactions between individuals within and between different societies. In his view, virtue-ethics is the exploration of general emotional resources, tendencies, and capacities. Master Kong, on the other hand, has a different conception of virtue. It is grounded in a comprehensive and detailed notion of human nature that seeks to describe the content, structure, and overall shape of human nature. It is developed in terms of a teleological view about the cultivation of human nature expressed in an ideal or paradigmatic model of what it is to be human, specifically, modeled against the background of the sage-kings. Confucius – and Confucianism generally – seeks to provide an account of human nature that describes its content, structure, and shape. Virtues are part of this account – together with roles, rites, knowledge, etc. One consequence of this difference is that for Smith the virtues are more expressions of features of human psychology within the confines of particular social conditions. For example, instead of describing and holding up the man of practical wisdom as the ideal standard for the good and the aim of every human life, Smith describes what people must be like in order to form and maintain a humane and cooperative society and interact with other societies around the world in an agreeable and beneficial manner. For Smith, the virtues are practical expressions of what is needed to live well in particular social conditions; human nature serves as a resource for crafting the best kind of life. Confucius' idea has a firm but general psychological foundation, not a specific trajectory or goal. Confucius idea of virtue is not context-sensitive, but generally valid and if dependent on anything, then on the role a person performs.

The second level is about how widespread virtue is. While both philosophers seem to abhor ruffians and the "xiaoren", they do so for distinct reasons. Adam Smith believes that those ruffians have the epistemic capabilities associated with self-interest and can even acknowledge virtue; however, they do not act on it. Kong, on the other hand, seems to think that the "xiaoren" lack the epistemic capabilities as well as virtues, since they act on instincts. Later, Confucians then expand the Master's view and accept that proper education and even acting on instincts could develop the necessary capabilities to attain merit (Kim 2004).

The third difference is in the way the interested self uses self-interest. The Smithian "gentleman" has a solid sense of society. At all times, however, the "gentleman" has his own interests in mind, too. Even when putting society first, the "gentleman" is acting on his own interest, since putting society first means seeking the approval of the self's actions by society. The Confucian "virtuous" and the "junzi", on the other hand, use self-interest in order to comply with the rites and understand virtues as well as to act on them. The status of self-interest is thus different. For Smith, it is an epistemic category that permeates the virtue of prudence. For Master Kong, it is just the epistemic category.

Fourth, there are also differences between Master Kong and Adam Smith on the extensional aspects of action. For Confucius, the rites are essential for performing roles. The relationship of virtues, rites, and roles seems to create an objective framework on how people should act. In Smith's thought, however, there does not seem to be such a framework. Guided by virtues and the impartial spectator, the self devises courses of action and acts, but all these seem to be contingent on the specific context and the specific social desiderata associated with the context. In the TMS, Smith acknowledges the importance of etiquette. However, for him, etiquette is not ethically constitutive of the "gentleman". In Master Kong, ritual propriety means more than just adhering to etiquette. It

means attaching ethical value to it. The "junzi" is always rén (仁) and lǐ (禮), because the roles themselves are shared ritual performances. This dimension is absent in Adam Smith.

Fifth, the Smithian gentleman has no necessary political role to play. When engaged in the public sphere, the gentleman will use the same virtues and self-command that allow him to be successful and ethical in other transactions. There is no special "calling" for public agency associated with the "gentleman". In fact, that itself is part of the novel social model sponsored by Smith: the same "gentleman" that is successful and ethical in other exchanges can engage in politics. Smith's is a bourgeois social model. Master Kong, on the other hand, associated a special calling to the "junzi": the "junzi" was called to lead through superior ethics. This is also absent in Smith.

In addition to these discussions and on a different level, two further similarities of Smith and Confucius arise – but these similarities impose problems. Both seem to think that all members of society share the same values. Furthermore, both might presuppose that all agents share the same epistemic structures. In the Confucian case, these two (hidden) assumptions might be, after all, plausible. Since Kong accepted the natural structure of the dào (way, 道), the "tiān" (heaven, 天), and the order of things, what follows logically is that this natural order transposes to the social order and to the structures of thought of agents. For Smith, the situation is more difficult, since he does not seem to make an explicit commitment towards a natural order or a metaphysical grounding.

In reality, there are two groups of problems with Adam Smith's theory of virtue. The first is: Smith refers to two principles that he deems necessary conditions for human society. He presupposes that all members of the community share the same values. Also, he equally presupposes that they train themselves to adhere to these values, i.e. he imagines all members of society cultivating common values. The argument in which morality is a means of self-control rests largely on Smith's notion of self-command as an essential precondition for human society.

To the first problem in more detail: Smith believes that to judge whether a motive or feeling is warranted or proper, we must take up, not some external perspective, but that of the person who has the motive or feeling – the agent's standpoint, in the case of motivation; the patient's standpoint, in the case of feeling (TMS, 16-23). Of course, Smith does believe that impartiality regulates moral judgment. However, it does so by disciplining the way in which we enter into the agent's or patient's point of view, not by providing its own perspective. Moral judgment involves an impartial projection into the agent's or patient's standpoint. "We imaginatively project, not us ourselves, but impartially, any one of us (TMS, 82, 137-38)". The judgment that the agent's motive or the patient's feeling is proper involves what Smith calls "sympathy": an imaginative sharing of the agent's motive or the patient's feeling from his point of view (TMS, i). Thus, Smith's view makes all moral judgment deeply and individually related – either agent-relative or patient-relative or both (as in the case of justice). When one judges an agent's motive, one does so from the agent's own perspective (appropriately regulated), viewing the practical situation as one imagines it to confront him or her in deliberation. And when one judges someone's feeling or reaction, one does so from a patient-relative point of view, viewing the situation as one imagines it to confront the patient who responds to it.

And to the second problem in more detail: Smith considers social harmony not just to be a product of individuals using the impartial spectator but a precondition for its application, since overall values and "moralities" are supposed to be something shared by all of society. In a context in which each has different sentiments, the impartial spectator would lead not to social desiderata but

only to the rationalization of individual value judgment. Smith aims at self-cultivation and, thereby, at the inculcation of common sentiments that enable virtue.

Returning to the main line of this paper: Confucius and Smith share a great deal of philosophical anthropology and ethical thinking. While there is nuance between them in terms of the use of self-interest – how far does the interested self-use self-interest – and disagreement on the question of ritual and leadership, there is another factor that makes their respective philosophies as different as they seem: their context. Each philosopher was facing a completely different historical and institutional environment. Therefore, each had different goals. Master Kong was restoring order by looking back at periods of greatness. Smith was eradicating poverty and creating a good society by devising a novel social model. Master Kong's past greatness was a society determined by rituals and roles. His ethical thinking was that it is not only sufficient to do the right thing, it is necessary to do them for the right reasons, the right reasons being virtues. Smith's novel social model was based on free transactional interactions. In order for these to work, people would have to be committed to each other, establishing a relationship of trust. This can be done through nourishment of virtues, self-command, and the constant balance in the light of the social approval of one's actions. So, the similar philosophical anthropology and ethics applied to different institutional realms result in different models for society.

This paper analyzed similarities and differences in the social philosophy of Confucius and Adam Smith. While both share a disregard for petty people and esteem the noble person as the cornerstone of society, each does it differently. In particular, both have different – but not contradictory – definitions of what makes an exemplary person. They agree that virtues are pivotal for acting and that virtues (always) have a relational character. Yet most importantly, both agree that the acting self has interests and that self-interest is practically and epistemically important. They disagree in the precise way self-interest is involved in action.

The Smithian "gentleman" acts on virtues, has the action, its motivation, and its results relative to the whole society in mind. This guarantees that he is not a "xiaoren". But, on the other hand, self-interest guides the "gentleman's" application of virtue, lacking ritual propriety and the performance of a public task. Therefore, the "gentleman" might be "virtuous" but is no "junzi".

It is in reading Confucius and Adam Smith as virtue-ethicists that it becomes apparent that not only virtue matter for them – the interested self matters, too.

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Cultivating Reason & Civility - A Moral Priority

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Abstract:

Cultivating reason and civility as a moral priority requires our attention as world alliances promoting peace, security, and human dignity are breaking down revealing the often immoral underbelly of nations and of national leaders. Our world has grown closer together due to modern technology, and, in a way, further apart, as a diversity of values is spread unevenly within nations and throughout the world. Seeking common or shared values, especially moral values, is needed, requiring political and personal transparency, but remains in short supply. Experience has shown that the assumptions we bring to moral discourse are often undisclosed causing confusion and often the collapsing of open dialogue. We learn from E.A. Burtt (1965, 28 ff.) that presuppositions are the given – the intuitively given – we present to reality that in turn modify reality and become reality itself. And we tend to shape our moral views, perhaps unaware of their cultural origins, by our own cultural genealogy. Presuppositions as culture are the "there" that is "there" but not-yet fully or intentionally realized or openly stated. We know about these presuppositions through the language of discourse and argument, but ever so often they remain hidden and protected so as not to reveal their intended consequences.

Our assumptions about value have a motivational quality pushing us to discover the causal links that complete the theory our presuppositions entail. This dynamic relativity calls for discussion – a dialectic of conversation – for agreement and consistency to be sustained. When we transfer this conversation to morals and ethics we notice that the suppositions we bring to the table when answering the question "Why should I be moral?" often determine the answers we give. Thus, if we are truly interested in locating our shared values, transparency is required. As we know, hidden motives – of individuals and nations – more often than not corrupt the search for ethical and moral comity.

To this conversation the theist brings his or her belief in God as law-giver and moral judge; the pragmatist, being oriented to science, recognizes that ethics lies outside of his or her method to procure and provides practical, social, reasons for being ethical, the politician often brings the hidden desire for manipulation and control, and the psychologist makes an effort to penetrate the human mind assuming the existence of an innate moral compass although often explained sociologically and developmentally. But what motivates either to pursue ethics remains hidden, lurking in the background of their beliefs and, perhaps, future hope. Moral knowledge remains elusive, but most agree that it is worth pursuing.

This paper acknowledges these pursuits and difficulties. As this paper will show, values are primarily cultural and/or social constructs orienting us to pre-conceived futures, difficult to change and discuss openly. Because we have been given a mixed bag evidenced by human diversity and moral pluralism, open dialogue is needed and cultivated civilly. Hence, this paper makes a case for dialogic civility as a means of communication and values adjudication understanding that communication

will remain closed unless someone steps up and begins to open such dialogue. Entailed by this is that ethics, morals, and civility are more than theoretical concerns; they imply social relationships immersed in cultural diversity, are person oriented, and are needed for world repair.

Candace Carnicelli (2019) Director, Common Peace Center for the Advancement of Nonviolence says, "Knowledge strengthens our conviction and deepens our wisdom and understanding. It opens up our mind – presents choices we did not previously know we had – allows for previously unknown possibilities to be birthed. It is a power that allows us to release fear – fear of the unknown." She quotes Martin Luther King, Jr, who said, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensely and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education." As David Brooks (2016, 183) advises, "Character development, like historic progress, best happens imperceptibly, through daily effort." And daily effort is sorely needed. Thus, dialogic (rational) discussions of ethics and values is recommended as a way of seeking commonly shared values and building a more civil and ethical society.

Keywords: Civility, cultural pluralism, dialogic civility, identity markers, innate, intuition, moral epistemology, moral knowledge reason, social knowledge, sources of moral knowledge, universal cognitive modules, will

Identity Markers: From Whence Came Our Values?

What Lies Behind The Righteous Mind?

Noticeably, every nation, like every person, has certain identity markers. These often include power, position, education, and wealth, to name a few. Nationally they come in the form of GDP, trade surpluses or deficits, a powerful military, a strong workforce, and identifying with either capitalism or socialism, possibly both, etc. Identify markers differentiate our values, point to their foundation, and hint at the undisclosed principles lurking just beneath the surface of our words and actions. They identify persons and groups – religious bodies, political parties, and nations. What is beneath these identity markers, often left unsaid, are ideals definitive of our deepest, most cherished beliefs. We are sometimes fooled by identity markers because we fail to look behind the words used, only to the actions of persons and groups. Unarticulated value assumptions are often hidden in plain sight.

Richard Rorty (1979, xxxi) correctly observed that the ideas and arguments of philosophers, theologians, educators, and scientists are embedded in a morass of unstated beliefs and assumptions. The clarity of their statements, the logic of their arguments, and the axiomatic assumptions guiding their theories provide only an illusion of objectivity. So, we ask, "What is it that motivates our moral perspicacity?" and "Why aren't people and groups more transparent about their beliefs and assumptions?" An example is the recent vote of the United Methodist Church to maintain their "traditional" view of the LBGTQ community. That is, although such individuals are welcomed in the church, the church will not hire them as ministers or elders, ordain them, or perform same-sex

marriages. Hidden just underneath the surface of this decision is the view, mostly taken from the Old Testament and then written into the Methodist Book of Discipline, that homosexuality is a sin.

To clarify the picture of value-markers, Johnathan Haidt (2012, 146 ff.), in his book *The Righteous Mind,* has identified some of the basic identity markers of moral life. He calls these "universal cognitive modules upon which cultures construct moral matrices." These motivators are identified as care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. Haidt also calls these constructs "adaptive challenges" and indeed they are as the last two markers can easily be applied to the Methodist decision and perhaps bring some clarity to their resolution. Haidt's analysis is steeped in sociological insight supported by psychological interpretations from which much can be learned.

Haidt, being the psychologist that he is, begins his dissertatum by probing the origin of moral values. He concludes that each of the above foundations has an innate beginning; meaning, "being in advance of experience" (Haidt 2012, 178). He calls his proposal "an educated guess": "Particular rules and virtues vary across cultures, so you'll get fooled if you look for universality in the finished books. You won't find a single paragraph that exists in identical form in every human culture. But if you look for links between evolutionary theory and anthropological observations, you can take some *educated guesses* about what was in the universal first draft of human nature" (178). Being unsure what he means by "the universal first draft of human nature," we can only wonder what undisclosed assumptions lie behind this statement. Certainly, "being in advance of experience" requires a moral thorough explication.

The evidence is thin as Haidt's observation hangs on his initial scrutiny of young children about whom he believes evolutionary forces have brought them into some kind of primitive moral awareness. Left unsaid is whether these foundations are biologically innate or intuitions built through human experience. Although he gives "intuition" and "innate" the same meaning – "being in advance of experience" -- his "cognitive modules" bare the stamp of sociological analysis and his proposal appears to be developed more on the structure and functioning of human society, on patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and the habits of everyday life than on some kind of innate biological moral intelligence. To move around this quandary, he says, "...I call my theory the 'social *intuitionist* model of moral judgment'." For Haidt, moral sentiments originate as intuitions, innate and evolutionary, and appear later in life when cognition (reasoning) is applied to them (56-57).

We should point out that many researchers are concerned with combining epistemological considerations – that there is such a thing as "moral knowledge," especially innate moral knowledge – and viewing children as possessing moral capacities not solely imposed by their enculturation. Elliot Turiel remarks, "The development of social knowledge in children and adolescents is a broad topic requiring some choices regarding the focus of analysis. These choices are naturally guided by one's theoretical orientation to social reasoning and its formation and transformation in the process of growth. My research ... has led me to focus on categories of social reasoning...the analysis of

categories of social knowledge have provided a framework for an understanding of children's social interactions with peers, their relationship with adults, their processes of development, and the relationships between social judgments and actions." Turiel's thesis is "that social life is guided by rational processes and that the construction of fundamental and distinct categories of social knowledge begins early in childhood." His assumptions do not contradict those of Haidt's, as he side steps the issue of innateness, only to stress the importance of social interactions and the need to cultivate reason and civility (Turiel 2008, vii).

We All Wonder

Thus, there is much to unpack in Haidt's thesis as well as how moral/social knowledge develops. We all wonder whom we are and from whence we came. There is some mystery to this as we had nothing to do with our conception. But, here we are complete with our genetic and cultural past, trying to unwind our "self" in all its mysterious dimensions. Having been born, reared, and educated in the American South, history is of great importance to me. Yet, even though I can trace much of my surface life, the origins of my thoughts and values and how they came to be what they are remains vague and unidentified. Decisions were made to bring us into life and these decisions connect us to myriad ancestors far and wide. Who were these ancestors of mine? What was their conceptual make-up and how did their values impact my life? How did their mores seep into my genetic, evolutionary, development, if indeed they did? Is Haidt correct? Was I born with a built-in moral sensitivity? Why are some individuals pathological killers; what was built into the first draft of their human nature? Can universal conclusions to Haidt's assumptions be empirically reached?

Mine is not a fruitless wondering, for in me, as in others, are hidden values captured and convoluted within my genetic/social makeup. These are perhaps cultural implants difficult to define and even more difficult to dislodge and bring into rational inspection. As Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958, 50) has commented, "The aspect of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something—because it is always before one's eyes) The real foundation of his enquiry does not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at sometime struck him.—and this means we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and powerful." Wittgenstein seems to be saying that our values are hidden in "plain sight"; perhaps they are.

Because values are deep-rooted, often concealed just beneath the surface of rationality, their origin is of some mystery. Haidt's is one thesis proposed to clarify this quandary. But, are they natural (innate) and modified by experience, or are cultual and environmental factors their source rather than unmodified psychological or personal characteristics? Given that values lie quietly within, often just underneath the surface of rational thought, through time and socialization some become instinctive and when reinforced, authoritarian. Obviously, they appear innate, but no MRI can reveal these inherent features and neither can they be denied. The way we talk and think and the decisions we make are not only products of family, nurture, and education, but are artifacts duly

embedded by our ancestral history. And all of these values are not "righteous" or "moral" as Haidt assumes them to be. Richard Rorty (1999, 173) thus warns against seeking a "source of moral knowledge." He argues that "knowledge is justified true belief" and recommends replacing subject-centered morality with *communicative reasoning*. Following the insights of Jürgen Habermas, Rorty says, "...that is why, in the public square of a pluralistic democracy, justification is always up for grabs, and why the term 'source of moral knowledge' will always be out of place."

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967, 1-3) also provide a clue to this quandary when saying "that reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyze the processes in which this occurs." They point out, "Sociological interest in questions of 'reality' and 'knowledge' is thus initially justified by the fact of their social relativity." Not to throw away our biological evolution, we have been provided with some biological advantages, *special organs of equilibrium*, as noted by psychologist Jean Piaget (1967, 102). Piaget explained, "This is true of mental life, whose *organs of equilibrium* are special regulatory mechanisms. This is so at all levels of development, from the elementary regulators of motivation (needs and interests) up to *will for affectivity* and from perceptual and sensori-motor regulations up to operations for cognition." This seems to correlate with Haidt's view of "being innate," but *correlation* doesn't imply *identity*, only *resemblance*. Both Haidt and Piaget are using metaphors to explain what is unseen, only assumed. "Identity" and "correlation" are not equivalent.

Strangely vague is Piaget's notion of "will for affectivity." This feeling (will, desire) – *affectivity* – can be positive, open-minded, amiable, and helpful, or unpleasant and damaging to sociability. Obviously, these "special organs of equilibrium" do not have some identified consistent moral content – an "ought" deeply embedded in their "is." This is not clearly articulated by Piaget or Haidt. Internal social regulators can be positive social inter-actors – in tune with moral precepts – or negative, blocking civil interactions and even being irrational. Evolution has surely provided the means for value (moral) identification and regulation, but the natural world remains morally neutral. No doubt Darwin (Haidt 2012, 56) thought our values had an evolutionary modus operandi, but offered no biological proof of such.

Piaget (1967, 58) adds, "To the extent that the emotions become organized, they emerge as regulations whose final form of equilibrium is none other than the will. Thus, the will is the true affective equivalent of the operations of reason. Will is a late-appearing function. The real exercise of will is linked to the function of the *autonomous* moral feelings, which is why we have waited until this [late-childhood] stage to discuss it." Many agree that we must choose (will) to be rational as Piaget suggests, but to say our moral feelings are autonomous – self-directed and independent – seems to deny their social construction. Surely Piaget is letting his psychological assumptions guide his observations and conclusions. "Will" or "the expression of what we desire to happen" does not presuppose "what we desire to 'morally' happen." "Will" becomes linked to moral feelings or amoral feelings as experience and the socialization process moves forward. Likewise, as children grow into

maturity, they are able to provide reasons for their moral judgments, reasons for their wants, likes, and dislikes.

Thus, to say that our moral discernment is purely evolutionary or biological (innate) or autonomous ignores an additional observation of Piaget; namely, that "Will is late-appearing" and of Berger and Luckmann that moral knowledge is socially constructed. People desire many things, living morally rather than selfishly or otherwise is just one choice made in life. We continue to grow and exchange our ideas and thoughts with others, produce offspring that carry much of whom we are and what they will become. And there is more; birthing within, developing our thoughts and values, is a process of continuous learning and adjustment. This is a sociological, enculturation process, a process by which we learn the traditional content of a culture and assimilate its practices and values.

Social Control and Practical Reasoning

So, here I sit thinking and writing but unaware of the vastness of the genetic and social processes bringing me to this point in my life. This is a philosopher's nightmare as objectivity is always the goal of philosophical proclivity. But objectivity and even subjectivity melt in the vast, perhaps ambiguous, nature of whom we are—our intrinsic self about which we only get a peek now and then. Johnathan Haidt tries to clarify this picture, and does shed light on some basic moral constructs of social interaction, but appears to convolute biological innateness with evolutionary social development; these are not easily separated. There are others who dismiss the *intrinsic* altogether (Rorty, 1999, 50-51; 120; 263) considering it being too unsteady and ill-defined for moral theory building. This is understandable as science and technology have pushed us into a fact-based culture-seeking epistemological security. But, such security will not be found as our pre-rational dispositions color our decision-making, even the decision to be rational (See: Hester 1975). So dare I suggest we peek under the covers of our thoughts and decisions and therein exhume the hidden values that are regenerative and illusive? This is conceivably an impossible task, but not completely so, as we can explore many of the hidden assumptions, motives, and unwary messages from the past forming our present cognitive dispositions and why we act the way we do. This is a major insight of Haidt's work, but, as we are aware, the origin of an idea in no way constitutes its validation. The pre-verbal and pre-rational assumptions we bring to the table of human discourse and to our ethical behavior is a snarl of cultural habits and presuppositions that are difficult to untangle.

Moralities, and there are many, are special forms of social control and practical reasoning the purpose of which is to supply action-guidance for individuals in a social context. This is both a prudential and rational conclusion relying not on psychological metaphysics, but life's experiences. It is within social contexts that one encounters the problem of trying to determine what "is the "best" thing to do." In common language, this problem takes the form of knowing what is right and being able to distinguish right from wrong behavior. Thus, the crucial question for morality becomes, "Should I do what is right and refrain from doing what is wrong?" not, "Do I have an innate more

sense?" Implied by this is that there exists conclusive reasons for doing what action, if it is right, and conclusive reasons against doing the action if it is wrong. This may just be an overstatement as *conclusive reasons* often disappear in the fog of cultural diversity. No innate – before experience – moral knowledge can resolve this problem. Morality is a form of social reasoning motivated by social hope.

Social Hope

There are hidden connections – connections and relationships that define whom we are and how we respond to others. These hidden connections can be revealed by reason but reason doesn't create them. Our commitment to reason is itself a pre-rational commitment, a leap of affirmation pleading for consistency, contradiction avoiding, and pushing us into the future. Reason is a form of social equilibrium and is never as "pure" as some believe it to be. Noticing this uncertain quality, German philosopher Ernst Bloch (1986, xii) formulated what is called "the ontology of the not-yet," which is important to his idea of "social hope" and has significance for science and ethics as inference-making activities. Bloch points out that "actual thought never moves in straight lines, like thought that is fixed, cut and dried, in which nothing expands or changes and which is therefore incapable of doing justice to transformation"(xiii). Bloch's formulation reads, "P is *not-yet* Q" (strictly, "If P, then *not-yet* Q") and explains his commitment to avoid any possible closure to the dialectical interchange between individuals or groups of individuals. With this Bloch says "this forward-pressing urge latent in every moment is hope" (xiii).

Social hope implies a vision of *the not-yet* and cannot be contained in logical inference only or in un-exhumed assumptions and ideas. The openness of hope is revealed in the vision it embraces and vision is forward-looking where hope, ethical or otherwise, is activated in the existential moment of decision-making. More often than not, hope is situation dependent. Here hope finds meaning and musters the energy to move forward. Cultivating reason and civility hangs on social hope and our motivation to activate dialogical discussions that are open, fair-minded, and focused on shared moral values. Agreeing with Bloch, both science and ethics are built-up from yet-to-be tested hypothesis – the not-yet – the beliefs, hunches, and commitments we bring to both: from hypotheses that are yet-to-be tested (verified) empirically and in ethics from hypotheses that are yet-to-be assessed by one's experience in the social environment and what behaviors meet cultural expectations as to right and wrong behavior.

Both science and ethics rely on conditional judgments, having an *iffy* quality about them with reference to that which has yet-to-be discovered and/or confirmed, the motives and unspoken values they entail, and, in ethics especially, to the decision or indecision of following a recognized ethical rule or intuitive ethical belief. Both involve interpretations of the real and recognized—the physical and the social nature of human living and the cultural expectations under which one lives. And although empiricism is the hallmark of science, what is unspoken and only assumed is as important as what is said and placed in theoretical discourse. Be forewarned: just as we cannot build a secure

bridge from hope to certainty, neither can we build from science, a bridge from fact to value, from isness to oughtness. This is a fallacy inherent in moral psychology.

Yet, Marc Hauser (2006), like Haidt, seeks a science of morality. He comments, "On the contrary, I argue that moral judgments are mediated by an unconscious process, a hidden moral grammar that evaluates the causes and consequences of our own and others' actions."[1] Hauser says this shifts the burden of evidence (that we in fact have some sort of moral compass) "from a philosophy of morality to a science of morality." This is an assumption requiring our attention. Is Hauser agreeing that morality is innate – an unconscious process – or is our hidden moral grammar built up through social connections, our ancestral heritage, and enculturation? This is unclear, but either way it entails a search for the "hidden grammar" of moral discourse, the unspoken assumptions that drive our conclusions. This we should consider in both ethics and science.

To accept the causal relationship suggested by Haidt or Hauser at face value, between observing children and the inference that they possess an innate moral sense, may be an item of commonsense or perhaps a hidden assumption of psychology, but real life doesn't always move in this way. Moral value varies from culture to culture and from person to person revealing their particular pre-rational beliefs and habits. We are often fooled by the decisions others make. Inference-making pushes us into Bloch's "not-yet" about which there is an uncertain quality difficult to probe. Obviously, there is an inherent limit to reason as logic can note facts and infer relations, but cannot create either. Values and intrinsic motives or even so-called innate moral knowledge are inferences made, perhaps to confirm our own humanity, but their identity is always environmentally constructed, built or destroyed by relationships that are made and relationships that have failed.

Moral Reasons: A Practical Approach

Kurt Baier (1995) says the very purpose for entering into moral deliberation is to maximize the good life and seek the best possible course of action in one's day-to-day activities and choices. Obviously, not all of one's choices are moral ones, so what makes them moral? Baier points out that what makes one's deliberations moral is the use of moral reasons. So, in Baier's view, what are moral reasons? Baier says that *moral deliberations* take place if and only if choices and decisions are considered from the moral point of view. A person must adopt the point of view of morality if he or she is to be moral (Baier 1970, 331-333). He says the moral point of view is a standard of judgment by which individuals are called upon to weigh their convictions, sentiments, and assumptions about others. This standard looks at the world from the point of view of everyone recognizing that others too have a right to a worthwhile life. Obviously, in Baier's view, morality stresses equality, fair-treatment, and human decency. His definition of the "moral point of view" is a standard treating all people as

> equally important centers of craving, impulses, desires, needs, aims, and aspirations; as people with ends of their own, all of which are entitled, prima facie, to be attained. From this point of view everyone

> of these individuals is required to modify his impulsive behavior, his endeavors and his plans by observing certain rules, the genuinely moral rules. (Baier 1970, 333)

Given Baier's view of morality and because moral rules are designed to facilitate conflicts of interests, reason is required for arbitration when conflicts occur. Baier (1982, 13) explains,

> Human beings are not, it is plain, born as moral agents. Everybody has to learn to become one. We could not learn this if we did not grow up in a society which has what is sometimes called the institution of morality. Such a society teaches its members the roles to be played in determining what people may in reason ask of one another and what such requests by others they may reject. The basic role is, of course, that of the moral agent trying to work out what morally speaking is wanted of him in the particular situation in which he finds himself. To be able to do this he must have learnt the skill of practical reasoning and the general directives which formulate what is generally wanted of a moral agent. Being a moral agent thus presupposes the roles of moral teacher and moral learner. But since the general moral directives or precepts, which the learner accepts from his teacher are not necessarily sound, he must also learn to play the role of moral critic or reformer, the role moral philosophers have paid most attention to. All the roles mentioned so far are concerned with answering the question of what, morally speaking, one ought to do. But there also are three other roles, those of the moral accuser, defender, and judge. They are concerned with ascertaining the quality of someone's performance as a moral agent, that is, with his performance of the cognitive task of judging what he ought to do, and the executive task of doing it, in short his moral merit--and over time, his virtue. The moral accuser accuses someone, himself or another, of having performed these tasks badly, the defender will come to his defense, and the judge will pass judgment on him. Of course, unlike a legal verdict, such a judgment is never final.

Baier's thesis is pragmatic and often called "the good reasons approach to moral justification" (Hudson 1983). It is supported by the observations of Elliot Turiel (2008) whose thesis is that children are molders of society as much as cultural receptors, that they generate social knowledge through their own social understandings and experiences. Turiel reminds us that cognitive and emotional development is a maturation process as well as an educational strategy.

Reason and Civility

It is socially important to connect reason with morality; broadly, to civility. Also, in order to enrich our own understanding of human life we are rationally and, perhaps morally, compelled to acknowledge the diverse values freely expressed in our communities. As acknowledged, seeking their origin is often a fruitless task, but seeking their hidden suppositions is necessary for fair-mindedness and transparency. We are reminded by Thomas Jefferson (1787) "to shake off all the fears of servile prejudices, under which weak minds are servilely crouched." He said that we should, "Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call on her tribunal for every fact, every opinion" and "question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason

than that of blindfolded fear." (Coffman, 2012) But how is this possible; that is, how do we unearth and then face up to the myriad values that define our lives? How do we even discover them, prioritize them from a moral perspective, and apply them in the public square? This remains an arduous task.

Acknowledging Jefferson's words, perhaps a fresh paradigm is needed for sorting out and prioritizing our values, and for transferring moral value to younger generations. In this search we should understand that the language freeing us to discuss and debate, dissent and support, can also constrict us. Dialogic civility is such a paradigm requiring open-mindedness, respect, and fair-treatment. This is often a messy business reminding us that mass culture generously flushes out, and renders successfully vague, standards of rationality. Educator Alan Olson (2004, 36) comments,

> Today's model of scientific rationality may be changing, but rationality itself remains important as a critical requirement for comprehension and maintaining dialogue with different cultures, a task impossible to carry out apart from rational reflection on basic values. Rationality provides the basic values and starting points of all systems, and for the openness of different cultural worlds in the dialogue and flow of information.

As moral dialogue opens, there will be some uncertainty, a confusion of *fact* with *value* and a confusion of *response* with *evaluation*. A. S. Kling and L. A. Brothers (1992, 371-372) have warned that we often believe that our response is identical with our evaluation of whatever issues and problems we encounter. But ever so often our responses to social issues are irrational, coming from motives and values unarticulated and hidden deeply within our value histories. Objectivity is difficult, but reason calls it forth. Jordan B. Peterson (1999, 466) concurs saying that it is this confusion that has often proven a great detriment to moral and civil discourse noting that unarticulated values can be formulated as morally uplifting or constricting ideologies. It is to the later our attention is drawn.

Constricting Ideologies

Assessing the moral fabric of our lives or others, and our own biases is needed as we begin discussions of ethics and values. Acknowledging this will be uncomfortable as we all are beset with ongoing cultural ideologies definitive of whom we are and about which we hardly understand or admit. Yet, it's not comfort we seek in discussions of morality, but an honest exchange of ideas and solutions to current moral problems. To break the ideological chain binding our thoughts and values and those of others will be difficult and many times disorienting, but this is where an honest assessment must begin. Acknowledgment is a step forward in this process. Acknowledging that entrenched beliefs, principles, creeds, and ideas are often couched in dogmatic truths daring others to challenge could open many dialogical doors. Of course, as our own moral narcissism is uncovered, negative and emotional – even pompous – reactions will often color the conversation. This we must try to avoid. In the age of social media, it seems that dialogical conversations would move forward,

but this hasn't proven true. Social media is often used to promote personal and political ideologies and defame others as much as it is used for dialectical communication.

Admittedly, much of one's values-orientation is directed from the outside, by the ideas of politicians, ministers, friends, and family members. If outside pressures prevail, dialogue will break down and provincial values – often intrinsic and undisclosed – will be a wall separating and not producing the moral outcomes of community cohesion definitive of dignity, decency, and equality. As we are aware, faith and belief, as well as loyalty to various ideas and dogmas set the horizon of moral truth. To question a prized belief, is for many, to question life itself. Transformation from where we are to where we desire to be – to move from a morally confused present to an idealized moral future will be difficult and often mentally painful.

Although claiming to express things as they are, ideologies are, in reality, a means of protecting and defending a particular point of view or situation. Ideology, no matter its substance or source, supports a moral superiority often negating positive value discussions. Objectivity may be the goal, but difficult to procure. "From this perspective," comments Eric Shyman (2013, 317), "ideologies are, by nature, resistant to change, as they are almost always developed and applied from a protective standpoint—that is to preserve a system that is to be defended by a particular group." This is best expressed by Dean Price who, when talking about America's early pioneers, demonstrated the birth of an ideology. Price said, "The people that built the roads followed the animal paths. And once that path is set, it takes a tremendous amount of effort and energy to take another path. Because you get in that set pattern of thinking, and it's passed down generation to generation to generation." (Packer 2013, 10) Socialization, the process of learning to behave in a way that is acceptable to society, when set in, is difficult to dislodge.

Students in Florida and around the United States are aware of this as they have called for "gun control" and perhaps revising the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution. They are sensitive to the values of their parents and, if they are religious, the values taught in their churches. This sensitivity often biases their understanding and their objectivity, but not always. Many are reaching beyond this cultural horizon to a more holistic and inclusive ethical view. The pressures are many and the growing pains severe. Taking this into consideration, attention needs to be given to the language used in moral discourse as there can be a slippery slope effect to what has been labeled "political correctness," "moral relativity," and "identity politics." Often complex, blocking open and honest discourse, these can be engines of "unchanged," constricting moral vision. Troubling is, with overt and self-inflicted sensitivity, many in our public schools and universities have sacrificed the search for truth filling their classrooms with sympathy, warmth, and ungarnished understanding rather than hard-hitting and fact-checking dialectical discussions characteristic of exposing false beliefs and eliciting truth. Moral relativity is often the result, with everyone – students and teachers – happy that "their" truth is left unaffected and everyone feels good about themselves.

About this, Richard Rorty (1999, 276) comments,

> Insofar as 'postmodern' philosophical thinking is identified with a mindless and stupid cultural relativism – with the idea that any fool thinking that calls itself culture is worthy of respect – than I have no use for such thinking. But I do not see that what I have called 'philosophical pluralism' entails any such stupidity. The reason to try persuasion rather than force, to do our best to come to terms with people whose convictions are archaic and ingenerate, is simply that using force, or mockery, or insult, is likely to decrease human happiness.
>
> We do not need to supplement this wise utilitarian counsel with the idea that every culture has some intrinsic worth. We have learned the futility of trying to assign all cultures and persons places on a hierarchical scale, but this realization does not impugn the obvious fact that there are lots of cultures we would be better off without, just as there are lots of people we would be better off without. To say that there is no such scale, and that we are simply clever animals trying to increase our happiness by continually reinventing ourselves, has no relativistic consequences. The difference between pluralism and cultural relativism is the difference between pragmatically justified tolerance and mindless irresponsibility.

What Rorty points out is the unreality within the reality of the values-muddle we are today experiencing. Many are asking if there are universal principles definitive of "morality" and, if so, what are they. They often look to their parents, teachers, and religious leaders for support. And be put on guard, practices prevalent in our society such as political correctness and moral relativity, including an appeal to our heritage, could just be the patina concealing the hidden biases through which Constitutional rights are defined and defended. This I believe is what Olson (2004) meant when he said that *culture often renders successfully vague common standards of rationality*.

Johnathan Haidt (2012, 132-133) appears to confer, as he comments,

> Neither Shweder (1993, 360-365) nor I am saying that 'anything goes,' or that all societies or all cuisines are equally good. But we believe that moral monism—the attempt to ground all of morality on a single principle—leads to societies that are unsatisfying to most people and at high risk of becoming inhumane because they ignore so many other moral principles. ... To understand why people are so divided by moral issues, we can start with an exploration of our common evolutionary heritage, but we'll also have to examine the history of each culture and the childhood socialization of each individual within that culture.

Sensitivity to Differences

Care needs to be taken, as gender, race, sexuality, nationality, and social status are sensitive matters that draw our concern. Other than gun control, the status of immigrants, the right to protest, and religious freedom are additional issues that will drag hidden biases from under the cover of "being rational." The "culture wars" of some thirty years ago have not gone away as they too have taken on a political recasting. (See: Hunter, 1990 and Wuthnow, 1989) For example, with two alleged extramarital affairs looming over the presidency in 2019, white evangelicals are doubling down on their support for Donald Trump. But the political gains their support is yielding may come

at a high cost for the future of their faith. A new survey released in April 2018 by PRRI (Public Religion Research Institute) finds white evangelical support for Trump remains strikingly high, with 75 percent holding a favorable view of the president and only 22 percent holding an unfavorable view. This level of support far exceeds his favorability among all Americans, which is at 42 percent. Among all non-white evangelical Americans, Trump's favorability is only 36 percent.[2]

Strange as this may sound from a moral perspective, religion has become another source of diversity rather than a unifying force in America life. The variety of religious beliefs today surpasses the nation's multitude of ethnicities, nationalities, and races. With the advances in immigration from both Spanish speaking countries and from the Far East, America, which was once thought of as a cultural/moral melting pot, may resemble broken shards in 2019 rather than a grand blend of religious diversity, dignity, and decency. This is true even though the vast majority of Americans – 76 percent – identify themselves as Christian. It remains that 16 percent of Americans are unaffiliated with any faith, and 1/3 of the self-identified Christians are unaffiliated with any church. (See: Caplow, et. al., 2000) As the church's influence has weakened in American life, what other source of value and morality will take its place?

Cultivating Civility

To identify the relationships among moral beliefs expressed in religions, politics and laws, especially Constitutional laws, is a major challenge of moral thinking. This needs to be accomplished before alternative solutions to important social problems are recommended. Understanding our emersion in a diverse society, moral, civil, and legal consistency are vital to the political health of the country. This is not an intuitive overreach; commonsense tells us that. A productive first step is to examine the moral premises of American culture for no dialogue about American values is possible without a set of common moral assumptions. This does not imply the standardization of morality or the death of individualism, only that we are challenged to identify moral assumptions comprising our diversity that are able to unify our relationships and consistently guide our behavior when immersed in moral conflict situations.

To identify a new value-paradigm that includes an evaluation of our values and seek a common moral point of view, we need to proceed slowly and patiently. Time and effort are required to effectively interact with ideas such as "democracy," "inalienable rights," "the rights of minorities," and "dialogic civility." Furthermore, we should remain sensitive to gender equality, the LGBTQ community, and religion and race inclusion. Some will be open to dialogue on these issues, others will not. No innate moral sense can correct this problem. Cognitive and emotional development is a maturation process and, admittedly, many in our society demonstrate a deficiency in this regard. It will be an arduous task to uncover the hidden assumptions of social knowledge.

Democracy—a working principle for American government and American schools—is founded on the values of freedom, justice, fairness, integrity, honesty, responsible behavior, and the rule of law. But, be forewarned, as Thomas Jefferson said, "Though [the people] may acquiesce, they

cannot approve what they do not understand." (Coffman 2012) Understanding and application ought to be our goals. And this is conceivably a moral "ought" weighed by history and deep consideration. My thesis is simple: cultivating reason and civility ought to be a moral priority in schools, churches, government, and community organizations. Thus, care must be taken and attention given to the meaning of these principles, including the skills required for their application in value disputes. Surely, the violence that has now pervaded American life and especially its schools demands such reconsideration. Also, with a President constantly sending mixed value messages, reason and objectivity are needed.

Conclusion: Democracy, Our Mooring to Reason and Civility

Moral Foundations

In the more than two hundred years of American democracy, Constitutional safeguards, although living documents and not absolutes, have provided a buffer between the majority and minorities, the rich and poor, and those with an expansive education and those whose education is limited. These safeguards only work when they are enforced by people of strong moral character. But one must be aware as corporate creed, the hidden agenda of political pundits, and those using social media for unethical and undemocratic purposes are disruptive to moral and democratic development. A hidden assumption lying at the foundation of democracy is the requirement for honesty, responsibility, and fair-mindedness. These are pre-requisites for a working democratic culture. A study of ethics will reveal the blurred edges of morality and moral principles. It is along these edges where discussion will find meaning and importance and were dialogue is needed. Thus, we need mental and physical room, a forum, in which we can explore atypical ideas and avenues of action, and express our opinions in a non-coercive or intimidating setting. We need a place to examine beliefs, values and practice civility in the give-and-take of differences of opinion and the rational interchange of ideas. From this perspective, democracy as a moral principle must be preserved. Democracy is our mooring to reason and civility.

Willing engagement in such conversations will build connections to our cultural histories, especially our religious or nonreligious histories. Here we can begin to unearth the hidden assumptions and prejudices hopefully brought freely for open discussion. These connections will add ethical perspective in a world beset with mixed value-messages. For example, what value-messages were received when hearing about or reading about the demonstrations, protests, and violence in the August 2017 encounters in Charlottesville, Virginia? What value-messages were received from political leaders or from the clergy? Were these discussed with friends, teachers, and parents? Did Christian ministers place these within the context of Jesus' moral advice—to love others as we love ourselves? Were there mixed message in these exchanges resulting in values confusion? More often than not, it is along these distorted edges were meaning and understanding will be found. All of these represent open moral wounds in our historical past. Until these wounds

are cleaned out and disinfected with truth and moral knowledge, there will be no chance for healing. About the wisdom needed for intellectual and moral growth James L. Christian (2007, xix) writes,

> In a sense, intellectual growth happens to us; it is not something that we do. But it happens to us only when our minds are given a chance to operate on their own terms. They take their own time to process information and begin developing a web of interconnecting lines of illumination among their material ... Only disciplined study with an open mind will produce philosophic awareness. Insight and consciousness still come only with relentless labor. In this age of instant everything; there is no instant wisdom, unfortunately.

Many have lost contact with the moral foundations of democracy, and there has been a diminished cultivation of reason in schools stemming from an educational system that relies on fact-based teaching and constrained thinking. Problem solving, concept analysis, and creative thinking are essential tools for morally responsible behavior. Vladislav Lektorsky (2004, 51 ff.) concurs,

> This kind of education is an important means of cultivating moral and civic virtues because many people cannot make political and moral judgments, cannot argue their positions, cannot foresee the consequences of their actions, and cannot, therefore, make a reasonable choice between different alternatives.

Admittedly, there is a certain vagueness and uncertainty in American values. Is this due to our inability to think and reason with logical acuity? Americans, especially, are a divided and diverse people. Obviously, there is a pragmatic need for identifying the value touchstones that support democracy and flesh out their moral foundations. Teachers may require "re-education" to do this successfully, but it's a task worth pursuing. Objectivity in this re-assessment is difficult, but reason, dialogue, tolerance, and even civil dissent remain its moral prerequisites. Without these, freedom, liberty, and human rights have no chance of permeating our personal lives and political processes.

Socialization is an important educative process; this can't be over emphasized. Education, at any level, is a normative experience. It is value-based as it focuses on civility and democracy and challenges learners to understand and apply their values to a wide-range of problems and issues. Presumably, many will be challenged to evaluate and understand friendships, relationships, and how best to treat others. Given today's political climate, there are many who are stressed over human relationships and national/international entanglements. They are concerned with their future and the future of their children. To openly and objectively discuss these issues, no matter the ilk, is not a simple task and requires thinking about our behavior and attitudes and addressing those attitudes and behaviors that might be morally destructive. Albert Einstein has commented, "The world we have created is a product of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking." (Calaprice, 2005)[3] In a world overwhelmed with diverse beliefs and morally inconsistent behaviors,

change is something we seek. We acknowledge that our relationships with others are as important as any scientific discovery believing that cultivating reason and civility is indeed a moral priority.

Democracy, represented by civil discourse and moral behavior, is an ideal to which we ought to strive. Especially important is Bloch's introduction of the ontological priority of the "not-yet," of becoming, of what might happen sometime in the future. "It is therefore not," says Dennis J. Schmidt his translator, "the static or finished self-identity of concepts but their dynamic relativity to other concepts that lets them be meaningful or intelligible" (Bloch 1986, xii). It is this dynamic relativity that is the subject of this dialogue implying a more expansive notion of ethics preferable to one that is narrow, legalistic, self-centered, logic-based, and bleak. Ethics, which pursues human equality, happiness, and responsibility – which views the self as it views others – cannot be allowed to be diminished by a valueless rationality based on unreasonable self-interest or a survival of the fitness mentality implied in neo-Darwinian ethics and accepted as a hidden motive behind personal or national policies.

Endnotes

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2. Robert P. Jones, "White Evangelicals Can't Quit Donald Trump." *The Atlantic*, Apr 20, 2018. www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/04/white-evangelicals-cant-quit-donald-trump/558461
3. Calaprice, Alice, (2005) T*he New Quotable Einstein* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Editor Alice Calaprice suggests that two quotes attributed to Einstein which she could not find sources for, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them" and "The world we have created today as a result of our thinking thus far has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them," may both be paraphrases of the 1946 quote above. A similar unsourced variant is "The world we have created is a product of our thinking; it cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

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Fabricating Girls: Clothes and Coming-of-Age Fiction by Women of Color

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Abstract:

Given the long history of prejudice against clothing as a serious subject of scholarly analysis, dress has remained insufficiently explored in literary criticism as a feature of the *bildungsroman*, or the coming-of-age fictional narrative. Choice of dress has been, however, a crucial element in the establishment of identity and in the process of maturation, particularly in narratives about girls and most especially in late-twentieth and early-twenty-first-century works about girls of color. This essay examines the role of dress in three representative texts by women of color—one Australian, one Afro-British, and one Chicana.

Keywords: dress; fashion; coming-of-age narratives; *bildungsroman*; girls of color; identity formation

What happens when we focus on the intersection of two subjects that traditionally have been considered of lower status in many academic settings—i.e., girlhood and clothes? These two topics may long have attracted interest among popular audiences, but when it comes to literary criticism, in particular, they are only now beginning to accrue prestige, or what is often called "cultural capital." They have been long neglected, in particular, in the very place where they might have been expected: studies of the *bildungsroman*, which tracks the progress over time of an individual fictional protagonist. Conventional discussions of maturation in coming-of-age narratives, and conventional formulations of that genre, have mainly reflected masculine notions of development, pivoting on what Maureen Corrigan describes as episodes of "male extreme adventure"—i.e., "a one-shot testosterone expenditure of physical courage that pits man against nature/man/himself, with man (the narrator usually) left standing, bloody but unbowed" (Corrigan 2005, 5). This road to manhood—that is, through the testing of physical prowess and courage—has been acknowledged as a significant one; social experiences on the path toward becoming a woman, such as choosing what to wear or dealing with the responses of others to one's choice, have had no such cultural importance attached to them, and thus they have been overlooked in the construction of literary theory. Especially in "the late 20th century . . . [when] binary opposites . . . had yet to lose their grip," as Rosemary Hill emphasizes in her "Introduction" to *Frock Consciousness: Writing about Clothes from*

the London Review of Books, dress was absent from literary criticism in general, for a "subject as delicate as the history and meaning of clothes could not easily get a purchase" (Hill 2019, 2).

If the concerns of girls and their process of maturation only recently have begun to receive full scholarly consideration, especially through the growing field of Girlhood Studies, so too have narratives about clothing. Both in texts and in life, attention to dress was long associated with feminine preoccupations (albeit with a few exceptions, such as during the period of nineteenth-century male dandyism); was taken as a sign of vanity and insufficient intellectual or political seriousness; and was even viewed as a moral failing. As Daniel Miller tells us, in his "Introduction" to *Clothing as Material Culture*,

> Since it is used as a covering or as a surface, clothing is easily characterized as intrinsically superficial. . . . We struggle with what might be called a depth ontology, a very specific Western idea of being, in which the real person, myself, is somehow deep inside me. . . . This denigration of surfaces has been part of the denigration of clothing and, by extension, of those said to be particularly interested in clothing, often seen as women. (Miller 2005, 3)

More recently, in the Introduction to a 2015 volume titled *The Memory of Clothes*, the Australian arts educator Robyn Gibson has put this even more bluntly: "Almost every fashion writer . . . insists anew on the importance of fashion. However[,] typical responses from outside the discipline border on cynicism, ambivalence or irony." Why? Because fashion allegedly provides "evidence of women's inherent frivolity and flightiness," as well as being a topic seen as "trivial, ephemeral and unworthy of scholarly investigation" in itself (Gibson 2015, xiii).

Feminist criticism, too, has sometimes been harsh in its responses to the question of concern with clothing, albeit for a different reason. In her polemic *Beauty Sick: How the Cultural Obsession with Appearance Hurts Girls and Women*, Renee Engeln, for example, warns readers of the psychologically damaging pattern—i.e., the "lifelong tendency toward body surveillance"—that is established, when women learn in their youth to pay attention to matters of dress (Engeln 2017, 79). Even feminists who do not automatically denigrate the subject of fashion often have proven ambivalent toward it, at best. While claiming initially, in their Introduction to *Fashion Talks: Undressing the Power of Style*, that "fashion—like power—is neither inherently good nor bad," Shira Tarrant and Marjorie Jolles move with surprising rapidity toward qualifying this neutral assessment and reminding readers of the "problem" with fashion, which includes the fact that its positive "possibilities are easily co-opted" and turned to "exploitative" uses (Tarrant and Jolles 2012, 2). In the process of defending "dress culture" as having the potential to communicate both "artistry" and "creativity," Christine Bayles Kortsch feels obliged to acknowledge nonetheless, in the "Afterword" to her historical study of materiality in late-Victorian women's fiction, that "[attention] to dress and textiles has been associated with patriarchal oppression" (Kortsch 2009, 182).

Yet in literature, as in other spheres of life, dress is also an invaluable source of information, for it can make visible the process of achieving individual identity and thus can serve as a crucial

element to be traced throughout the *bildungsroman*. As Sophie Woodward writes in *Why Women Wear What They Wear*, "Because clothing is worn habitually over a period of time, it comes to define a person during a particular period of one's life. . . . [It] becomes intimately connected to the wearer and [serves as] . . . a material archive" (Woodward 2007, 24–25). But it also conveys other sorts of truths, especially in terms of its broader cultural meanings. What we wear, as Woodward notes, "is always situated in particular social, economic and political contexts, and through its material propensities, it articulates social categories such as gender . . . and ethnicity" (Woodward 2007, 25).

This last element—the issue of ethnicity, and along with it such matters as race and religious difference—has too rarely entered the critical discussion, even in literary studies that do focus on dress. Frequently, the focus has been exclusively on white women authors and on their white female fictional characters in otherwise fine (and class-sensitive) studies such as R. S. Koppen's *Virginia Woolf, Fashion and Literary Modernity* (2009), Katherine Joslin's *Edith Wharton and the Making of Fashion* (2009), and Celia Marshik's *At the Mercy of Their Clothes: Modernism, the Middlebrow and British Garment Culture* (2017). Lori Harrison-Kahan rightly has objected to this limited perspective: "The feminist literature on fashion has mostly failed to take into account the ways that gender and class intersect with race and ethnicity, despite increasing critical attention to intersectionality within the broader field of feminist studies" (Harrison-Kahan 2011, 207).

I would like, therefore, to begin thinking seriously about the images presented in a —necessarily small—sampling of late-twentieth and early-twenty-first-century fiction about girls as they come of age, and to consider the importance of the descriptions of the particular clothes that they wear in this process. In doing so, it is crucial first to ask what coming-of-age means, especially in terms of the lives and experiences of girls. If it is an event connected with the transition to a new status—i.e., a movement toward maturity—where and how does it occur? In *Girls on the Verge*, a study of modern rites of passage, Vendela Vida claims that that there has been a noteworthy change, thanks to "time and feminism," both of which have "liberated sexual mores" (Vida 2000, xiii). At least in the West, "yesterday's coming of age rituals," which had "inducted young women into adulthood based on sexual development," were turned instead, during the second half of the twentieth century, into "initiation rituals—ones that seek to secure adult identities that have less to do with first menstruation . . . and more to do with personal choice" (Vida 2000, xiii).

If Vida is correct, then we would expect to see evidence of this shift not only in day-to-day reality, but in the sphere of representation—in fiction about girls, as well as in fiction written with a young audience in mind, especially in texts created during and after the period that she identifies. Coming-of-age fiction provides older readers with a way of reflecting upon their own pasts and their own paths; it is also a tool that prepares younger readers for their futures, by allowing them to envision and to rehearse imaginatively what they are about to undergo. The power of a girl's coming-of-age narrative lies in its potential to shine a critical light on the shaping of identity and on the forces that either impede or assist in that effort. Coming-of-age stories do show us young female

protagonists exercising, as Vida says, "personal choice" (Vida 2000, xiii), as well as reacting to situations in which choice has been wrested from their grasp.

The category of contemporary literature that has focused most often on moments when identity undergoes a transformation is Young Adult (also known as YA) fiction. In the Fall 2010 issue of *Ms* magazine, Jessica Stites paid tribute to this genre with an article titled "Kick-Ass Girls and Feminist Boys: Young-Adult Fiction Offers Fabulous Fantasies of How the World *Should* Be." In it, she asserted that coming of age "can be rough for girls," while praising the ability of literature to intervene positively in the process: "For many of us destined to become feminists, there's a period when gender roles become ill-fitting and maddening, but we're not sure why. At that crucial moment, certain books can offer refuge or escape" (Stites 2010, 37). Among the most helpful books, according to Stites, are those specifically designed to appeal to young adults—a niche market of publishing "first carved out of children's books in the late '60s" (Stites 2010, 37). Stites claims, moreover, that the YA genre also has a special role to play, when it comes to young women of color: "For girls of color, marginalized by the triple whammy of age, race, and gender, YA can provide a thrilling moment of self-recognition" (Stites 37). Some YA texts, of course, encourage readers to follow the happy fates of female protagonists who manage, against the odds, to move from margin to center and to achieve a sense of empowerment. But others allow them to identify with the frustrations of fictional characters whose "personal choice," to use Vida's phrase (Vida 2000, xiii), has been restricted or taken away from them entirely.

Of all the ways to exercise and display personal choice, whether in life or in literature, none is more immediately and publicly visible than through dress. For the British Jewish novelist and journalist Linda Grant, writing in her 2009 volume of essays, *The Thoughtful Dresser*, "The defining moment in the life of a young girl is the moment when she is able to choose her own clothes" (Grant 2009, 123). All other coming-of-age rituals, such as "first menstruation, first kiss, . . . passing your exams, leaving home, [or] getting a job" are merely "stages. Milestones. Markers" (Grant 2009, 123). But clothing, as Grant points out, embodies and proclaims both the acquisition and the assertion of identity itself: "When you start to dress yourself, you are beginning a lifelong journey into your own future, the subtle, everyday construction of who you are through what you wear" (Grant 20009, 123). Grant's notion of the role of dress accords with that of anthropologists such as Emma Tarlo who, in her study *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, insisted that "buying and wearing a certain type of dress is in fact a creative act" (Tarlo 1996, 12)—a matter of "playing with identities"—for "clothes are not merely defining but they are also self-consciously *used* to define, to present, to deceive, to enjoy, to communicate, to reveal and conceal" [emphasis in original] (Tarlo 1996, 8).

Though the conventional model of coming-of-age narratives may involve social integration, some novels designed for the YA market have been offering images of girls who self-consciously and successfully construct oppositional identities—who, moreover, *fabricate* these by making them literally material through clothes. One clear example of this process occurs in Randa Abdel-Fattah's

chick-lit-influenced comedy, *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, which was released in the U. S. by Scholastic Inc. in 2007, but first published in the author's home country of Australia in 2005. Abdel-Fattah, a Muslim of Palestinian-Egyptian descent, tells the story of Amal—an otherwise unremarkable teenager, devoted largely to the joys of shopping in the Melbourne suburbs and to reading *Cosmopolitan* magazine until, thanks to an old rerun of the TV sitcom *Friends*, she has a revelation. As she watches the actress Jennifer Aniston play a character who is "dressed in a hideous bridesmaid's outfit at her ex's wedding," where everyone is "making fun of her and she wants to run away and hide," but who instead finds "the guts to jump onstage and sing," Amal feels a "rush of absolute power and conviction" (Abdel-Fattah 2007, 1). What she recounts next, through her first-person narrative, is certainly a coming-of-age experience of transition and transformation: "It was like stepping out of one room, closing the door behind me, and stepping into another. One minute it was the last thing on my mind. The next minute this courage flowed through me and it just felt unbelievably right. I was ready to wear the hijab" (Abdel-Fattah 2007, 2). Of course, Amal, who is also the wise-cracking teller of her own story, characteristically undercuts and deflates the importance of this moment with a comic postscript: "That's right. Rachel from *Friends* inspired me. The sheikhs will be holding emergency conferences" (Abdel-Fattah 2007, 2).

Randa Abdel-Fattah's novel addresses two YA audiences at once: a non-Muslim readership, which may be both ignorant and curious about hijab and its significance, and a female Muslim readership, in search of personal validation and representation of its conflicts over issues of difference within a majority white and non-Muslim nation such as Australia. What the author counts on these two disparate audiences sharing is an interest in clothes—not merely in styles of dress, but in the details of fabric choice, color, and cut that are allied to the concerns of the fashion industry. Thus, the unveiling of the veil, so to speak, happens at the local shopping mall, where adolescent girls go "to make an impression" (Abdel-Fattah 2007, 26). Abdel-Fattah details the fashionable "impression" that her protagonist strives to achieve through deliberate and elaborate preparation, especially through the selection and manipulation of material, with close attention to its physical properties:

> I've decided on a navy blue veil and baby blue cotton headband to match my jeans and blue cardigan. . . . I need the headband since the veil is a silk fabric and will slip off without a headband to grip it underneath. The contrasting shades of blue also spice up the look a little. I fold the veil in half, into a triangular shape, and even it out over the headband. I wrap it around my head and face. . . .When I've perfected the shape I fasten the veil with a small safety pin at my neck. I fling the tail ends across my shoulders and join them together with a brooch. (Abdel-Fattah 2007, 26-27)

Here, the actions of the fictional character, in her attention both to clothing and to cloth itself, mirror the concerns of actual Muslim women, such as those whom Özlem Sandikci and Güliz Ger discuss in "Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics of the Turkish Headscarf." For many Turkish women, as Sandikci and Ger suggest, "Fashion . . . changes the preferred patterns, colours and materials" of hijab, so that "the currently trendy designs are Burberry, chequered, small floral or almost abstract

floral, and leopard . . . while 'crinkle' (crumpled thin fabric), chiffon, and a combination of velvet and tulle are trendy fabrics" (Sandikci and Ger, 2005, 67; 69); moreover, as they add, "Once the 'right' scarf is selected, which also requires considerable work, the woman faces the intricate process of tying it" (Sandikci and Ger 2005, 73). There is, they assert, "a learning process, an acquisition of cultural capital in learning to tie in different styles" (Sandikci and Ger 2005, 75). Through the pride that comes with new knowledge, the "beauty work around the scarf gives the subject the sense of [becoming] a self-constructing person, who can take control of her own body and image" (Sandikci and Ger 2005, 79).

The production of a religious identity may be a spiritual issue; yet it is also *material* in the most literal sense, both in reality and in fictional representations such as Abdel-Fattah's novel for and about girls. For *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, Abdel-Fattah creates a title which, of course, plays comically on the notion of big-headedness as something that indicates pride, but also on the clichéd question that women supposedly ask when trying on jeans—"Does my ass look big in this?—as a sign of anxiety over weight, size, and body image in relation to clothing. In the narrative, the protagonist's concern in advance about how non-Muslim white Australians will react to her wearing of the headscarf—an anxiety that results in her producing a joke-filled "To Wear or Not to Wear List" that mirrors the sorts of lists featured in women's fashion magazines (Abdel-Fattah 2007, 17)—proves to be justified. The visible expression of difference sets off repercussions in her community and especially in her school, where Muslims are a minority. There, the most immediate conflict is with the woman principal, who is convinced that hijab is not what Vendela Vida would call an exercise of "personal choice" (Vida 2000, xiii), signaling adulthood, but something that Amal's parents must be forcing upon her against her will. When the principal finally is persuaded otherwise, she signals acceptance and compromise through fabric, informing Amal's mother that her daughter must confine herself to headscarves that match the school uniform:

> "'What color did she agree to?' I ask, hoping it isn't the awful maroon or yellow of our official colors.
> 'Maroon,' my mom answers. 'And don't scrunch your face like that. You should be—'
> '—grateful, yes, I know,' I groan. (Abdel-Fattah 2007, 59)

The lighthearted and universally familiar image of a teenager "groan[ing]" to her mother about the impossibly tasteless, unfashionable clothing directives of adults serves here to normalize the situation for both Muslim and non-Muslim readers alike. Abdel-Fattah draws throughout on clothing-related comedy and on girls' interest in style and fabric—in color, draping, and shaping—to create a narrative that will allow its audience to "try on," whether literally or figuratively, a non-majority religious identity and to negotiate successfully the consequences of assuming it. Young adult genre fiction functions here as a safe space—the equivalent of an adolescent's bedroom, complete with a wardrobe and a full-length mirror—for the imaginative rehearsal of one sort of coming-of-age experience which, in the world outside the text, has been fraught with political

tension and social conflict (and which, in some countries such as France, was made illegal for girls attending state-sponsored schools.)

In fact, many women—and, in particular, authors who are also women of color—have, in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, been writing coming-of-age narratives that turn similarly upon the acts of dressing or of being dressed by others and that offer readers the opportunity for *reflection*, in all senses of the word. They have been doing so, moreover, even in texts that are *not* targeted so explicitly at the young adult market. Indeed, the classification of such novels as "YA" sometimes proves controversial, if not inaccurate. In an essay cleverly titled "Hairitage: Women Writing Race in Children's Literature," Dianne Johnson, an African American scholar and a children's book author herself, categorizes as a "young adult novel" Simi Bedford's *Yoruba Girl Dancing*, which focuses on "upper-class Nigerian characters born into a newly postcolonial Africa and sent to England to receive their formal education" (Johnson 2009, 340). For Johnson, Bedford's fictional narrative (published in Britain in 1991, but covering a period from the mid-1940s to the late-1950s) is a story about "black hair"—about its racial and political meanings—in which "Bedford teaches young readers that cultural cues indicating not just gender but also class and race can be misread outside of a specific context" (Johnson 2009, 341). But Penguin Books, which has kept Bedford's work continuously in print since its publication nearly thirty years ago, has promoted it always as a contemporary novel, never as a children's or even a YA text. To Helen Lock, in "*Yoruba Girl Dancing* and the Post-War Transition to an English Multi-Ethnic Society," Bedford's work is a sophisticated political exploration of hybridity "from a child's perspective" (Lock 1999, 120), rather than a narrative directed at an audience composed of children. In *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria* (2000), Wendy Griswold raises quite a different concern, asking whether this novel should properly be called a work of Nigerian literature at all, since its author, Simi Bedford, has lived most of her life in London. Griswold, however, never questions its status as a novel meant for adult readers, taking that as a given.

I, too, would dispute Dianne Johnson's attempt to claim *Yoruba Girl Dancing* for the category of children's literature, even as I would disagree that its primary emphasis is on the relationship between the protagonist's "sense of belonging," in diverse environments, and "hair [that] is distinctly African" (Johnson 2009, 340). The coming-of-age story that Bedford has created invites multiple audiences to engage with the comic voice of Remi Foster and to do so differently, depending on their own age and location. It is, moreover, an account of "belonging" and also of displacement and alienation that focuses explicitly throughout on dress. Images of fabric and fashion and information about clothing styles, rather than hair, dominate the narrative. The first-person narrator's development of an identity follows a line through repeated instances of oppression by white Englishwomen who forcibly clothe her in ways that deny or denigrate her heritage, her race, and even her gender, until she reaches the moment when, as Linda Grant might have put the matter, "she is able to choose her own clothes" and thus to begin the "lifelong journey" toward her "own future" (Grant 2009, 123).

Throughout the first sections of Bedford's narrative, in which the young Remi describes her idyllic and privileged childhood as part of the ruling class of Lagos, the clothes that she sees around her and in which her Nigerian relatives dress her signal pride in family membership and aesthetic appreciation of black women's skin and bodies. These outfits are carefully chosen and complexly designed, following traditional fashions but also adapted to modern tastes and sometimes worn with "the latest hats from Paris" (Bedford 1991, 18). Nigerian identity allows for hybridity, but it also demands thought and attention to self-presentation; in the words of the fashion historian, Rowland Abiodun, "Although not as grave as being without clothes, dressing inappropriately is highly offensive to Yoruba aesthetics and life-affirming sensibilities" (Abiodun 2010, 3).

As Linda Grant has suggested when reflecting upon her own very different childhood as a white Jewish girl of the post-Second-World-War era in Britain, "[Becoming] a woman was about dressing up. . . . Clothes were not what you wore to be comfortable: they were how you built your femininity" (Grant 2009, 122). That is certainly true for the fictional Remi Foster's observations about fashion and mid-twentieth-century Nigerian femininity. At the wedding with which the novel opens, the guests show that they belong to the bride's or the groom's party through the colors of their gorgeous silk garments, which are decorated with "gold thread, silver tissue and lace" (Bedford 1991, 24) and accompanied, in some cases, by the elaborately tied "magnificent" headdress of "full Yoruba costume" (Bedford 1991, 24). In these early sections, too, Simi Bedford reflects her young narrator's familiarity with Nigerian women's clothing styles that are unfamiliar to Western readers, and the text offers those readers a kind of glossary of fashion, as she describes a wedding guest whose headdress, or *gele*, and blouse, or *buba*, are of "the same blue material as . . . her ero, worn wrapped around like a skirt and knotted at the waist, her ipele which was bound tightly across her hips and the eborun, folded lengthwise and thrown over her shoulder" (Bedford 1991, 24). These are the garments of adult womanhood to which Remi Foster aspires. In the meantime, nonetheless, she is clothed in a body-affirming two-piece "'up and down,'" which consists of a tubular bodice and a skirt "fitted just as tightly all the way to the ground"—a style of "Sierra Leonian" origin "that the young women were wearing," and about which Remi's aunt notes approvingly that "it showed the figure off to perfection" (Bedford 1991, 24).

If Remi expects the wearing of this fashionable and flattering garment to represent her first step toward coming of age in a Nigerian setting, she soon receives a rude shock. Almost immediately, she is turned over to the care of her step-grandmother, a white working-class woman from suburban London, and then sent to boarding school in England. As this step-grandmother, known to Remi's parents as "Bigmama," explains to her own white relatives, "'Remi's family . . . believe that it's imperative for their children to receive an English education, so that when the time comes and their country is given independence they will be ready and prepared: they are the ones who will be running things in the not too distant future'" (Bedford 1991, 67)

In the new environment of England, however, Remi finds to her dismay that white people will not permit her the freedom of "running" anything whatsoever, including the process of covering

herself; instead, the author makes her protagonist's utter powerlessness visible and *material*, as Remi is clothed against her will in outsized, unattractive coats that overwhelm her developing body. These are garments so big, as she puts it in comic terms to the reader, that they seem designed to "last me the rest of my life" (Bedford 66). They not only rob her of individuality and of connection to her own community, but obliterate her gender identity. Riding the bus in London to Harrods, to purchase the clothes necessary for attendance at an elite boarding school, she is surveyed and subjected to the white bus conductor's intrusive, insulting question to Bigmama, " 'Is it a boy or a girl?' 'I am a girl,' I said, offended" (Bedord 1991, 65).

Far more offensive and humiliating, however, is the encounter that follows, with a shop assistant at Harrods who fits her out in the wardrobe required for English school-life. This is a uniform made entirely of an unrelieved shade of brown to which the saleswoman quite blithely and unselfconsciously appends the *n-word*, as a descriptive adjective. Remi's horrified response to seeing herself in the dressing-room mirror, wearing clothing implicitly tied to the *n-word*, is to "burst out crying, [as] great racking sobs shook me to the ground where I lay watering the sable carpet with my tears, while Bigmama and the saleswoman looked on helplessly" (Bedford 1991, 67). It is a moment both of comic incongruity and of high tragedy.

Here, the drabness and the ugliness that the protagonist perceives in the cloth itself combines with the psychic violence of the racist name for its color to produce a deeply felt psychic wound—an injury from which Remi does not begin to recover until the end of the narrative, when she has graduated from boarding school and, though still living and studying in London, finally can enjoy the liberty of dressing herself. Control over her clothing indicates control over her own fate and self-definition. When we last see her, the adolescent Remi declares, through her clothing choice, her identity as a young woman who is now part of a community of color, in both a literal and a political sense—a group of Africans, South Asians, and Central Americans who consider themselves beautiful and sexual: "We dressed to look alike deliberately and we didn't care who stared at us now . . . When asked who we were and where we were from, we smiled mysteriously and moved on, languidly swinging our hips, all of us in our high, high heels and our tight, tight skirts" (Bedford 1991,184).

The choice of these late-1950s modes as their vehicles of expression is a reminder, too, of Linda Grant's observation about women's fashion of the period: "Clothes were not what you wore to be comfortable"; they were instead a "costume" that invited a woman to become "a person who had an existence out in the world" (Grant 2009, 122). In the case of Remi Foster's circle of friends, which she describes as looking "like a swarm of iridescent dragonflies" (Bedford 1991, 184), the "world" for which these women are deliberately dressing themselves is a postcolonial one, in which it will not only be possible, but desirable, to embrace and to celebrate color as a form of power. They are an elite and educated group—Remi herself is now studying law—who will make use of Western styles for their own purposes and be neither limited nor oppressed by them.

But not all girls' coming-of-age fiction ends in triumph. Both Amal, in Randa Abdel-Fattah's novel, and Remi, in Simi Bedford's, are young women of color who enjoy lives of economic privilege—in the case of Remi Foster, of extraordinary class privilege, too, with access to many opportunities and choices (including, as she reaches womanhood, the choice of aesthetic clothing that suits her body and expresses her personality). For these girls, the ability eventually, if not always immediately, to select their own garments and thus to take control of how others will see them and will read their characters can function as a source of social power.

What happens, however, to girls who do not have the luxury of exercising this control and who, because of their circumstances, may never have it? In her 1992 volume, *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, Sandra Cisneros focuses on one such girl, in the short story titled "Eleven." The protagonist, Rachel, who is Chicana and poor, describes an event in the classroom that transformed the day she turned eleven-years-old from a celebration to an unforgettable assault on her sense of self. This traumatic episode begins with an adult publicly imposing on her an item of clothing and, by doing so, forcing upon her a despised social identity:

> 'Whose is this?' Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. 'Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month.'
> 'Not mine,' says everybody. 'Not me.'
> 'It has to belong to somebody,' Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.
> Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, 'I think it belongs to Rachel.' An ugly sweater like that, all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.
> 'That's not, I don't, you're not . . . Not mine,' I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.
> 'Of course it's yours,' Mrs. Price says. 'I remember you wearing it once.' Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not. (Cisneros 1992, 7) [ellipses in original]

As the child-narrator does not say, but as the adult reader (who is implicitly the audience for this story) understands nonetheless, there is a third category of hierarchical authority that enables "Mrs. Price" to decide arbitrarily what is and is not the truth: she is "older," she is "the teacher," and also, judging from her Anglo name, she is white or at least not Chicana, unlike the children over whom she has power in this school. Thus, her false memory of having seen Rachel in the sweater becomes "right," as her words overrule the narrator's. Worse yet, in an act of what the narrator experiences as psychic violence, she orders the girl to put the sweater on her own body. Lacking any way to answer or to counter the insult implicit in Mrs. Price's association of her with an item of clothing that is dirty and "smells like cottage cheese" (Cisneros 1992, 8), the narrator, humiliated, regresses in age: "I'm eleven and it's my birthday today and I'm crying like I'm three in front of everybody" (Cisneros 1992, 9).

Cisneros depicts a reverse coming-of-age for the narrator, who loses both maturity and agency throughout the course of events leading her to being clothed in a sweater that is not hers. At the same time, this narrative encourages the adult reader to come of age politically, through awareness of the social vulnerability and disempowerment inherent in Rachel's plight, as a non-privileged young girl of color—a situation embodied in the distasteful and shame-inducing materiality of the garment that she has been made to wear. By the end, the narrator is counting backwards, while also leaping far into the future, to describe the desire she now feels not to exist at all. The story concludes with these painful words: "I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. . . . I want today to be far away already . . . like a runaway balloon, like a tiny *o* in the sky, so tiny tiny you have to close your eyes to see it" (Cisneros 1992, 9). Rachel has indeed undergone a transition from one phase to another, but only in the most negative sense, as she now yearns above all for invisibility and flight, even at the price of ceasing to live. To be defined by others as nothing more and nothing better than that red sweater is to be, in effect, shamed to death.

In his study *Clothing: A Global History*, Robert Ross affirms that "people decide for themselves what clothes they will wear, which is why wearing clothes (and certainly not wearing them) is almost invariably a political act," for it is "one of the most public ways by which people can announce to their fellows who they are, or at least . . . who they would like to be, or who they would like to be thought to be" (Ross 2008, 169). For young women characters in the fictional genre of the *bildungsroman*—and perhaps especially for young women characters of color—it is often one of the few means by which they can or do make these announcements. This circumstance is a reflection, moreover, of something that is equally true in the actual lives of girls, who often feel themselves helpless, silenced or, like Cisneros's Rachel, with nothing at their command but a squeaky "little voice" (Cisneros 1992, 7). As Eugenia Paulicelli and Hazel Clark remind us, in *The Fabric of Cultures*, clothing "is part of material culture and has a double face. It is at one and the same time public and private, material and symbolic" (Paulicelli and Clark 2009, 3); thus it is a medium "through which to gain a new understanding of cultures, and individual lives" (Paulicelli and Clark 2009, 1). Representations of dress in girls' coming-of-age narratives, whether or not those texts fall within the category of "Young Adult" literature, have much to tell us as readers, whatever age we may be, and a great deal of information to offer about the experiences of girls of color in an often hostile world.

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Flying South: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" in Three Stories by Flannery O'Connor[1]

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Abstract:

The influence of Edgar Allan Poe in many later authors is beyond any doubt. Themes, characters, locations, scenes, etc., have been used by writers belonging to a wide range of varieties. Among them, Flannery O'Connor acknowledged how Poe had influenced her fiction, and these influences can be traced through some of her most iconic pieces. This essay focuses on how O'Connor retold some of the key elements of the poem "The Raven" and included them in three of her short stories.

Keywords: Uncanny, failed intellectual, American Literature, the South, influence

The influence of Poe on many 20th century authors is beyond any doubt. (In the words of Joyce Carol Oates in her "Afterword" to *Haunted: Tales of the Grotesque*: "Who has *not* been influenced by Poe?" [Oates 1995, 305]). However, how these writers use Poesque resources, characters, locations etc., has been studied in so many different ways that more and more arguments can be added every year. From the icy mountains of Antarctica[2] to the shores of Lake Huron, where a modern-day Dupin and his African-American companion still try to solve mysteries,[3] the long shadow of Edgar Allan Poe continues falling on writers, texts, and audiences, as Benjamin Franklin Fisher claims:

> Poe's Gothicism cast shadows over many later works of fantasy, science, and detective fiction –not to mention the numerous "modern Gothics" that continue to pour forth– just as it enters the work of Edith Wharton, William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, Hart Crane, Stephen King, and much else (Fisher 2003, 91).

Burton Pollin also studies this phenomenon in his book *Poe's Seductive Influence on Great Writers* (2004), where he explores how Edgar Allan Poe has directly influenced many writers belonging to different genres from his contemporaries Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne to more recent ones, like, for instance, Ernest Hemingway or Stephen King. Flannery O'Connor, even if not directly mentioned by Pollin, can be included in this group as a great and popular author.

Her literary achievements are nowadays beyond any doubt, and she began her career as a pulp author, as the first editions of her (probably) best known novel, *Wise Blood* (1952), prove.[4]

The relation of Flannery O'Connor to Poe has been demonstrated by studies such as Harold Bloom's *Flannery O'Connor* (1986), among others. The writer herself also recognized Edgar A. Poe as one of her main sources of inspiration. O'Connor, in a letter to "A" dated 28 August 1955, says about her reading:

> The Slop period was followed by the Edgar Allan Poe period which lasted for years and consisted chiefly in a volume called *The Humerous*[5] *Tales* of E. A. Poe. These were mighty humerous – one about a young man who was too vain to wear his glasses and consequently married his grandmother by accident; another a fine figure of a man who in his room removed wooden arms, wooden legs, hair piece, artificial teeth, voice box, etc. etc.; another about the inmates of a lunatic asylum who take over the establishment and run it to suit themselves. This is an influence I would rather not think about (*HB* 98).[6]

The influence of Poe on O'Connor's works, as it will be argued through these pages, does not only come from *The Humerous Tales*, but from many other texts. For example, "The Black Cat" will explicitly appear in her novel *Wise Blood*, and in some of her short stories, like "Wildcat" (1947) and "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1955). At the end of *Wiseblood*, the main character, Hazel Motes, wraps himself with barbed wire and puts stones in his shoes to walk on them. His landlady criticizes his actions by using a Poesque reference:

> 'Well, it's not normal. It's like one of them gory stories, it's something that people have quit doing – like boiling in oil or being a saint or walling up cats,' she said. 'There's no reason for it. People have quit doing it' (*CW* 127).[7]

The reference here is to "The Black Cat."

This article shows how three of O'Connor's short stories ("Good Country People" [1955], "The Comforts of Home," and "The Lame Shall Enter First" [both 1965] invoke Poe's most famous poem, "The Raven," establishing a narrative continuum and presenting a collection of common characteristics.[8] I will focus on two characteristics: the "failed intellectual" and the presence of the uncanny, personified in "The Raven" by the black bird. I will also demonstrate how O'Connor rewrote "The Raven" as an exercise of memory. O'Connor stories portray characters who turn to writing in order to forget a difficult past, so she decided to turn to Poe as her model since he deals masterfully with this topic. However, Poe not only masters forgetting, he also invites the repressed past to come back, as the writers of Gothic novels had done before him. The repression of the past, and its unavoidable return has been one of the main topics of Gothic literature since its origins in the 18th century.[9] In the texts in question, the study of the past acts as a replacement for the loss of a

loved one. The inclusion of refrains in these texts can be understood as a means of remembering, bringing the forgotten mementos (uncanny and terrible) back to mind.

Before starting with the main topic that will be developed along this article, it is necessary to note how extensive the influence of "The Raven" has been. By considering Thomas Ollive Mabbott's words, it can be deduced that this poem has, at least, had the opportunity of influencing most of the major literatures in the world, as it has been known by any reader who has ever approached the work of Poe:

> "The Raven" is Poe's most famous composition. Like the short stories, it was written to please all kinds of readers, and it was immediately successful. Not only was it copied in countless newspapers at once, but it soon was to be found in textbooks and anthologies. Since it is, despite all its elaborate metrical ornamentation, a straightforward narrative, it can be and has been translated into every major language. Woodberry wrote of it: "No great poem ever established itself so immediately, so widely, and so imperishably in men's minds" (Mabbott 2000, 350).

Some examples of what Mabbott explains in this quote (and of how his arguments have turned to be truer than he ever expected) can be extensively found, for instance, in the volume *Translated Poe* (edited by Emron Esplin and Margarida Vale de Gato, 2014). There, a whole part of the book is dedicated to how Poe's poetry and fiction have been translated. From French to Turkish and from Chinese to Icelandic, many examples are shown. However, when dealing with translation, it is impossible not to mention how some (or many) of these translators, also writers themselves, have mined "The Raven" to create obscure winged creatures for their national literatures. For instance, Brazilian poet Joaquim Machado de Assis is said to have created new poems using Poe's "The Raven," besides offering a Portuguese translation in his "O Corvo" (1883), as Sérgio Luiz Prado Bellei explains:

> The emphasis on Machado de Assis's version of "The Raven" as just another good or bad translation has prevented most critics from fully appreciating the significance of his interest in Poe's poem. One critic, however, had be shown any specific interest in "O Corvo," might have been the one exception in this critical trend (Prado Bellei 1989, 1).

Pradro Bellei's notions of "montage" and "incorporation" are going to be important for the kind of argument I will try to develop here. Flannery O'Connor, as Curvello proves for the author of the *Ocidentais*, will take those elements, characters or scenes that seem to be useful for her purposes. By means of this resource, she aims to enrich her own literary tradition, creating a new product with the most relevant elements the previous work has to offer.

The influence of "The Raven" is not merely quantitative but also qualitative. Not just the amount the works influenced is important, but all the different ways writers have used to "rewrite" this magnificent piece. For instance, George Monteiro, when dealing with the influence of Poe on

Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), remarked three different usages of "The Raven." These are the tendency to brevity, the aesthetic sense, and the concept of long poem.

For all the aforementioned circumstances, it is relevant to include this kind of study within the current theoretical debate. "The Raven" has been influencing (and haunting) writers' minds for more than a century and a half. It is matter beyond literary transference. Analyzing how the poem influenced such a great author as Flannery O'Connor does not only refer to structural or thematic parallelisms, but to what a Southern author thought of (and valued from) a predecessor.

The Failed Intellectual

The character of the failed intellectual is especially relevant when dealing with both Poe and Flannery O'Connor. Even if they are claimed today as two major examples of American *belles-lettres*, both had to suffer a kind of failure or another. In the case of Poe, it has to be born in mind that his writings did not begin to be wholly understood and valued until the turn of the century; on the other hand, Flannery O'Connor enjoyed professional success when she was alive. However, her failure came from her own condition. From 1952 on, lupus attacked her, and forced the writer to spend the rest of her life confined to her family farm in Milledgeville (Georgia).[10] This meant that she had to forget her recently inaugurated artistic career in the North to accept a "mediocre"[11] life which would animate her texts until the day of her death. This episode was later recreated in some of her stories, like "Everything That Rises Must Converge" or "The Enduring Chill" (1965). The presence of these intellectuals is not just notable by itself, but also because of the fact that all of them have to face (in some way or another) the presence of the uncanny, as will be seen below and as Poe's student had to do before them. Although usually critics have associated the presence of these "failed intellectuals" (in the case of O'Connor) to the relation she maintained with her contemporary writers, many of them labelled as liberal,[12] this notion needs to be put into context. Even though she knew (and disagreed with) many of her colleagues, the idea of the intellectual (scholar, person who has devoted a whole life to the study) is one of the main thematic influences her works received from her life.[13] The character Asbury Fox returns from New York to his family farm in the South in "The Enduring Chill;" so too Flannery O'Connor was first attacked by her terrible illness during a journey back home. Joy/Hulga is unable to leave her mother's house due to her poor health in "Good Country People;" O'Connor's forays from her mother's house were also very restricted.[14] Julian resents his mother's attitude in "Everything That Rises Must Converge"; O'Connor letters at times reflect similar feelings, as she expresses in her letter to "A" dated 9 August 1955:

> "If my mother were to come in during this process and say, 'Turn of that light. It's late,' I with lifted finger and broad bland beatific expression, would reply, 'On the contrary, I answer that the light being eternal and limitless, cannot be turned off. Shut your eyes,' or some such thing" (*HB* 94-5).[15]

About this last issue, in 2002, R. Neil Scott, commenting a book by Bettina L. Knapp entitled *Women in Twentieth-Century Literature: A Jungian View* (University Park: Pennsylvania State

University Press, 1987), said about the chapter "Flannery O'Connor's 'Everything That Rises Must Converge': Sacrifice, a Castration (87-101): "Submits that while O'Connor's relationship with her mother 'made terrible inroads' on her emotional life, rather than allow herself to be destroyed in spirit, she 'transfigured what festered within her' into such artistic creations as this story ["Everything That Rises Must Converge"]" (Scott 2002, 362).

The opening of "The Raven" is specially revealing when attempting to configure what kind of scholar Poe imagined. Not much is known about the scholar or his life: only the fact of having previously lost his partner Lenore. Not even his age, his condition, or his areas of interest are depicted trough the poem. The reader only receives a simple note of what the intellectual is doing during the fateful night he has to fight the raven:

> Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
> Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
> [...] (Poe 2000, 364).

Volumes have been written to answer the question "What was the scholar reading in Poe's 'The Raven'?" From classical and Judeo-Christian mythologies to ancient Nordic folklore and from history to occult sciences[16], many explanations have been provided of what that "forgotten lore" was. However, it is not important here. This essay needs to focus only on the status of that lore: "forgotten." The scholar seems to be interested in something that probably nobody else is studying at the same time. Applying present-day methods of literary research, the "School of memory" (belonging to the trend of Memory Studies, as Torsten Caeners explains [2015]) would say that Poe's character is trying to create a new memory out of the things that are already gone.[17] As Torsten Caeners points out:

> If remembering is the appearance of relations, the apparition of links, a resurgence of connections to the past in a present moment, memory is the bridge that facilitates the connection between these two temporalities (Caeners 2015, 284).

This detail, along with the fact of having lost Lenore and of being alone in a date around Christmas, as Byrd Howell Granger suggests: "[...] its share of the twelve days of Christmas [...]" (Granger 1972, 53), make him enter the category of failed intellectuals (and of failed person, too), who is not capable of even granting himself a companion during Christmas time

O'Connor's protagonists in the selected stories (Joy/Hulga in "Good Country People," Thomas in "The Comforts of Home," and Sheppard in "The Lame Shall Enter First") also accomplish these definitions, sharing many of their characteristics with Poe's student. All of them have failed both in their professional and personal purposes.[18] More importantly, the three of them have dedicated many years to a "forgotten lore." In the case of Joy/Hulga, Flannery O'Connor presents a Doctor in Philosophy who suffers from a heart condition; in words of Henry T.

Edmonson III: "[...] Hulga is a dilettante in nihilism, an amateur in 'nothingness'" (Edmonson 2003-2004, 66). During her academic years, this scholar focused her research in the study of Nicolas Malebranche, a neglected Baroque philosopher who disserted widely on the topic of "the truth."[19] Elizabeth Hubbard tries to acknowledge the meaning of the inclusion of this philosopher within O'Connor's text, stating,

> Yet there is also a significant degree of irony in Hulga's appropriation of Malebranche, considering that she appropriates his methods of thinking and knowing without acknowledging or accepting any of the philosophical conclusions he reaches based upon a rational application of these methods, [...]. Again, we see her moral and intellectual blindness, her lack of self-understanding as well as of a clear-sighted intellectual understanding of the thinkers with whom she claims to engage and upon whose work she attempts to justify her solipsistic existence (Hubbard 2011, 58).

Perhaps the French author could be among the texts Poe's student keeps in his room, for he is seeking the truth and the sense of his life after Lenore's disappearance. This search for truth, along with the mystic representation of the scholar (alike Malebranche himself) makes this statement possible. O'Connor wants to point out a contradiction in this character: Joy/Hulga has a vast knowledge in the probably least useful field for the life she must have.[20] Her lore is doubly forgotten, for she not only studies a forgotten author but one who is completely irrelevant to her life and surroundings. Then both scholars share the characteristic of intellectual isolation and despair that will lead them to embrace what they think is hope.[21] That is why Poe's character, after having heard the raven tapping at his chamber door, asks "Lenore?" (Poe 2000, 365); that will also be the reason why O'Connor's character will accept Manley Pointer and will trust him to the point of giving him her wooden leg. A common characteristic shared by O'Connor's characters and Poe's scholar is that they are trying to forget someone's death. In the case of Joy/Hulga, she tries to keep her mind away from her own demise, since it can happen at any moment because of her heart illness: "The doctors had told Mrs. Hopewell that with the best of care, Joy might see forty-five. She had a weak heart" (*CS* 276). Since the diagnosis is given, the young scholar tries to confront it with the means at her disposal, as does Poe's character. Books become a weapon for both of them because the reading of themes nobody else is interested in (Malebranche?) can make them feel closer to the lost beloved Lenore and to what she understands (or desires) as a normal life, respectively:

> Joy had made it plain that if it had been for this condition, she would be far from these red hills and good country people. She would be in a university lecturing to people who knew what she was talking about (*CS* 276).

By using this parallelism, Poe and O'Connor compose terribly hard scenes: two intellectuals, forgotten by the world, have to focus on a "forgotten lore" to keep alive something in which nobody else is interested. They have to face the fact that no one is going to care about their troubles, so they

create their own route out of hopelessness. In the case of Thomas, not even his mother is able to understand him:

> Had she been in any degree intellectual, he could have proved to her from early Christian history that not excess in virtue is justified, that a moderation of good produces likewise a moderation in evil, that if Antony of Egypt had stayed at home and attended to his sister, no devils would have plagued him (*CS* 385-86).

As Philip Edward Phillips states for the scholar of "The Raven," but easily applicable to the rest of the intellectuals included in this study, "The speaker himself is the sole mourner, whose utterances echo through the darkness" (Phillips 2008, 78).

Thomas, from "The Comforts of Home," has also spent most of his life studying a forgotten lore. As said at the beginning of the story, he is a historian with a focus on local history. Once again, it is possible to find how this character is assimilated to Poe's scholar in "The Raven," since History is one of the most suitable topics to be located among his library. Books concerning past events compose the most forgotten of lores. Once again, too, as seen for the previously mentioned story, Thomas is an expert in a doubly forgotten lore. History affects the past, what provokes a great sense of forgetfulness; besides, the local history he studies will never be known or studied by anyone else beyond the borders of his community. As the scholar created by Poe, Thomas is alone; his knowledge is his only solace. As seen for Joy/Hulga, and as it will be seen for Sheppard, Thomas's focus on History is also an attempt to forget. Actually, later in the story, the reader gets to know that Thomas's father has died, and that his presence still haunts the house and the young historian. By means of study (as Poe's character) Thomas tries both to keep his mind busy and to keep his father's memory alive. That's why his reaction against Star Drake will be so disproportionate.

Finally, Sheppard is perhaps the most different of all these characters, since he has not dedicated his life to a "theoretical forgotten lore." His labor as social worker is not one of the "useless disciplines." However, as Flannery O'Connor conceives the story, Sheppard's activity (not an intellectual one, but one that needs a certain amount of theoretical formation) is as useless as Joy/Hulga's PhD. That does not mean that Sheppard is only a theoretical social worker, but that his efforts are forgotten by those who he tried to help. This case is probably the most despairingly terrible among the ones included in this essay. Even if Sheppard has relatives (so he is not alone), his attitude leads him to live an isolated life. As Poe's scholar, O'Connor's social worker decides to isolate himself from the society and the outer world, only focusing on his labor. Besides, there is a detail that links Sheppard with the previously analyzed characters and to Poe's one: he is also trying to forget someone. Indeed, it is mentioned that his wife has died shortly before, leaving him and his ten-year-old son on their own. At one point, he confesses his dedication in his job is to make this task easier:

> "Don't you think I'm lonely without her too?" Sheppard said. "Don't you think I miss her at all? I do, but I'm not sitting around moping. I'm busy helping other people. When do you see me just sitting around thinking about my troubles?" (*CS* 448).

Then, Sheppard's beneficiaries those "other people," turn out to be like Poe's student's books; they are just tools these characters are using to forget their pain and their deceased loved ones. Both study and helping people have become vices.

These "failed intellectuals" offer a very interesting interpretations when analyzed through the lens of the so-called "School of Memory" or Memory Studies. All of them try to recover a forgotten (or in danger of being forgotten) past, and all of them also use the resources their education has given them to construct false memories. By means of education, all these characters forge an ideal past prior to the moment of grace that changed everything. As the next section proves, this moment of graces, specifically applied to these stories, is narrowly linked to the presence of the uncanny, since it will be used to trigger the underlying tragedy.

The Presence of the Uncanny

Besides the high importance of the figure of the failed intellectual, the presence of the uncanny is, beyond any doubt, the most important characteristic shared by these four texts. They have not only in common a "foreign" element appeared to disturb the main character's life, but also how this sense of uncanniness is built both by Edgar Allan Poe and Flannery O'Connor, being it possible to find a quasi-parallel structure between them. Even though the presence of the uncanny has affected almost every single kind of literature (at least belonging to the Western canon), the implications this concept has in the analyzed woks and authors make it a key element to understand the interrelations between these texts.

As any reader of Poe would recall, the raven included in the eponymous poem perfectly accomplishes the Freudian description of the uncanny:

> The German Word unheimlich is obviously the opposite of heimlich, heimsch – meaning 'familiar', 'native', 'belonging to the home'; and we are tempted to conclude that what is 'uncanny' is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar. Naturally not everything which is new and unfamiliar is frightening, however; the relation cannot be inverted. We can only say that what is novel can easily become frightening and uncanny; some new things are frightening but not by any means all (qtd. in Sage 1990, 76).

As Hoffmann's Sandman, Gothic literature's ghosts, or (later) Flannery O'Connor's wildcat, Poe's raven is an unknown entity coming from an unknown place beyond the borders of human understanding. As some critics have noticed, the home of this bird is possibly located in Hell, as Byrd Howell Granger explains:

> For it is the folkloric connotation of the raven as the Devil's bird and as one of the forms he takes upon occasion for convenience which makes clear exactly why the young man will never again see his lost Lenore (Granger 1972, 53).

Even if the possible location of the raven in Hell does not constitute an uncanny element *per se*, due to the theological implications of the reference, this contributes to enhance one of the characteristics the uncanny usually shows: its ability to awaken terror and horror in the reader. The (possibly) unknown or (possibly) hellish origin of the bird make the scholar feel a most obvious horror as he would suffer if he knew the source of his unease.

Before starting with the explanation about the parallel structure of the texts, it is worth mentioning that the four uncanny elements are representatives of religion.[22] The raven, as seen above, can be assimilated to the Devil; Manley Pointer is a *Bible* salesman; Flannery O'Connor directly refers to the Devil through the narrator of "The Comforts of Home:" "The devil for Thomas was only a manner of speaking, but it was a manner appropriate to the situations his mother got into" (*CS* 385); and Rufus Johnson is a fundamentalist Christian who wishes to be a preacher, as his grandfather was. It is interesting to note how Flannery O'Connor used her knowledge of Christian Theology to compose this religion-related uncanny. Even if religion is not usually considered a source of the uncanny, the way in which O'Connor depicts in several of her works (as something terrible and unfamiliar) turns it into an uncanny presence. In a letter to Cecil Dawkins (dated November 17, 1957), Flannery O'Connor, when discussing which authors had had an influence in her, writes: "All I have read of Isak Dinesen are the twelve *Gothic Tales* and some of them I like right much – the one where the old woman and the money change places – but I can't take much of her at one time" (*HB* 253). As known, the collection O'Connor mentions includes a story entitled "The Deluge at Norderney." This tale, depicting Cardinal Hamilcar von Schestedt, was conceived as a treatise on the Holy Ghost, probably one of the most uncanny elements of the Catholic religion.[23] One of the most relevant scenes that recreates the uncanniness of this element is the closing one of "The Enduring Chill," in which Asbury Fox is attacked by an unknown bird:

> The fierce bird which through the years of his childhood and the days of his illness had been poised over his head, waiting mysteriously, appeared all at once to be in motion. Asbury blanched and the last film of illusion was torn as if by a whirlwind from his eyes. He saw that for the rest of his days, frail, racked, bur enduring, he would live in the face of a purifying terror. A feeble cry, a last impossible protest escaped him. But the Holy Ghost, emblazoned in ice instead of fire, continued, implacable, to descend (*CS* 382).

Along the next section of the essay, the common characteristics these uncanny elements have will be analyzed. The first thing that needs to be envisioned is how the uncanny enters the life of the failed intellectual, who is the main character of the stories and the poem, but who will be pushed into the background as soon as the respective strange elements that appear on stage. Both "The

Raven" and Flannery O'Connor's stories expose a situation in which the uncanny is somehow voluntarily led into the house (and then, into the life of the character).[24] All the analyzed characters also believe that they have nothing to fear from the uncanny element, since they are superior to it physically or intellectually (or both). Nevertheless, all of them will have to confront a force that is able to beat them in any field of their lives. If we remember Poe's poem, it is said how, after a period of vacillation, the unnamed scholar allows the bird to enter his room:

> Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
> In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
> Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
> But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door –
> Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door –
> Perched, and sat, and nothing more. (Poe 2000, 366)

It is his action of opening his window and moving his curtains that permits the uncanny into his life. Without having any notice of it, this character (as it will be seen for the others) is commencing a radical turn towards his existence, by letting his greatest enemy cross the borders of his domain. After that inflection point, only disgraces will visit the character, ending with his physical and moral destruction.[25]

"Good Country People" is even clearer in this respect, since its main character, Joy/Hulga, not only endorses her mother's decision of granting Manley Pointer access to her house, but she invites him to go with her to the barn,[26] thus sealing her own destruction:

> "Ain't there somewheres we can sit down sometime?" he murmured, his voice softening toward the end of the sentence.
> "In the barn," she said.
> They made for it rapidly as if it might slide away like a train. It was a large two-story barn, cool and dark inside. The boy pointed up the ladder that led into the loft and said, "It's too bad we can't go up there."
> "Why can't we?" she asked.
> "Yer leg," he said reverently.
> The girl gave him a contemptuous look and putting both hands on the ladder, she climbed it while he stood below, apparently awestruck. She pulled herself expertly through the opening and then looked down at him and said, "Well, come on if you're coming," and he began to climb the ladder, awkwardly bringing the suitcase with him (*CS* 286).

Due to her superior intelligence, her time at college, and her heart disease, Joy/Hulga thinks that she is above any of the people that surround her; so, when Manly Pointer appears at her mother's door with his black suitcase and his innocent face, she thinks he will be an easy victim, at least in a moral sense. Once again, circumstances prove otherwise, explaining that the only weak character is

Joy/Hulga herself. As seen for the raven, Manly Pointer (the uncanny agent) wants to go to the elevated place, to the only place where Joy/Hulga can truly be herself; once again, the main character allows him to do his will.

"The Comforts of Home" is the only discordant note. Thomas does not allow Star Drake into his house, but he tacitly accepts her.[27] Once Star Drake has been accepted within his domain, he behaves like any of the other characters: certainly, he wants to expel her, but he does not do anything for this to happen but complaining of his discomfort.

Finally, in "The Lame Shall Enter First," a similar scenario is depicted. Sheppard accepts Rufus in his house, even giving him a key to have free entrance, against the opinion of his only living relative: his son Norton. Even if the child clearly states he does not want Rufus with him, his father does not pay attention. As seem for the raven and the previous stories, Sheppard opens the doors of his house to something that he knows positively of being evil. One of the possibilities Poe's poem mentions is that the "visiter" is the disappeared Lenore. Either if the solution is this supernatural event, or what it is finally discovered to be (a wild huge black bird), the scholar can be sure that what is out of his chamber cannot do him good, physically or spiritually. In the same sense, Sheppard knows that Rufus has been a convicted juvenile offender:

> "I gave Rufus a key to this house when he left the reformatory – to show my confidence in him and so he would have a place he could come to and feel welcome any time. He didn't use it, but I think he'll use it now when he's seen me and he's hungry. And if he doesn't use it, I'm going out and find him and bring him here" (*CS* 446).

Even with his antecedents, Sheppard invited the teenager to his house, where his 9-year-old son lives too. Once again, an educated person, a supposedly higher intelligence, opens the door to an unknown force, to something that is stronger than himself.

After the uncanny has entered the houses and lives of the characters, another common characteristics Poe's poem and O'Connor's stories shares is the freedom this uncanny element enjoys. Nobody can stop it, so its perverse influence is total. In a similar manner, the characters of the Gothic novel, in many cases, freely accepted the presence of the villain within their lives: Elvira invites Ambrosio to her house in *The Monk* (with the result of Antonia's rape and murder); John Melmoth invites Monçada to stay at his house (with the result of the horrible story about the man in the portrait); Jonathan Harker freely enters Dracula's castle, etc. As seen for "The Raven", the bird flies all around the room of the scholar, disturbing all his order and peace.

This freedom to fly can be easily assimilated to the freedom of movements the other uncanny characters enjoy. All of them have open access to their hosts' houses. Both their physical and their moral presence (but specially their actions: moral murder of Joy/Hulga, driving to madness of Thomas, and the provoked suicide of Norton) are like a shadow that darkens the whole micro-universe in which they land, as the shadow of Poe's raven darkened the scholar's room while flying.

The first story by Flannery O'Connor included in this essay also shows how, after receiving the invitation to enter the house, Manley Pointer is given a high freedom to move in the house. Under his disguise of Bibles salesman, no fear is apparently expected from a young, well-looking man. Even more, he is tacitly given a kind of authority to direct the action of the story for an amount of pages enough to draw a tragic outcome:

> She looked up and down the empty highway and had the furious feeling that she had been tricked, that he had only meant to make her walk to the gate after the idea of him. Then suddenly he stood up, very tall, from behind a bush on the opposite embankment. Smiling, he lifted his hat which was new and wide-brimmed. He had not worn it yesterday and she wondered if he had bought it for the occasion. It was a toast-colored with a red and white band around it and was slightly too large for him. He stepped from behind the bush still carrying the black valise. He had on the same suit and the same yellow socks sucked down in his shoes from walking. He crossed the highway and said, "I knew you'd come!" (*CS* 284-85).

As seen for "The Raven," the wanderer has such a high authority over the situation that he can fabricate, the situation that pleases the most his perverse and dark interest (the wooden leg and the humiliation of the intellectual), as he has total control over it, even if Joy/Hulga thinks otherwise. Meanwhile, the rest of the characters are not conscious of their subjugation, they have forgotten about the couple (or, at least, O'Connor depicts it so). Poe's scholar believes he can expel the bird from his room; Joy/Hulga trust her intelligence to trick Manley Pointer.

Unlike the previous examples, in both "The Comforts of Home" and "The Lame Shall Enter First," the uncanny characters are not tacitly given any freedom or authority over the house; in these case, they are directly invited to have and to apply it.[28] Against Thomas's opinion, his mother gives Star Drake total freedom, not only inside the house, but also to do her will according to her desires, even if this seems to contradict the woman's Christian morals. Even if Star Drake does not directly fabricate the scene,[29] she uses her influence over the old lady to move freely. Then, that "Imagine it was you" the mother continuously repeats turns from being an expression of pity to be a tool used by Star Drake to control Thomas; something similar is appreciated in Poe's "The Raven" when the scholar does not directly attack the bird for it uses the possibility of being Lenore (or sent by her). On the other hand, all along "The Lame Shall Enter First," it is possible to appreciate how Rufus Johnson receives more attention from Sheppard than his own son Norton. More specifically, Norton disappears from scene for almost the second half of the short story, only to reappear for the tragic dénouement. As it happened with Thomas's mother, Sheppard also has a justification for behaving as he does, and for somehow trusting the uncanny: "'I have nothing to reproach myself with' [...] 'I did more for him than I did for my own child'" (*CS* 481). Sheppard thinks his good deeds are going to have a proportionate reward; facts will show how this is way far from reality. As seen for Poe's scholar, too, Sheppard cannot directly defend himself from Rufus, for the teenager is the only note of goodness left in that house after his wife's death. If the raven (or Rufus) dies,

Sheppard's wife (or Lenore) will disappear forever, for they are, even with their uncanniness, the principal elements the main characters have now to remember their losses. Both the raven and Rufus, with their cruelty, constantly remind the characters about their lost lovers, even if their main aim is to cause pain, like when Rufus suggests Sheppard's wife is in Hell. However, unlike seen for Poe's poem, Sheppard will have enough strength to get free of Rufus; nevertheless, the teenager's legacy, as the raven's, will stay forever with him, as will be argued below.

Perhaps, one of the most representative common characteristics of all the uncanny elements studied here have is a kind of refrain they carry as their presentation card. Poe clearly explains how he came to compose his raven's refrain "Nevermore." It is the only word the animal will pronounce and the writer explained in detail how it arose in his "The Philosophy of Composition":

> I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*.
> [...]
> The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself (Poe 1984, 18-19).

Even if Poe confessed the election of "Nevermore" was the result of a quasi-mathematical operation, chosen in terms of nature, character and sound, the refrain has become a symbol of much else. "Nevermore" can make reference to the impossibility of Lenore's return, or to many other aspects. Many critics have dealt with the mysterious meaning of the ominous refrain, and almost as many explanations have been given. To present only a few examples, it has been said it expresses the intention of the raven to never leave the scholar's room or, as Roman Jakobson states, it can refer to a multiplicity of meanings:

> Given the context of the dialogue the refrain conveys a series of different meanings: you will never forget her, you will never regain peace of mind, you will never again embrace her, I will never leave you! Moreover this same word can function as a name, the symbolic name which the poet bestows upon his nocturnal visitor (Jakobson 1978, 1-2).

Anthony Caputi, who has deeply study Poe's usage of refrains in his poetry, states that the inclusion of "Nevermore" responds to a question of the inner structure of the poem. Then, as Caputi explains, Poe would have written a literary piece with two perfect structures: one visible to the reader and one only perceptible when the inner structure is understood:

> In view of these remarks on "The Raven" Poe's claim that the poet must begin with his "dénouement constantly in mind" clarifies another of his ideas on the subject of form. "The Raven" suggests, as

> "Dreamland" (1844) and "Ulalume" (1847) clearly show, that Poe was interested in the kind of circular form that can be achieved through a judicious use of refrain, a form wherein the latter part of the poem comes back upon the beginning. The first stanza of "Dreamland" sets forth in concrete terms, however vague and indefinite, the state of mind to be equated with dreaming (Caputi 1953, 174).

It is not my goal to decipher what Edgar Allan Poe wanted (or didn't want) to mean with his "Nevermore." It will just be taken using the information the writer himself offer in "The Philosophy of Composition": it is a refrain that becomes the most peculiar feature of the raven, even more than its external aspect. As it will be argued, Flannery O'Connor also chose to include refrains in her stories to compose the inner structure of them.[30] The selected short stories show examples of these sentences, used in the same ways as Poe's Plutonic bird did it.

In the case of "Good Country People," Manley Pointer has his own refrain. As a representative of religion he supposedly is, the sentence he continuously repeats is related to his role as Bibles travelling salesman, but also with the same ambiguous meaning Poe gave to the one in his poem: "You ain't saved?" What is that supposed to mean coming from a person like Manley Pointer, with no sense of morality at all? If we go to the final scene of the story, the wanderer confesses what his true faith is: "'I hope you don't think,' he said in a lofty indignant tone, 'that I believe in that crap!'" (*CS* 290). His only beliefs are based on his capacity to travel around the country and to trick innocent, disabled girls, as Joy/Hulga is revealed to be, despite her PhD. Manley Pointer's refrain (with the macabre characteristic that surrounds this personage) can be interpreted as a warning to Joy/Hulga before he develops his perverse intention of depriving her of her wooden leg (a lie to achieve his goal, as O'Connor's psychopaths do);[31] it can also be seen as a statement, for her higher intelligence will not save her when she has to face real life, paradoxically represented by the agent of the uncanny. Finally, it can be used in its more religious sense, being Pointer a devil in disguise and Joy/Hulga a victim who has fallen into temptation by going with him to the barn in the woods.

Probably, the most surprising case among the selected stories is that from "The Comforts of Home." There, Star Drake is almost completely silent for the whole story, until she pronounces a couple of sentences just before the outcome of the story. However, even if she does not talk, that does not mean she does not produce any sound. Indeed, her "Nevermore" is not a word or a sentence, but her laugh: "With a shriek of laughter she ran to meet the dog" (*CS* 383); "The back door slammed and the girl's laugh shot up from the kitchen through the back hall, up the stairwell and into his room, making for him like a bolt of electricity" (*CS* 383); "The girl's laughter rang upward a second time and Thomas winced" (*CS* 384). Throughout the story, this (for Thomas) annoying sound is repeated, being the only way in which the girl communicates with the outer world. As a well-constructed "Nevermore," that laugh also shows a high dose of ambiguity: it is not very expectable to find that sign of joy and happiness coming from someone with such a dark past as Star Drake's. She is presented as a tragic character, but her expression and most peculiar feature belong to the comic genre, showing a mixture of genres only masters like Poe or O'Connor can

achieve. Besides, Star Drake's laugh can be interpreted as her weapon to construct the scenario for the dénouement she wants. It has been said that Thomas is a historian and his a respectable Southern family, so seriousness and not humorousness is expected by him and his readers to be found in his life. Then Star Drake, as an earthly raven (in parallel with Poe's bird), is perceived as the destruction of his world, as it happens in the poem: even if, potentially, neither the raven nor Star Drake can harm the other characters, they are perceived as a menace.[32]

Finally, in "The Lame Shall Enter First," Flannery O'Connor drew the least ambiguous of her refrains. If it has been seen as a common characteristics that the previous uncanny characters did not give a clear meaning along with their sentence, Rufus Johnson in shockingly and unnecessarily clear with his: "'Satan,' he said. 'He has me in his power'" (*CS* 450). The teenager repeats it all along the story, and Sheppard had already heard that when he invited Rufus to live with him and his son, so he knows something evil is growing inside the backwoods' boy. Rufus does not try to cheat anyone, he presents himself as he is: evil and burdened with the hideous education his grandfather gave to him. Through this difference, Flannery O'Connor builds a human raven who is even more destructive than Poe's bird. Truth and fact, when not paid attention to or believed, can be as dangerous as the intellectual worlds.

Finally, the last thing Poe's poem and O'Connor's stories have in common is how they structure the outcomes of the plots. The dénouement of "The Raven" is probably one of the most powerful images in the history of Western literature:

> And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting
> On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
> And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
> And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
> And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
> Shall be lifted – nevermore! (Poe 2000, 369).

As seen for the meaning of the refrain, scholars have widely discussed the meaning of this last stanza. "Why is the soul of the scholar trapped on the raven's shadow?," "Why does the narrator not refer to the scholar's body, but only to his soul?," "Why did Poe return to demonic reference at the end of the poem?," etc., are only a few examples of the questions brought into the debate. Once again, Sérgio Luiz Prado Bellei offers an explanation, assessing that the two stanzas of the poem, by suggesting more than showing, offer a view of the scholar's mind, being the raven a mean he has to project the memory of Lenore (and the drama of her loss) into the present (Prado Bellei 1989, 53-54).

Perhaps, the most interesting detail of the last stanza for the development of the argument of this essay is the image of the raven standing on the bust of Pallas. As the reader will know, Pallas was the Greek goddess of wisdom and war, patron of Athens. Then, by depicting a black Plutonic bird over it, Poe creates a Gothic image: darkness, the unknown, stands and prevails over reason,

represented in the scholar who "shall be lifted – nevermore." As it will be explained, Flannery O'Connor chose this image to draw the outcomes of her three stories under discussion here.[33]

As previously mentioned, the last scene of "Good Country People" takes place in a barn in the middle of the woods. The nature of this place locates the outcome of this story on an elevated level. However, this elevation will not be the definitive assimilation of Poe's last stanza. After Manley Pointer has displayed the content of his valise ("[...] a pocket flask of whisky, a pack of cards, and a small blue box with printing on it" [*CS* 289]) and has stolen Joy/Hulga's wooden leg, he leaves the farm, leaving the girl completely abandoned and with no possibility of easily returning to her home:

> "Give me my leg!" she screeched. He jumped up so quickly that she barely saw him sweep the cards and the blue box into the Bible and throw the Bible into the valise. She saw him grab the leg and then she saw it for an instant slanted forlornly across the inside of the suitcase with a Bible at either side of its opposite ends. He slammed the lid shut and snatched up the valise and swung it down the hole and then stepped through himself (*CS* 290).

This scene represents a change in the main orientation of the spatial coordinate of the story. Until this moment, the key passages of the story had taken place horizontally, with their culmination on the young couple lying on the hay of the barn. However, now, once the wanderer has achieved his goal. Flannery O'Connor decides to change the dominant coordinate to vertical. This is the first similarity with the last stanza of "The Raven;" the second and most prominent one would come from the image of a standing Manley Pointer, a position Joy/Hulga cannot reach now. So, as seen for the raven over the bust of Pallas, O'Connor depicts a new uncanny archetype of the unknown who stands over reason, represented in a Joy/Hulga (a new scholar) who, like the protagonist of the poem (and more physically than him) "shall be lifted – nevermore."

A similar situation is presented at the end of "The Comforts of Home." After Thomas has lost his sanity and has heard the voice of his dead father, he decides to do something to get free of Star Drake. With the complicity of the sheriff, Thomas develops his plan. However, things go terribly bad for him,. When he has to face the situation , his mind goes blank and he shoots the gun he had used to implicate Star Drake:

> Thomas fired. The blast was like a sound meant to bring an end to evil in the world. Thomas beard it as a sound that would shatter the laughter of sluts until all shrieks were stilled and nothing was left to disturb the peace of perfect order.
> The echo died away in waves. Before the last one had faded, Farebrother opened the door and put his head inside the hall. His nose wrinkled. His expression for some few seconds was that of a man unwilling to admit surprise. His eyes were clear as glass, reflecting the scene. The old lady lay on the floor between the girl and Thomas (*CS* 403-04).

As deduced from this quotation, Thomas ends by killing his mother instead of the uncanny character. Then, the doubt arises: is it possible to think that this was Star Drake's plan from the beginning? Being this true or not, what can assured is that the image is, once again, similar to Poe's last stanza: the uncanny, Star Drake, stands as "morally superior" to the representative of reason, the educated Thomas, who is discovered by the sheriff when killing his mother. Once again, reason is defeated by the forces of darkness, moral darkness in this case.

However, the most outstanding example of O'Connor's retelling of the last stanza of "The Raven" comes from the end of "The Lame Shall Enter First." After Sheppard has quitted trying to civilize Rufus, he "remembers" he had a son. However, it is too late, because Rufus's malign influence has already accomplished its task, and Norton has to pay for this father's sins:

> The light was on Norton's room but the bed was empty. He turned and clashed up the attic stairs and at the top reeled back like a man on the edge of a pit. The tripod had fallen and the telescope lay on the floor. A few feet over it, the child hung in a jungle of shadows, just below the beam from which he had launched his flight into space (*CS* 482).

A tragedy has finally occurred; another possibility would be difficult bearing in mind Sheppard's attitude. However, beyond the tragic sense of this dénouement, it is important here how the scene is constructed. The child has hung himself in a desperate attempt to go back to his dead mother. Beneath him, the last present from his father, a telescope, stands. This gift had been given to Norton (and to Rufus) to awaken his interest in space exploration (so, in science). However, Rufus's influence has it turned into an obscurantist object, used by the child to seek for his mother in Heaven. This, along with a previous affirmation stated by Rufus ("'Right now you'd go where she is,' [...] 'but if you live long enough, you'll go to hell'" [CS 462]), convince the child of which is the only way of returning with his mother. Then, what O'Connor depicted and the reader gets is a child influenced by a person who said continuously "Satan has me in his power" to kill himself, hanging over an object designed to serve the science. Once again, darkness stands over the bust of Pallas, over the realm of reason.

Conclusions

The previous pages show in which way Flannery O'Connor received and influence by one of the most notable works by Edgar Allan Poe: "The Raven." Many of her stories showed how she was a master of retelling, taking examples from several previous literary traditions. According to her own testimonies, the American Renaissance was one of the most strongly influential periods from which she received inspiration for her own compositions. The analyzed short stories by O'Connor recreate some structural parts of the narrative line of Poe's poem, making them a good case of "literary transference". Even if this influence is not explicit, the mentioned examples demonstrate how O'Connor used images, characters and ideas from "The Raven" in order to write "Good Country People," "The Comforts of Home," and "The Lame Shall Enter First." The conflict between science

and the unknown, the usage of the uncanny or the introduction of a misunderstood and lonely intellectual personage are only a few samples of how O'Connor attempted (and succeeded) to recreate Poe's most famous poem. The forgotten lore Joy/Hulga studies, the refrain of Star Drake or Norton hanging above a telescope (like the raven over the bust of Pallas) are the little homage a master of the 20th century-South made to her 19th century predecessor.

It is true that the production of Flannery O'Connor (as it has happened with Poe's) has been address from countless perspectives (gender studies, postmodern theory, racial studies, religious studies...). However, the relevance of this essay rests in how it has approached a case of literary influence. Not only example of the included texts have been pointed out, but how all this interrelates. Saying that "The Raven" is present in the production of Flannery O'Connor would be close to not saying anything; however, the true importance of that presence needs to be studied down to the last detail. This is the particular relevance of this article, and whet it joins the current debate of Comparative Literature.

A last field in which the relation between these two major authors is noticed (and which has been pointed out throughout the essay) is the preoccupation of both Edgar Allan Poe and Flannery O'Connor for theorizing about short narrative. "The Philosophy of Composition" is well known, and has been analyzed (like Poe's stories) from many different perspectives. However, the collection *Mystery and Manners* is also a good homage O'Connor could pay the Bostonian through the references to him and his works that can be found there. Essays like "The Nature and Aim of Fiction" or "Writing Short Stories" prove that the description of how Poe conceived his raven (as explained in "The Philosophy of Composition") was also in the mind of O'Connor when she was composing her particular literary universe.

Endnotes:

1. This study has been partially possible thanks to the Research Project "Edgar A. Poe on-line. Texto e imagen" [Edgar A. Poe On-line. Texts and Images], sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Science (Ref. HAR2015-64580-P). I would also like to express my gratitude to Margarita Rigal-Aragón, PhD (Associate Professor of English at the Universidad of Castilla-La Mancha –Spain–), for her suggestions on the first draft of this paper, and to the University of Limerick (specially to David Coughlan, PhD, chair of the Irish Association for American Studies and Head of English), because the final version of this article was completed during the months I spent there.
2. In reference to H. P. Lovecraft's novel *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936)
3. In reference to Stephen King's recent novel *Mr. Mercedes* (2014).
4. As demonstrated by Connie Ann Kirk, among others.
5. This particular way of spelling the title of the collection was introduced by Flannery O'Connor in her letter, the actual spelling being *Humorous Tales*.
6. Abbreviations used for Flannery O'Connor's works:

CS: *Complete Stories*.
HB: *The Habit of Being*.

7. For more information about the relation between Flannery O'Connor and Edgar Allan Poe see, for instance the recent Doctoral Dissertation by José Manuel Correoso-Rodenas (included in the

references), in which the influence of Gothic literature (particularly American Gothic) in Flannery O'Connor's fiction is explored in detail.

8. It is true that this essay could be extended to include some other examples by O'Connor, like for instance "Wildcat," "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," or "The Enduring Chill." However, I have decided only to include "The Comforts of Home" and "The Lame Shall Enter First" because they share more characteristics with "The Raven" than any of the previous. Besides, the plotlines of these stories, as it will be seen, was conceived following a very similar structure to the one used by Poe in his poem. Nevertheless, when needed, quotations or examples from stories different from the discussed will be used.

This said, it should be clarified that the inclusion of "The Lame Shall Enter First," with all the differences this story has in relation to the others (as it will be pointed out) has been a decision in order to show how O'Connor used different means to rewrite Poe's poem. As influence is not a simple process, the variations it can have justify the inclusion of this "different" story.

9. Indeed, in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the past and the curse over the illegitimate tenants of the castle is what triggers the plot even before the novel is started.

For a more accurate analysis of the importance of the repressed within the Gothic, see Clemens, Valdine. *The Return of the Repressed. Gothic Horror from* The Castle of Otranto *to* Alien. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999, or Steven Hall's Introduction to Mike Carey and Peter Gross's *The Unwritten: Dead Man's Knock* (2011).

10. In a very strong resemblance to those maidens of the Gothic novel that were imprisoned, from the earliest examples of Horace Walpole to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892).

11. At this point, it would be interesting to turn to Mark McGurl's work, who expresses this crucial moment of personal ambiguity for O'Connor with the following words: "She liked to quip that she had been 'saved' from a career as a creative writing teacher by the illness that forced her to live at home with her mother, and thought of workshop discussions as being "generally comprised in equal parts of ignorance, flattery, and spite" (Mystery 86)" (McGurl 2007, 529). Eileen Pollack has also manifested in this respect: "To writers who teach to earn their living, Flannery O'Connor has long represented the benefits that accrue to writers who refuse to teach (or, in O'Connor's case, are prevented from doing so by illness). Her continued exposure to irritating southern matrons and Jesus-haunted back- woods preachers kept her fiction gritty and eccentric in ways that might have been impossible if she had remained in the academy" (McGurl 2007, 546).

12. See, for instance, what she says in her *Prayer Journal*: "Dear God, In a way I got a good punishment for my lack of charity to Mr. Rothburg last year. He came back at me today like a tornado which while it didn't hurt me too much yet ruined my show. All this is about charity. Dear Lord please make my mind vigilant about that. I say many many too many uncharitable things about people everyday. I say them because they make me look clever. Please help me to realize practically how cheap this is. I have nothing to be proud of yet myself. I am stupid, quite as stupid as the people I ridicule. Please help me to stop this selfishness because I love you, dear God. I don't want to be all excuses though. I am not much. Please help me to do Your Word oh Lord" (O'Connor 2013, 19).

13. Following Mark McGurl once again, we have a testimony about one of these "complicated relationships" Flannery O'Connor had with some of her colleagues: "In a letter dated 2 April 1960, O'Connor took a moment to backstab her friend Robie Macauley, who had been with her at the Iowa Writers' Workshop in the late 1940s, when both were getting their Master of Fine Arts degrees there, and whose opinions she normally respected. Although he would soon co-author a textbook called *Technique in Fiction* (1964), Macauley must at some point have expressed approval of a writer from the previous generation whose disregard for technique had become notorious, an object lesson in the badness that can result from uncontrolled 'self- expression': 'As for R.M.,' she wrote to another friend, 'he is a great admirer of Thomas Wolfe & in my opinion anybody that admires Thomas Wolfe

can be expected to like good fiction only by accident' (*Habit* 385). The combined effect of Wolfe's experiences at an innovative private day school in Asheville, and later at the University of North Carolina, and finally as a helplessly undisciplined student playwright in George Pierce Baker's fabled Drama 47 Workshop at Harvard, had been to convince him that the central task of the literary artist must be to defend the sovereignty of his genius against any forces that might presume to diminish or contain it" (McGurl 2007, 530; emphasis in the original).

14. Also memorable is the trip she took with her mother and some fellow Catholics to Lourdes and Rome. When reaching the French shrine, her opinions deserve to be highlighted, since them really fall within the category of the grotesque that impregnates all her production. In a letter to "A" dated 19 April 1958, O'Connor writes about a nun who she befriended: "She hopes that what I will get out of the Lourdes trip is a vocation to belong to the Marist Third Order. All I can say is boy, that would be an appropriate penance but I hope I'll be spared" (*HB* 279); later on, in another letter to "A" dated in Rome 5 May 1958, O'Connor goes on with this argument: "... Lourdes was not as bad as I expected. I took the bath. From a selection of bad motives, such as to prevent any bad conscience for not having done it, and because it seemed at the time that it must be what was wanted of me. I went early in the morning. Only about 40 ahead of me so the water looked pretty clean. They pass around the water for 'les malades' to drink & everybody drinks out of the same cup. As somebody said, the miracle is that the place don't bring epidemics. Well, I did it all and with very bad grace" (*HB* 280).
15. The interesting relationship O'Connor had with her mother has widely referred to by several critics. One example is Louise Westling, who in 1978 wrote "Yet there is at least one distinctive element in O'Connor's fiction which ultimately calls attention to her motivation as a female and leads us outside the work for explanation. This is the repeated mother-daughter pattern which seems a disturbing force often at odds with the clear purpose of a story" (Westling 1978, 510). More recently, Gretchen Dobrott-Bernard has said: "In 1966, two years after the author's death from lupus erythematosus, Stanley Edgar Hyman referred to her unique portrayal of the mother/daughter dyad as 'the duo of practical mother and dreamy daughter on a dairy farm' (30). In fact, in the writer's depiction of these fictional families, it is difficult for the reader to overlook the allusions to her imposed retirement to 'Andalusia,' her mother's farm in Milledgeville, Georgia. Readers familiar with her written correspondence and her biography will find that many elements coincide. O'Connor's widowed mother, Regina O'Connor, ran her farm with the help of tenant workers, while her daughter wrote. Although O'Connor does not single out a Regina prototype in her fiction, parallels can be easily traced. Her fictional farm widows, like Regina, are concerned with appearances. hard work, common sense and being lady-like (Nichols 27). Several of her stories share these features, and in one of them, 'Good Country People,' biographical coincidences are remarkable" (Dobrott-Bernard 2004, 71-72).
16. See, for instance, the studies by John F. Adams, or Byrd Howell Granger.
17. The "School of Memory" refers to a trend in Literary Criticism and Theory that is based in some previous theories, such as Post-Structuralism, New Historicism, Marxism and Psychoanalysis. The postulates of this trend expose how a text is not temporally isolated, but it is a palimpsest made with all the previous texts belonging to the same tradition, and also of all the previous readings the reader has done (for more information about "Palimpsestism," see Caeners 2015; for information about how a kind of palimpsestism has also been developed in Gothic Literature, see Hogle, Jerrold E.. "Introduction: the Gothic in western culture." *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 1-20.). This school also deals with the possibility of a reader who creates new memories out of the readings, as if they were experiences.

Also, the trend of 'social memory' developed mainly by Paul Connerton (1989) deserves to be mentioned, understood as a communal memory that includes folklore, mythology, tradition, and literature. So, due to the particularities of its history and its cultural implications, the South of the

United States would as suitable to apply this example as it is Ireland, where the model has been displayed by Jarlath Kileen (2014).

18. In reference to Joy/Hulga, Laura Behling widens the question when disserting about the meaning of the scholar's disability: "Although initially portraying Hulga as the character who is 'ugly' both physically and emotionally, what is at stake for the reader throughout the text is to determine what it means to be 'ugly' and to which of the characters 'ugliness' applies" (Behling 2006, 88).
19. Although he can be considered an important author due to the influence his works would have on later authors such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he can certainly not be considered as having the same relevance as the "founders" of modern philosophy (René Descartes, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume...) in terms of the amount of authors and works he has influenced. While Descartes, Locke, etc., are today considered key philosophers to understand the modern world, Malebranche has been relegated to an academic background, having been John Norris (also quite obscure himself) his main disciple.

In relation to Malebranche and his theories about "the truth," Martin Heidegger needs to be mentioned. Besides being a contemporary of O'Connor, his theories on the essence of being (or Dasein) are interesting inheritors of those of Malebranche. It could be stated that Joy/Hulga has also being reading the German philosophy of Heidegger according to many of her affirmations, or even to her idea of Manly Pointer being "good country people": "Her voice when she spoke had an almost pleading sound. 'Aren't you,' she murmured, 'aren't you just good country people?" (*CS* 290).

20. When introducing the character, O'Connor's narrator reproduces Mrs. Hopewell (Joy/Hulga's mother) thoughts. A description the lady gives of her daughter's condition is: "You could say, 'My daughter is a nurse,' or 'My daughter is a schoolteacher,' or even, 'My daughter is a chemical engineer.' You could not say, 'My daughter is a philosopher.' That was something that had ended with the Greeks and Romans" (*CS* 276). This fragment goes back to an argument used by O'Connor when dealing with Poe: "'People have quit doing it'", as seen for the quotation from *Wise Blood* cited above.
21. This concept of "isolation" probably deserves a further explanation. Even though most of Flannery O'Connor's characters do not live in solitude (as the character of "The Raven" does) due to the fact that they have relatives, it cannot be asserted that this circumstance can make them look less isolated. Their families are not usually depicted as a solace, but (often) as a source of despair.
22. However, the relation of the uncanny with Flannery O'Connor's works has also been explored when referred to the comic and grotesque aspects of her stories by critics such as Éric Savoy, who assesses: "At once wry and dry, O'Connor's comic intuition is most at home in the *unheimlich*, the uncanny, which is to say that her work depends vitally on the *ludicrous*" (Savoy 2016, 135; emphasis in the original).
23. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "'No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.' Now God's Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, his Word, his living Utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of himself. The Spirit who 'has spoken through the prophets' makes us hear the Father's Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself. We know him only in the movement by which he reveals the Word to us and disposes us to welcome him in faith. The Spirit of truth who 'unveils' Christ to us 'will not speak on his own.' Such properly divine self-effacement explains why 'the world cannot receive (him), because it neither sees him nor knows him,' while those who believe in Christ know the Spirit because he dwells with them (available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P1Z.HTM).
24. It is true that Thomas does not voluntarily allow Star Drake to live under his roof; however, the decision is made by his moral authority (his mother) and he cannot do anything but complain.
25. It would be interesting to study the influence of the folk tradition of the "enlutado" (griefstricken) in the outcome of "The Raven." The "enlutado" is a myth very popular in many places o Europe and

Latin America. This quasi-magical being is said to absorb light and to be dressed completely in black, as the raven certainly is. It is also believed to confront its victims with all their sins, turning them mad or provoking their suicides.

26. Notice how the author uses a gothic reference in this passage. An elevated barn can easily be assimilated to a tower, one of the key scenarios of classical gothic. Then, it can be easily deduced that chances of succeeding are not very high for Joy/Hulga, the maiden.
27. See endnote 17.
28. Once again, Lewis's *The Monk* would be an outstanding precedent within Gothic.
29. Although her intentions are never clear.
30. However, Flannery O'Connor was not the only 20th century Southern author who took inspiration in Poe to use this literary and phonetic resource. According to Sarah Ford, Eudora Welty (1909-2001) also used it in her novel *The Optimist's Daughter*: "In *The Optimist's Daughter* Welty performs a different kind of re-writing, focusing this time on gender and targeting a more specific allusion, Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Raven'. Poe's use of rhyme, alliteration and repetition creates the gothic tone for the poem's subject of a man grieving his lost love and imagining that a raven croaking 'nevermore' means that he will be forever trapped in his sorrows. Poe explains in his essay 'The Philosophy of Composition' that his decision in writing 'The Raven' were not just logical but inevitable. If 'Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem', then it follows that the appropriate tone is 'Melancholy' and the topic must be 'Death', which leads Poe to his 'obvious' subject: 'the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world' [...]" (Ford 2016, 440).
31. Let's remember the grandmother in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."
32. Besides, in this story a second refrain can be found. It is the already mentioned and explained sentence pronounced by Thomas's mother "Imagine it was you." This sentence, as it happens with Star Drake's laugh, is not planned in the serious and anodyne life of the local historian: he cannot be in Star's place, because he is a moral-intelligent man and a respectable member of his community, son of a deceased judge.
33. Even if not included in this essay due to plot disparities, Flannery O'Connor's "Wildcat" also has a last scene resembling the last stanza of "The Raven." After a life expecting, Old Gabriel gets the second encounter with the wildcat he desires: "He was on his feet now. 'Lord don't want me with no wildcat mark.' He was moving toward the cat hole. Across on the river bank the Lord was waiting on him with a troupe of angels and Golden vestments and stand there with the Lord and the angels, judging life. Won't no nigger for fifty miles fitter to judge than him. Pick. He stopped. He smelled it right outside, noising the hole. He had to climb onto something! What he going toward it for? He had to get on something high! There was a shelf nailed over the chimney and he turn wildly and fell against a chair and shoved it up to the fireplace. He caught hold of the shelf and pulled himself onto the chair and sprang up and backwards and felt the narrow shelf board under him for an instant and then felt it sag and jerked his feet up and felt it crack somewhere from the wall. His stomach flew inside him and stopped hard and the shelf board fell across his feet and the rung of the chair hit against his head and then, after a second of stillness, he heard a low, gasping animal cry wail over two hills and fade past him; then snarls, tearing short, furious, through the pain wails. Gabriel sat stiff on the floor" (*CS* 31). Even if Old Gabriel is certainly not a scholar, he is a human being, so an intelligent creature. Somehow, then, this outcome also depicts the image of the raven standing over the bust of Pallas, as the wildcat, coming from the woods, symbol of darkness, the supernatural and the unknown has presumably killed the man.

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Chicano *Letrado*: The Native Informant as Writer in *Pocho*

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Abstract:

José Antonio Villarreal's novel *Pocho*, originally published in 1959 and arguably the first work of Chicano literature, captures in its protagonist, Richard Rubio, the dilemmas of an emerging culture's native informants. As a Chicano native informant specifically, Richard Rubio unwittingly aides in overturning his community's cultural silence by disclosing knowledge about what it is like to be silent – what it is like to be subaltern.. Such cultural knowledge is disclosed to both other characters within the story and, of course, to readers of the novel themselves. The native informant of *Pocho*, who is an aspiring writer himself, must negotiate between his culture's declining oral tradition and the more public and authoritative written tradition to which he is attracted. What is particularly noteworthy about *Pocho's* contemporary landmark status in Chicano literature is that it very much stands as a narrative – and thus, arguably, the first *künstlerroman* of contemporary Chicano literature – about the making of the Chicano writer.

Keywords: Chicano literature, subaltern studies, postcolonialism, native informant, autobiography, multiculturalism, cultural representation, silence, identity, oral history

> To be a native informant is to speak, after a fashion. The native informant's role in ethnography [. . .] is to provide information, to act as a source and an object of knowledge.
>
> Mark Sanders, "Postcolonial Reading" (1999, 3)

Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* proposes what she calls "the native informant" (1999, xi) to address the paradox of minority representation, and which appears in discourses of resistance and holds out the critical possibility of an interventionist awareness of the complicities involved in producing and propagating such discourses. In his review of Spivak's text Ian Baucom clarifies that to speak of the native informant "is not to speak of a subject but of a subject position, or, more accurately, a serial positionality within a range of discourses, a repeated moment within those discourses" (2000, 421). Since the native informant's discursive presence is repeatedly momentary we must conclude that the cultural authority of the native informant character, of Richard Rubio, in *Pocho* will, likewise, be only momentary but nonetheless repeated throughout the narrative.

Aside from the author himself, José Antonio Villarreal, who as an empirical and *de facto* native informant in his own right directs his literary portrayals from *without*, we find that the semi-fictional native informant character emerges *within* the narrative of *Pocho* as a figurative fixture of the Chicano experience, as a conduit of information that facilitates the production of "creative structures of knowledge to allow its readers to see, feel, and to understand their social reality" (Saldívar 7). The reader identifies with the native informant in *Pocho* due to the native informant's exhibited sensitivity to matters concerning the landscape of cultural politics it inhabits and navigates throughout the course of the narrative. These cultural politics, informed as they are by history and the habits of tradition, exert pressure on the native informant's conscience and subsequent social behavior in the narrative.

The native informant character in *Pocho* exhibits cultural authority and knowledge within the narrative's "distributed field of attention" (Woloch 2003, 17) by functioning as a featured source of cultural information. Given that history is the subtext of all Chicano literature, it is then imperative that in an examination of the native informant character in *Pocho* – an example of Chicano literature – there is an assumption from the outset that fiction and history are not understood as mutually exclusive. While the extent of its fictionalization may be impossible to gauge, the native informant character in *Pocho* – regardless of its fictional (in)accuracies – is still a product of history. The native informant character in *Pocho* occupies a dialectical site within the narrative in which its form as a fictional carrier of cultural knowledge necessarily references a historical reality – an index for both the writing and the reading of the text – outside of the narrative; a referential act without which the native informant character, its cultural knowledge, or the narrative itself could not even tentatively have the proper name "Chicano" affiliated with it. A focused tracking of the display, transmission, and acquisition of cultural knowledge associated with the native informant character in *Pocho's* narrative uncovers curious scenes wherein that cultural knowledge is brought into critical relief by the relative narrative silence that accompanies unelaborated experience at the margins of the native informant's narrative itinerary.

For example, in chapter 2 of *Pocho* we witness on display not only Richard's cultural and linguistic leadership as a spokesperson for migrant workers; but we also see that the cultural authority exhibited by Richard in this instance is conditioned on the silence of the migrant workers whom Richard represents as he speaks on their behalf to figures of authority. We are told that "The year was 1931, and the people of the Santa Clara Valley were hungry" (Villarreal 1989, 47). Villarreal tells us that the pangs of hunger that inflicted all residents of the Santa Clara Valley at this time silenced the racially motivated jeers usually directed at Mexican children at Richard's school.

> The hated, oft-repeated cries of his schoolmates – "Frijoley bomber!" "Tortilla strangler!" – now disappeared, as did the accompanying laughter, and he sometimes shared his lunch with them. He did this with a sense of triumph, because he felt he had defeated them by enduring their contempt and derision openly. For almost a year, he had purposely eaten where he could be easily observed, refusing

> to be driven into hiding because they laughed about the food he ate. He did not suspect the real reason for his victory. (Villarreal 1989, 47)

The burden of the Great Depression had minimized the overt racism of Richard's peers in the Santa Clara Valley during this difficult time.

The valley's needy residents, or "the people" (Villarreal 1989, 48), began organizing so as to devise plans to petition aid from city and county government. Richard keenly observed as professional organizers routinely led meetings, spoke on behalf of the people in official capacities, and literally stood in the background as the people regularly marauded food and produce trucks that traveled through Santa Clara on the 101 highway. One Saturday morning Richard accompanied his father to the pear groves at the north end of the valley where Juan had worked every season since he brought his family to the valley in the 1920s. When Richard and Juan arrived they encountered two hundred men waiting for individual ranchers to draft the most able-bodied and seasoned workers. Richard was a close acquaintance of the eighteen-year-old daughter of the orchard owner, Mr. Jamison. On occasion, and as Juan worked in the groves, the owner's daughter took Richard to her library "where he lost himself in the books her father had bought for the son he never had" (Villarreal 1989, 52). On this particular Saturday, however, not even the owner's "old help," the most loyal and trusted of the available workforce, went to work in the groves as expected. Instead, they collectively demanded a raise in pay from fifteen to twenty-five cents. Upon hearing the urgent exchange between her father and the workers, the owner's daughter excused herself from Richard's company and came to the defense of her father. Speaking in front of the workers she reasoned with them that her father had fought with the Growers Association to get the pay to fifteen cents in the first place; and that most other orchard owners in the valley chose to keep their pay at twelve cents. Still, an anonymous voice from the rear of the crowd of workers continued to demand a pay raise beyond fifteen cents.

> "Just who are you?" she asked the man who had spoken. "Step out so I can see you!" When the man did not come forward, she said, "All right! So this is a strike! *We* were warned that this might happen this year, but Dad wouldn't believe his friends would let him down. He's always been so good to you, and even now is doing the best he can. Do you think you're the only ones having a hard time?" She paused, then tried to reason with *them*; she appealed to their sense of fairness. "If that crop isn't picked, we'll be running the ranch for Giannini next year. If we pay you what you ask, we lose not only money but the ranch as well – but you don't care anything about that, do you? You forgot the things he's done for you." She was angry once more at their silence. (Villarreal 1989, 53-54, my emphasis)

The *we* and *them* in this passage are particularly telling in that they imply a clear class division between the owners and the workers from the perspective of the owner's daughter. Richard, however, found himself caught between the respective constituents represented by *we* and *them*. On

the one hand, he sympathized with what the owner's daughter was saying. He did not really understand what was happening, but was in immediate sympathy with her.

On the other hand, Richard belonged to *them*. That is, the financial interests of Richard and his family were at stake in the workers' demands for higher pay. Still, and unable to get the workers to see her side of the matter, the owner's daughter demanded that the workers leave the property. Not only did she call the sheriff, but she also threatened to shoot anyone who decided not to heed her demand to leave her father's property. Curiously, she did not include Richard among those who needed to vacate the property. He remained by her side as she awaited the sheriff's arrival. The workers did leave, but they stubbornly remained stationed along the dirt road located just beyond the perimeter of the owner's property. At one point during this wait she sent Richard to tell the workers they were welcome to water if they were thirsty. Richard had now become a messenger who could safely cross hostile class, ethnic, and linguistic lines.

Shortly after the sheriff's arrival the workers proceeded to maraud the contents of a fruit truck leaving the owner's property. Collectively, the workers believed that the contents of the truck were politically tainted as it represented the labor of strikebreakers who chose not to resist Jamison's fifteen cents wage. Still on the scene, the sheriff and his deputies attempted to control the situation by attacking the workers with nightsticks. During the melee Victor Morales, a recent acquaintance of Richard's, in self-defense struck a deputy with a rock and killed him. Richard was the only one to have actually seen Victor strike the deputy. The deputies proceeded to question everyone on the scene, including Victor and Richard. Victor denied any involvement in the killing of the deputy. The last person to be questioned by the police turned-out to be Richard Rubio.

> Richard was brought forward. "Look sonny," said the sheriff, "did you see who hit that man? Come on, speak up!" The boy was frightened, and had difficulty phrasing his answer in English. He could not speak. "You must seen it," continued the sheriff, "or else you wouldn't be so scared!" (Villarreal 1989, 59)

At this juncture of the interrogation Richard found himself in a bind due to the silence he exhibited. Richard did not want to tell the sheriff what he actually knew about his friend while at the same time needing to make the sheriff believe that his silence was not an affect of fear. For the silence implied to the sheriff that Richard was fearful of disclosing that he in fact did witness Victor kill the deputy. Instead, Richard reasoned with the sheriff in accented English that his apprehension to speak resulted from an apprehension to speak the appropriate language.

> "I don't talk English too good," answered Richard. "I almost answered you in Spanish." (Villarreal 1989, 59)

In effect, and prior to speaking to the sheriff, Richard rationalizes an alibi for his silence. He realizes that the police believe the predominantly Mexican workers at the Jamison orchard to be

illiterate and unable to speak English. So, Richard's apprehension to speak because of a presumed inability to speak English all that well made sense to the police. Of course, Richard spoke English just fine; in fact, he spoke it much better than all of the workers at the Jamison orchard. But by Richard's reasoning – that silence stemmed from linguistic challenges – such an apprehension on the part of Richard was, by logical extension, an apprehension inflicting all of the Mexican workers at the Jamison orchard. In the eyes of the police, the workers remained silent not because they were intentionally withholding something from the police, but rather because they lacked the proper linguistic aptitude to speak the language of the police. Richard used the police's logic of Mexican inaptitude to re-caste the collective silence of the workers as linguistic incompetence. To be sure, Richard was asked by the police to elaborate upon what he saw Victor do to the deputy. Yet, it was precisely the meaning of the unelaborated experience signaled by his silence (along with that of the workers) that hung in the balance during his interrogation by the police. While the police initially presumed that Richard's silence meant he resisted (along with the others) elaborating upon what he in fact did witness, Richard resignified for the police what his silence actually meant.

It is only fitting, then, that in a critical consideration of the paradoxical situation of the native informant – of the oscillation between its adjoining presences and absences in Chicano literature – that we look to a text that since the 1970s has incited so much discussion about the origin of Chicano literature. Germane to this critical discourse on *Pocho* has been a preoccupation with acknowledging (usually as an item of introduction or disclaimer) the tenuous origin of Chicano literature itself.

> Since the early 1970s, it became a matter of literary routine to consider *Pocho* the first Chicano/a novel. While textual rediscovery of earlier texts and the reinterpretation of other texts written and/or published earlier then *Pocho* have shaken the tenability of that assertion, many still claim that *Pocho* is the first contemporary Chicano/a novel. This in itself is interesting, since the way *Pocho* has been read [usually as the inaugural text of Chicano literature] almost contradicts the poetics of reading that the novel contains [. . .]" (Martín-Rodríguez 2003, 43)

While *Pocho* is certainly a landmark text due to the historical timing of its publication just prior to the onset of the Chicano Movement in the 1960s, its contemporary stature as, more precisely, the first Chicano novel is due in large part to a certain post-World War II transition from the oral tradition of the *corrido* to the written form of the novel as a vehicle of cultural resistance for the Mexican American community. *Pocho* emerged at a time of great change within the Mexican American community, a postwar era when accelerated Americanization by the community meant, among many other things, greater access to major English language publication venues (Saldívar 1990, 48). Villarreal's *Pocho* by most accounts stands alone as pioneering the arrival of the post-*corrido,* pre-*movimiento*, and thus contemporary, Chicano literary voice upon the scene (albeit along the fringes) of American literature.

It is, therefore, more than coincidental that given the aforementioned transition underway within the Mexican American community at the time of *Pocho's* publication – the transition from oral narratives to written ones – that the first notable example of contemporary Chicano literature preoccupies itself in many respects with this nascent form of written discourse. Again, we have this represented for us by Richard Rubio, the novel's principle native informant character, for whom writing emerges throughout the novel as something different, something new, but altogether something that has a very personal allegorical quality to it in that writing becomes symbolic of the very openness of his future. Writing will permit him to distinguish himself out of, and perhaps in spite of, the anonymity of the oral tradition of his Mexican parents. It will allow him to productively play with language in a way heretofore unexplored in the culturally-bound oral tradition of his parents; to participate in the uninhibited textualization of his own life experiences (in a way akin to what is denoted by the poststructuralist notion of *écriture*). So, for Richard, writing promises a future filled with a perpetual play of signs and meaning that, in his estimation (and as confirmation of his solipsistic disposition illustrated above) he alone can have a stake in directing. For Richard, writing is freedom. So it is precisely through Richard's character that *Pocho's* narrative exhibits a consciousness of the very discursive form that brings it into its written existence in 1959. In other words, *Pocho* as a novel cannot exist, cannot have been written, if not for not only the discursive transition underway at the time of its writing, but also if not for the courage of an individual Mexican American writer like Villarreal – partially represented by Richard Rubio in the novel – to appropriate a discursive means of expression that was pre-emergent at the time.

The historical tension embodied by Richard Rubio's character between oral and written discourse is very much represented in the novel as a cultural predicament. That is, for Richard the oral tradition becomes representative of the unfamiliar customs of Mexico that he could only imagine in his mind; whereas the oral tradition proved itself a much more tangible vehicle and visceral experience of cultural reconnection for Juan Rubio who immigrated from Mexico to the U.S. – and since longed to return – following the Mexican Revolution. As a young boy, for example, Richard accompanied Juan on his short trips around the Santa Clara Valley visiting migrant workers from Mexico upon their summer arrival to the area to work. While such reunions proved particularly significant for Juan as a way to vicariously reconnect with Mexico via these seasonal acquaintances, for Richard the stories that he heard told were entirely fictional in that, unlike Juan, he possessed no stable referent for what they disclosed.

> With his father, Richard sat around campfires or in strange kitchens, with wood stoves burning strongly and the ever-present odor of a pot of pink beans boiling, freshly cooked tortillas filling the close, warm room, and listened to the tales of that strange place [Mexico] which seemed to him a land so distant, and the stories also seemed of long, long ago. It was then, listening and weaving a parallel fantasy in his mind, that he felt an enjoyment so great that he knew he could not possibly savor it all. He listened to the men [Mexican migrant workers] speak until he grew drowsy, and he climbed onto

> his father's lap, and Juan Rubio held him easily against his body, close to his chest, and the boy associated the smell of the man with his happiness. (Villareal 1989, 43)

Here, within this isolated illustration of the importance of oral discourse for recent Mexican immigrants of the novel, we also see that the unnamed men that presumably tell the stories that Richard listens to serve, in their own right, as Mexican native informants of the oral tradition for both Richard and Juan.

But while they do indeed listen to the same men tell their stories, the significance of the stories – the value of their narrative transaction – is registered in entirely different ways by Juan and Richard, respectively. Whereas for Juan the stories elicit a "constative" effect in that for him the stories report on an empirical state of affairs in Mexico, for Richard the stories elicit a "performative" one in that they produce something in his imagination that only begins to exist at the moment that the utterances are issued (Iser 1986, 362). But it is precisely on account of their "preformative" effect that the oral stories that Richard hears are so important to his development as a future writer. It is not so much the content of the stories that serve to introduce Richard to the realm of fiction as much as it is the stories' effect. For he must rely solely on his imagination in order for the stories to achieve a meaningful narrative in his mind. Juan Rubio, on the other hand, is able to figure and recall an empirical landscape in his mind as the narratives told by the Mexican migrants unfold for him. For Juan, there is a real history, a real state of affairs, that the stories of the Mexican migrant native informants are reporting on. But for Richard, who was never a living subject of that history out of which the stories emerged, there is only the present utterance of the stories. There is no firm historical referent for Richard to refer to in the way that there is for Juan.

Despite the fact that Richard functions as the novel's protagonist, the oral stories he hears are implicit confirmation of his absence from the tumultuous history of the Mexican Revolution (known only too well by Juan) that preoccupies the first thirty plus pages of *Pocho* from which Richard is an absent subject. The first thirty pages of *Pocho* might be considered a representation of the very "absent cause" of Richard's formation as a writer precisely because he has no referent – a condition of the absent cause of history – for the history referenced in the oral stories. Since he was absent from the history in the first place, it is impossible for it to serve as referent for the stories in the way that it does for Juan Rubio. In *The Political Unconscious* Jameson discusses the notion of the "absent cause" thusly: "What Althusser's own insistence on history as an absent cause makes clear, but what is missing from the formula as it is canonically worded, is that he does not at all draw the fashionable conclusion that because history is a text, the "referent" does not exist" (1981, 35). To be sure, the referent of history most certainly exists for Juan in the oral stories of the Mexican migrants. Jameson continues: "We would therefore propose the following revised formulation: that history is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious" (1981, 35).

Certainly, writing permits Richard to write about the experiences he is present to experience – personal or otherwise – within the historical epoch he inhabits. And certainly, the narratives told in the oral form by the Mexican migrants indicate a history, but a history from which he was absent. So, it is precisely the necessary fictionalization that must take place in his mind because of his absent presence in that past history that – and through the non-referential content of these stories – he is introduced to fiction writing.

As the embattled and embodied site of the historical confrontation of oral and written discourse, of Mexican culture and American culture, of reality and fiction, Richard Rubio as an inaugural literary figure for contemporary Chicano literature constitutes what the late Angel Rama referred to as the self-educated *letrado* (1986, 118-120); one who lacked contact with institutions of formal education, yet managed to develop a "less disciplined and systematic, but also more liberated, intellectual vision" (1986, 119). In response to his mother Consuelo's assumption (during one of their pivotal exchanges in the novel) that he would be a doctor or a lawyer if he were to attend college upon the family's hopeful return to Mexico, Richard states that he does not "intend to be a doctor or a lawyer or anything like that" (Villarreal 1989, 63). As we learn throughout the novel, Richard intends to be a writer. But the habit of reading that informed his future writing was initially undisciplined and unsystematic.

> The world of Richard Rubio was becoming too much for him. [. . .] For the most part, he lost himself in dreams or spent hours reading everything he could find, indiscriminate in his choice through his persevering desire to learn. Now, after work, he was a familiar figure in the town library, and later, when the vacation ended, he continued the practice, for by then the meager library at school provided little for him. [. . .] His teachers encouraged his reading, but unfortunately did not direct it, and he became increasingly complex in his moods. (Villarreal 1989, 102-103)

He used such an approach to learning to liberate himself from what he deemed to be the constraints of cultural tradition; a cultural tradition that was not accustomed to reading to the degree that Richard read unless it resulted in undertaking an occupation that produced more income than either a field hand or a writer.

> "But all this reading, my son," [Consuelo] asked. "All this studying – surely it is for something. If you could go to the university, it would be to learn how you could make more money than you would make in the fields or the cannery." (Villarreal 1989, 63)

He envisioned for himself a life without subscription to, or conscription by, the traditional Mexican culture of his parents. His intellectual vision consisted of simply wanting to *be* and to draw from his experiences so as to actualize his future as the informed writer he envisioned himself becoming. "I'm gonna write books when I grow up," Richard says. (Villarreal 1989, 74). And he

learns with experience and time that in order to do so he must ask and pursue questions. He learns that he must ask the kinds of questions that regularly upset or silence his mother.

> He had been asking her questions again, and she was a little angry. She always became quiet when he asked her things. (Villarreal 1989, 60)

Since an early age Richard inquired about small and large matters in an attempt to try and make the world around him more transparent.

> Every bug he saw was green, and he idly wondered why. Such things worried him, always. The sky was his biggest problem these days. In the beginning there was darkness – nothing, he was told, and accepted, before God made the world. [. . .]
> But if there was nothing in the beginning, what was there? Just a bunch of empty sky? But if it was even just empty sky, it was *something!* And the darkness! Was not the darkness *something!* (Villarreal 1989, 33, original emphasis)

But whereas early-on in the novel we see Richard, who is then still firmly within the sway of the Roman Catholic faith, expecting answers, or signs, to his questions to come to him unsolicited from the silent nothingness of being, later in the novel he learns that not only could he manipulate reality; but that in order to do so, sometimes he needed to refrain from speaking altogether in order to be heard – to not answer so as to answer the call. Richard, in effect, learned the art of dissimulation by silence.

By chapter 9 of *Pocho* Richard has become a teenager who is beginning to assert his role as the sole male figure within the Rubio household as his once unified family is on the brink of disintegration. Consuelo exhibits her impending feminist liberation by refusing the housekeeping duties that not too long before were almost exclusively hers alone. Juan has become disinterested in all family matters and has fallen into a slight depression. Thus, Richard arguably becomes the lone caretaker and disciplinarian of his siblings. But Richard becomes dissatisfied with this new role. He feels conscripted by cultural duty. Instead, Richard desires to find his true calling, which he believes lies beyond the cultural confines of his home life.

During this time Richard begins to reflect on his individual identity. Everywhere he encounters Mexican migrant families that he cannot help but think are similar to his own. But he is curious to find out if, in fact, his suspicions are accurate. He begins to detect a difference among the "Mexican" migrants observed: some were distinctly of "old-country ways" (Villarreal 1989, 149) not unlike that of his parents; but a more contemporary segment of the migrants, Richard finds, deliberately seek to distinguish themselves from this Mexican tradition. Richard becomes intrigued by the ways and means of this latter group, the *pachucos*.

> The newcomers became the object of his explorations. He was avidly hungry to learn the ways of these people. It was not easy for him to approach them at first, because his clothes labeled him as an outsider, and, too, he had trouble understanding their speech. He must not ask questions, for fear of offending them; his deductions as to their character and makeup must come from close association. He was careful not to be patronizing or in any way act superior. And, most important, they must never suspect what he was doing. The most difficult moments for him were when he was doing the talking, for he was conscious that his Spanish was better than theirs. He learned enough of their vernacular to get along; he did not learn more, because he was always in a hurry about knowledge. (Villarreal 1989, 151)

From a safe distance at first Richard undertakes a certain silent ethnographic assessment of the cultural disposition of the *pachucos*. His avid hunger to learn their ways leads him to take stock of their dress, speech, and overall observances of respect. But in doing so he perhaps becomes more conscious of his own cultural make-up. He calculates his difference from the *pachucos* so as to anticipate the most effective ways to eventually fit-in with them; and thus to identify with them. He is in a hurry to obtain knowledge about how the *pachucos* manage to distinguish themselves from both Mexican and Americanized ways of life and create a cultural niche all their own.

After a while however, and a bit later in chapter 9, the uniqueness of the *pachucos'* resistance to both Mexican and American culture begins to lose its appeal for Richard. He begins to sense that in his haste to learn the ways of the *pachucos* he has, to a certain uncomfortable extent for him, begun to compromise his most valued quality: his individuality. "Now the time came to withdraw a little," we are told (Villarreal 1989, 152). At once, Richard is compelled to preserve his individuality while not completely sacrificing the comradeship of the *pachucos* that he now enjoyed. Richard began to sense what amounts to the metonymic aspect of all naming in what he observed as the "incongruous nicknames" (Villarreal 1989, 154) of the *pachucos*.

> In this group, there was Tuerto, who was not blind; Cacarizo, who was not pockmarked; Zurdo, who was not left-handed; and a drab little fellow who was called Slick. (Villarreal 1989, 154)

In other words, Richard sensed a certain betrayal of individuality by precisely the function of classification that naming entails.

> I can be a part of everything, he thought, because I am the only one capable of controlling my destiny. . . . No – no, never – will I allow myself to become a part of a group – to become classified, to lose my individuality. (Villarreal 1989, 152)

Richard implies that classification limits one's individuality. Thus, if naming is a means of classification and Richard wishes not to be classified, then in the end Richard desires to be nameless; since naming for him always proves incomplete. Richard distrusts metaphysics, and prefers the silent

benefits of remaining nameless. It is through this silence that Richard believes he can preserve his own individuality.

But like the good future writer that he wanted to become, Richard believes that he should experience life. We are told in chapter 6 "Richard recalled reading somewhere that a writer should try to live a full life in order to write about it" (Villarreal 1989, 114). So, before he parted ways with the *pachucos* Richard wanted to absorb as much experience as possible. Following an event one evening at a local dancehall, Richard rode along with the *pachucos* to a nearby orchard where the pachucos planned to fight with a rival gang from Ontario, California. The rival gang had recently beat-up the brother of Rooster, the *pachucos'* leader. To be sure, Richard was petrified by the idea of his participation in a gang fight. Despite his fear of the impending fight, "He remained *silent*, afraid that they might discover the growing terror inside him" (Villarreal 1989, 154, my emphasis). Richard's fear of the fight itself was trumped only by his fear of letting on to the *pachucos* that he was, in fact, fearful of the impending fight. But Richard also wanted to not compromise the opportunity to actually experience a gang fight.

> In spite of his fear, his mind was alert. He strained every sense, in order not to miss any part of this experience. He wanted to retain everything that was about to happen. (Villarreal 1989, 155)

The *pachucos*, along with Richard, were detained by authorities shortly after the fight in the orchards. Two night watchmen had no idea that the *pachucos* and Richard had just recently been involved in a gang fight. Still, the watchmen's suspicions of inevitable illegal activity compelled them to detain the *pachucos* and Richard.

> The men really had nothing to hold them on, because they had not done anything yet, but Richard new they did not need a reason. (Villarreal 1989, 157)

In effect, in knowing that the watchmen did not need a reason to detain the *pachucos* Richard was conscious of their subaltern standing in society. As Gyan Prakash maintains, the subaltern signifies "a pure externality beyond the realm of reason" (2001, 287). Richard later proves that he is keen to the subalternity of the *pachucos* when he manipulates the police's expectation for subaltern silence.

Upon the *pachucos'* arrival to the police station, Richard wishes to know where he can file a complaint on the grounds of police brutality. His inquiry is interpreted by a police officer as "'resisting arrest'" (Villarreal 1989, 158). In other words, Richard's inquiry reveals that the police's assumption that a subaltern *pachuco* like Richard is incapable of voicing a reasonable request. As a presumed subaltern (by the police) Richard is always already an unreasonable social element who cannot voice reasonable requests – like wanting to file a complaint about police brutality – because all acts by such a subaltern subject are always already presumed to be tainted by unreasonable

motives. Observing all of this Richard concluded that he must exploit the very thing that the police expect of subaltern subjects like Richard and the *pachucos*: silence.

The *pachucos* remained silent as the police detectives proceeded with the interrogation. The police, in fact, assumed that the *pachucos* had something to do with the recent abduction and rape of two local while girls. The *pachucos* had no knowledge of the abductions and rapes, but they did understand that the police were attempting to pin the crimes on them by forcibly compelling them to say anything about the crimes. Whereas the detectives did not expect the *pachucos* to speak on their own without being solicited to do so, now that questions were being asked of them that were race-related Richard sensed that something needed urgently to be said on behalf of the *pachucos* to preclude further police brutality. In other words, Richard sensed that their collective silence had now become incriminating.

> He knew then that the detectives would not waste time with the others, because while they had been silent, he had at least answered some of the questions. But he did not really know what to expect.
> "Sit down, kid." The detective's approach was different this time. "Tell me all about it." Richard almost laughed, because now he was being conned; and he suddenly realized that this was the last of it and the detective would not hold them, because he had nothing to keep them on.
> "There isn't anything to tell," he said, and the office made a little joke about how Richard was the only one who would speak up, and how that showed he was not afraid, like the others – though he knew all along it was just the opposite. And Richard knew that he knew this, but now he was over his fear and talked to him calmly [. . .].
> "[. . .] You tell me what you were doing, and I'll see that you get a break."
> "Nothing, I told you."
> "All right, then, don't tell me about tonight. But how about on other nights?
> What have you guys been up to? A little stealing, maybe? Where do you get your marihuana? You been maybe jumping a nice little gringa out in Willow Glen? [. . .]"
> "So you're going to be a college boy?"
> "I guess so." [. . .]
> "Drop in and see me sometime. We can use someone like you when you get older. There are a lot of your people around now, and someone like you would be good to have on the side of law and order." (Villarreal 1989, 159-162)

Richard was, in effect, singled-out from the rest of the *pachucos* because of his recognized ability to ask questions and reason with the police. His demonstrated articulateness was recognized by the detective as an opportunity to exploit the silence of the *pachucos* by having Richard speak on their behalf, to have Richard conspire with the police against the *pachucos*, and to essentially have Richard become a native informant of the police at the silence expense of the *pachucos*.

Let us close by examining perhaps *Pocho's* clearest illustration of Richard Rubio's reluctant arrival as a Chicano native informant. In the following we see what amounts to Richard wanting to vacate the identity that at one time he sought and assumed.

> Then, one day, [Richard] thought, What the hell am I doing? And he began once again to spend time in the library, and enrolled in a course in Creative Writing at night school.
> He did not learn a thing about writing, but was thrown into contact with people with whom he could talk. His new friends were older and thought him a very interesting subject, and he was happy listening to them, because they were educated and liberals and introduced him to new adventures in reading. But then he began to understand them and did not agree with some of their ideas, because they constituted a threat to his individuality, and his individuality was already in jeopardy. And it bothered him that they should always try to find things in his life that could make him a martyr of some sort, and it pained him when they insisted he dedicate his life to the Mexican cause, because it was the same old story, and he was quite sure he did not really believe there was a Mexican cause – at least not in the world with which he was familiar. They thought him very interesting some more, and showed him off, but they made the mistake of thinking him a child, and in the end it turned out badly, because one of them, a Marxist, became very middle-class when he found Richard in bed with his extremely pretty wife. They dropped him [. . .]. (Villarreal 1989, 175-176)

Richard chooses to remain silent on that which his contemporaries inaccurately assume he must want to talk about as much as they expect him to talk about it. That is, he does not want to talk about the so-called "Mexican cause" that his contemporaries want him to talk about. Inevitably, and not solely because he failed to espouse the "Mexican cause," his fellow writers silence him – and presumably move-on to recruit someone who will conform to their demands for an authentic Mexican voice – for not meeting their expectations. Richard senses a fundamental contradiction between what he wants to write and the writing expected of him by his contemporaries. The contradiction is not as simple as merely his loss of individuality by assuming the "Mexican cause." Rather, the crux of the contradiction lies in the fact that what he would be expected to write by assuming the "Mexican cause" would mean that he would be writing something that would have already been anticipated, would have already been expected; what, in essence, would have already been read previously elsewhere and only merely confirmed – rather than created anew – in Richard's writing. His writing would be judged not on its nuance or creativity, but rather on the repetition of a message that would ultimately be expected to confirm (and in a way conform to) the "Mexican cause" envisioned by his non-Mexican contemporaries. The very play, the very textuality, of his writing would be short-circuited by the conformity he was expected to exhibit. Richard anticipates that the kind of writing he would be expected to perform would manage to silence him more that it would facilitate his creative expression. Ultimately, and ironically, by dropping him his contemporaries do him more favor than harm. By doing so they have, in effect, preserved his individuality for him – something he has been trying to do all by himself throughout the novel. The harmful silencing that they intend by their dismissal – by dropping him – serves only to free Richard from the constraints of expectation that the "Mexican cause" and the "Mexican" label would impose on his writing.

Given these pivotal illustrations in *Pocho* of the formation of the native informant as writer, one could rightly still wonder what exactly it is that makes *Pocho* the story of the maturation of a "Chicano" *letrado*, a "Chicano" native informant? How is it that we can claim *Pocho* as the story of the maturation of a "Chicano" native informant if nowhere in the novel there is an explicit statement confirming that Richard is "Chicano?" What might the novel's silence on this very significant matter mean? To be sure, Richard is constantly exhibiting in the novel an awareness of his bi-cultural existence. Even though he does not appropriate a name for it, he senses the condition. "[Richard] was" Villarreal narrates, "a product of two cultures" (1989, 129). Richard, then, does know that he is, at once, a Mexican and an American. But such an interstitial existence between categories, between "Mexican" and "American," would more than likely have struck Richard during the historical time of his development as a native informant as an existence free of labels altogether: neither Mexican nor American. And being free of labels, of categories, is precisely what constituted "individuality" for Richard. While "Chicano" is, in fact, rarely mentioned explicitly in the novel, when it is mentioned it is meant to describe a condition of poverty rather than refer to a cultural identity. At this time in history there is no name, no category, to identify Richard's bi-cultural existence. It is precisely because "Chicano" remains an as-yet articulated, pre-emergent identity of the historical time period inhabited by Richard's character that he constitutes, in effect, an as-yet named "Chicano." Perhaps if there had been a label to assign to his bi-cultural existence, Richard would have resisted it just as well. We can only imagine that Richard eventually became recognized as distinctly "Chicano" regardless of whether or not he identified with the term and what it came to signify during and after the Chicano Movement. Thus, the irony of the "Mexican cause" illustration discussed above is that despite Richard's reluctance to become a spokesperson, a "martyr of some sort," the descriptive insights the reader is given of Richard's sensibilities on the matter defy his reluctance and by default make him into the novel's principle "Chicano" native informant character. His appearance or representation to us as such – as a character of the novel who functions as a conduit of cultural knowledge in spite of himself – necessarily cancels his represented reluctance to assume such responsibility. Despite his reluctance, Richard Rubio's story in *Pocho* is destined to become that of the formation of the "Chicano" native informant precisely because it is a story of the pre-Chicano Chicano experience.

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Cinephile narrators. Reshaping text/image relation in French contemporary fiction (Christine Montalbetti, Tanguy Viel)

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Abstract:

Considering Christine Montalbetti's cinematic gaze and Tanguy Viel's exhaustion of the filmic memory, the paper demonstrates how much these contemporary writers' legacy turns out to be that of cinema. Movies complete or even replace their imaginary library. Such an ambition to think cinema in terms of writing questions the very basis of saying and of seeing in the context of media permeability. Inspired by film visual potential, Montalbetti and Viel's novels do not end with the quest for the verbal equivalences of the moving images. The novelistic treatment of cinephilia involves more complex operations that produce effect on the diegetic device in its entirety. Therefore, it would be imprecise to speak of the interaction between the novel and the film in terms of analogy or influence, since the narration is inherent to the filmic image anyway. It is rather an incorporation by the writing of its own narrative patterns, such as they have been updated by cinema.

Keywords: cinephilia, contemporary French novel, intermediality, moving images, narration, visual perception.

Introduction

The analogy between the text and the image that is at the heart of the famous *ut pictura poesis* formula is no longer of the same nature in the dialogue between the contemporary French novel and the cinema. Although the so-called narrative component of the film originates from the written narrative, it gives rise to a distinct mode of expression in which the visual images unfold in their intrinsic movement in a continuous or discontinuous sequence. In the same way, the novelistic writing, by challenging visual potential of the moving images, involves a range of profound changes in its own diegetic device.

This paper will focus on two contemporary writers, Christine Montalbetti and Tanguy Viel, who are both particularly interested in cinema as visual imaginary source and who experiment with

its narrative modalities. Furthermore, they call themselves moviegoers and insist on such an approach both in writing and by means of writing. Christine Montalbetti asserts that her imagination is truly visual and her writing is stimulated involuntarily by cinematographic images. Montalbetti prefers to talk about her own style in terms of comparison with certain cinematographic components, rather than to question the possibility of translating them into writing. (Montalbetti 2012) Tanguy Viel, in turn, considers cinema as a rich procurement source of mental images capable of replacing his spectator-reader memory, while writing only refers to these already existing images. (Cassagnau 2007, 161-162) According to Viel, cinema offers a serious alternative to the scarcity of stories in literature, as a reservoir of forms to be potentially explored by writers.

I suggest examining the phenomenon of cinephile writing more closely as exemplified in a few emblematic novels of these two authors: *Campaign experience* (Montalbetti 2005a) portrays an attentive observer character; *Western* (Montalbetti 2005b) is the title of another novel that clearly refers to a Hollywood genre; the character of *The Black Note* (Viel 1998) lives in a movie theatre and keeps an archive there; lastly, the narrator of *Cinema* (Viel 1999) is speaking only of a movie, a single movie, *Sleuth* (Mankiewicz 1972) and the experience he comes through it. These novels raise immediately a number of important issues such as the hybrid generic nature, the status of the novel in relation to the source film (when there is one) and the methods of transposing visual experiences into writing. However, formulating my questions in these terms would imply to remain in the text/image bipolarity, between the film component and the verbal component, with a prejudice that their relation is necessarily that of derivation or of dependence. Yet, it is the nature of this connection that I would like to give consideration to here, hence the title of my paper: in my view, the text/image interaction in these novels is neither the result of direct influence of one medium on the other, nor the illustration of their possible analogy. This interplay acts rather as an impulse, which opens a way for exploring cinema storytelling techniques by means of writing.

Cinephilia, between otherness and everyday

The literary treatment of cinephilia and its textual effects in the novels of Christine Montalbetti and Tanguy Viel permits us to intend both a fetishistic relationship towards cinema and a concrete manifestation of otherness. For one part, both authors have an imaginativeness that could be described as truly visual, which accords with the contemporary excess of visual productions, notably filmic ones, to the extent that films supersede books and replace the writer's library. In this context, all kinds of visual experiences appear as an inescapable writing material. Moreover, one must recognize that their texts elicit such an interpretation because of a strong presence of filmic references. For the other part, Montalbetti and Viel display, as spectators and cinema thinkers, an attitude of differentiation with the filmic image. They refuse to consider cinema as a rival the way it was for writers of previous generations, authors of *cinéromans* (cinema-novels), scripts and other intermedia forms derived from film. Indeed, in the decades that followed the invention of cinema writing was first conceived as its opponent, for it could not neglect the contribution of the new technique in the way of telling stories. Later, the cinema detour made by writers appeared no longer

as a rivalry game but as a step aside in a quest for formal renewal. In his research on American fiction shaped by cinema, Serge Chauvin underlines that writers have used their filmic background to develop a new experience of literature. Thus, a film became as much an object of a story as its narrative model. (Chauvin 1997, 7-8)

For Montalbetti and Viel, films have supplanted books and cinema has become as a privileged interlocutor. As already stated, the novels examined here are characterized by the explicit presence of references to the cinema: names, titles, places, reminiscences from existing or imaginary movies, movie theatres, all of which draw up novelistic sets. For example, *Western*'s characters have their names coming from the American film industry (Ted Lange, Richard Evans), or that could have derived from (Jeff W. Dunson, Will Nordman). This choice is probably part of the same idea as the recurrent use of the English language: to trigger reminiscences of the western genre. The novels also feature moviegoer figures: the character of *The Black Note* literally lives in a movie theatre, "he officiated like a Templar in there" / "il officiait comme un templier là-dedans." (Viel 1998, 34)[1] Through this character, we can recognize a homonymic passage between cinema as a theatre and cinema as a mental pattern: living elsewhere than in these premises would mean for him living "away from images" / "à l'écart des images." (Viel 1998, 34) The connection with the everyday life established by the cinephilia thus includes, on the one hand, a part of an unexplained passion and on the other hand, a part of the ordinary daily routine.

As defined by Jacques Rancière's, cinephilia

> is a relation with the cinema that is a matter of passion before being a matter of theory. [...] It maintained that the greatness of cinema did not reside in the metaphysical elevation of its subjects or in the visibility of its plastic effects, but in an imperceptible difference in the way traditional stories and emotions were imaged / c'est un rapport avec le cinéma qui est affaire de passion avant d'être affaire de théorie. [...] Elle affirmait que la grandeur du cinéma ne résidait pas dans l'élévation métaphysique de ses sujets ou la visibilité de ses effets plastiques, mais dans une imperceptible différence dans la manière de mettre en images des histoires et des émotions traditionnelles. (Rancière 2011, 8)

For Rancière, cinema would be a system of irreducible differences between emotion, art and vision of the world. All film theories have been vainly looking for their adequacy. Thus, the narrator of Tanguy Viel's *Cinema* is feverishly combing through newspapers to find out if the Mankiewicz's *Sleuth* would be shown in the movie theatres, looking to this opportunity would never arise. The *Cinema* narrator flees the "black" of the room, that *black* that Roland Barthes associated with the fascination (Barthes 1975), against a daily fascination by the image projected with his own video recorder and inscribed in the familiar frame of his house. Beyond the fascination, his relation to *Sleuth* is a form of submissiveness: the narrator stubbornly reviews the film and feels compelled to respect "the grandeur of things when they appear on the screen, the greatness especially in their own way" / "la grandeur des choses quand elles viennent sur l'écran, grandes surtout dans leur ordre à elles." (Viel 1999, 26) By dint of seeing the film several times, the narrator has appropriated it

completely to the point of being unable to abstract it from his life as a separate entity. This novel is a kind of manifesto to all Viel's works, since they are written as if in front of the movie screen.

The cinephilia thus appears as a fully-fledged experience, which becomes both a punctual fictional motif and a widespread novelistic material. From this point of view, the image thought comes forward less through narrative techniques than by describing the movie experiences of the characters. It is a way to challenge the dominant logocentric approach of the image; insofar the later cannot be reduced to linguistic schemas.

Visual perception as storytelling pattern

When cinematographic background comes into play, showing with words does not longer mean to prove their rhetorical or stylistic value but to draw attention to the intermedial feature of writing device. Cinephilia can also arise from valorisation of all kind of visual experiences. A prominent example of such cinematic writing is Robert Coover's *After Lazarus.* This excerpt, explicitly influenced by camera device, transfers its optics in the novel using the film metalanguage as a counterpoint:

> The street narrow, the surface worsens, and so does the jolting movement of the camera, until it is almost impossible to keep anything in focus. Stop. Inconsequential view of part of a rooftop. Brief jolting motion. Stop. Inconsequential view of the street, the corner of the house. Jolting motion. Stop. View of the house, like the others, and of the narrow space between it and the next house. In this space, between the houses, but full light (still no shadows), a cord is strung and hanging from it is a small scrap of tattered white cloth. Pan to the house and slow zoom in: clay wall, shuttered windows, closed door. The slow zoom continues, moving in on the door and toward its handle. (Coover 1987, 38)

In Montalbetti and Viel's texts, the cinematographic device is displayed rather as a supposed source of perception changes. Camera device intervenes, for instance, to dissociate characters' attitudes:

> He [George] was lacking a camera, you see, to make tracking shots on candles in the wind, and zooms in on our faces, on the iron box, to take it from above when it dipped, when the waves almost killed us. Even your fall on the bridge, in his eyes I saw he wanted to film you, I saw that he regretted, as never before, being completely empty-handed without a camera. / Il lui [à Georges] manquait une caméra, vois-tu, pour faire des travellings sur les bougies au vent, et faire des zooms sur nos visages, sur la boîte en fer, la prendre du dessus quand elle plongeait, quand les vagues ont failli nous tuer. Même ta chute sur le pont, dans son regard j'ai vu qu'il voulait te filmer, j'ai vu qu'il a regretté comme jamais d'être les mains vides sans caméra. (Viel 1998, 96-97)

or to convey a sense of juxtaposition of still images:

> Shot: Jack King, his face completely blackened by the backlight, but this is Jack King. Reverse shot: in his last and slow jump, the sky finishes reddening and emits a beam of amber, flavescent light, which illuminates the face of our thirty-year old / Champ: Jack King, le visage entièrement noirci par le contre-jour, mais c'est bien là Jack King. Contrechamp: dans un dernier et lent sursaut, le ciel qui achève de rougeoyer laisse filtrer un faisceau de lumière ambrée, flavescente, qui vient éclairer de face le visage de notre trentenaire. (Montalbetti 2005b, 210)

When the film device is exhibited in this way, it plays a perceptive intermediary role. However, even when the camera is absent, in such a cinephile environment, it becomes impossible to conceive the act of watching without associate it with the filmic device.

The gaze in Montalbetti's fiction is constantly highlighted by accumulation of details, which assimilates it to hypotyposis device. On this point, Umberto Eco expressed some mistrust regarding the very definition of hypotyposis. Conceived as a figure in which visual experiences are represented by verbal means, hypotyposis can nevertheless take various forms. It can be expressed by a denotation, a thorough description, an enumeration, or an accumulation of events or characters. (Eco 2003, 250-254) Unlike ekphrasis, which is associated with the object of art and, above all, with the fixed object, hypotyposis is a moving description. In contrast to the simple description, hypotyposis seeks to make the reader's gaze coincide with that of the character's one or to merge it with the narrator's gaze. It thus constitutes a narrative stake in its own right.

> Let's take a look at the courtyard for a moment. Imagine something raw, geometric, struck by simple broad lines as the consequences of primary volumes involved in the case / Prenons le temps de regarder un peu la courette. Représentez-vous quelque chose de brut, de géométrique, de frappé par de grandes lignes simples, conséquences des volumes primaires engagés dans l'affaire. (Montalbetti 2005b, 45)

This highly measured and geometrical description of the court spreads over a few paragraphs, but it does not have an exclusively descriptive purpose. Rather, it shortens the distance between reader and narrator. The character, meanwhile, seeks to catch objects with his eyes by attributing a "figurative equivalent, and usually a zoomorphic one / équivalent figuratif, et le plus souvent zoomorphe" to them, he "wraps his hammock with a tender eye / enveloppe d'un œil attendri son hamac." (Montalbetti 2005b, 98-99) In *Western*, the gaze also intervenes as a way to establish a relationship between characters, particularly through the physiological approach of the eye. The gaze takes on a haptic dimension and accomplishes the mediating function between various storytelling instances, that is to say, narrators and characters, and even the reader.

In Viel's fiction, such attention to the sense of sight is performed by an exploration of film image by the spectator-reader and the search for a plasticity of an image, "As soon as there's a gun [...], the eyes of the spectator let themselves be carried inside the image, they drift half-way under threat, and they execute / Dès qu'il y a un revolver [...], les yeux du spectateur se laissent porter à l'intérieur de l'image, ils dérivent à moitié sous la menace, et ils exécutent." (Viel 1999, 53) Such

attempt to exhaust the filmic image by words is a recurring process in *Cinema* and the transfer from a visual material to the written one engenders first a narrative effect. The traditional opposition between a total reading of the filmic plan and a reading that presupposes a spatial progression is presented here as a metaphor for the flow of thought.

On the broader cultural level, this writing phenomenon can be apprehended as a confrontation between the discursive and the iconic, traditionally claimed by Western theological and philosophical thought. In her text "Talking images," Marie-José Mondzain speculates about a possible match between seeing, talking and being spoken. (Mondzain 2005) Movie image is complex in that sense that it is, by definition, perceived as a talking subject and, at the same time, it calls to be spoken on. The speech intervenes to identify what there is to see, thus it goes beyond the gaze perception; conversely, what we see is unlimited and cannot be completely described by words. The inexhaustible is therefore constantly in play on image side and on speech side. Thereby, *Cinema*'s narrator tends in vain to verbalize visual elements that seem to him obscure in the plot of the film. While words confront the iconic material otherness, it can be directly associated with cinematographic influence. Accumulating heterogeneous strata, Viel's writing is intermedial since it results from the continuous superposition of different media within the text itself and by verbal means. Word and image dialectic shifts therefore into a different perspective, that of *intersemiotic translation*[2], as an opening of literary writing to exogenous, filmic, elements.

Exploring film temporality through writing

The characters and narrators' figures examined above, sometimes observers, sometimes spectators, have a direct impact on the storytelling mechanisms. The transfer of film logic to a novelistic discourse generates crossings between different diegetic levels. Narrative metalepsis constitutes one of the most representative devices in this matter. Following Gérard Genette's, narrative metalepsis includes any form of intrusion of extradiegetic narrator or narratee into diegetic universe, or vice versa. Narrative metalepsis is therefore inextricably linked to a transgression of diegetic levels. (Genette 1972, 244) To illustrate this definition, Genette remains committed to literary case studies, even if he brings in some examples from theatre and cinema. It might be well to point out that film techniques give rise to particular forms of metalepsis such as copy-pasted quotations from one film to another; cameo appearance of some celebrity within film diegesis; meta-diegetic discourse introduced by a character etc. (Genette 2004) This suggests that cinema would have an exceptional metaleptic capacity to incorporate a recorded extract of the real, considered as a non-fictional equivalent, in the fictional framework of the film. The cinematographic device favours these combinations by virtue of its optico-chemical principle which produces a transfer of the reality of a thing to its own reproduction.

Since several parts of Montalbetti and Viel's novels offer a re-transcription of film diegesis (real or fictive), the film-novel interaction occurs as a differentiation process of diegetic levels within the novel. Worthy of mention is the distinction made by Louis Marin between transparency and opacity: transparency is a quality of representation in which signs designate what is beyond them,

whereas the opacity presumes that the representation exhibits its own modalities and its own functioning. (Marin 1994) It may be inferred that in the novel, opacity operates as a narrative reflect, including author's interventions. Thus, narrative modes transformation contributes to a shift of representation mode. In Viel's *Cinema*, for example, characters bear the names of *Sleuth*'s actors. In the following excerpt, diegetic levels are moving between the novel's narrator, the *Sleuth*'s actors who almost become characters of the novel, and finally, the *Sleuth*'s characters.

> Most of the things I know I learned from the movie, I noted them owing to the movie, and not from other movies, not from the cinema, no, just thanks to Milo and Andrew, because of the esteem I hold them in, because of respect I have for Lawrence Olivier and Michael Caine, the two actors, but, if I hold them in any respect, it is precisely thanks to this film in particular. [...] But I shouldn't talk about them like that, and I shouldn't confuse them with their characters, it's a matter of ethics, I should let them get on with their own lives behind the movie, I should, yes, but that is impossible, since myself I don't have a life anywhere near the movie, I'm a dead man without *Sleuth*, yes, *Sleuth*, the original title of the film in English, for me it's no longer a name of the movie, in fact it's a friend's name, I say *Sleuth* as I would say *Andrew* / La plupart des choses que je sais, je les ai apprises dans le film, je les ai notées grâce au film, et pas grâce à d'autres films, pas grâce au cinéma, non, uniquement grâce à Milo et Andrew, à l'estime que j'ai pour eux, à l'estime que j'ai, bien sûr, pour Lawrence Olivier et Michael Caine, les deux acteurs, mais, si j'ai de l'estime pour eux, c'est précisément grâce à ce film-ci. [...] Mais je ne devrais pas parler d'eux comme ça, et je ne dois pas les confondre avec leurs personnages, c'est une question de déontologie, laisser à chacun sa vie à côté du film, je devrais, mais c'est impossible, parce que moi-même je n'ai pas de vie à côté du film, je suis un homme mort sans *Sleuth*, oui, *Sleuth*, le titre original du film en anglais, pour moi ce n'est plus un nom de film, c'est un nom d'un ami, je dis *Sleuth*, comme je dirais *Andrew*. (Viel 1999, 95-96)

Consequently, narrative frame is split into two fictional worlds: extradiegetic elements become intrinsic to the novel, while the narrator himself is about to integrate with the diegesis of the film he is talking about. Author's intervention in terms of commentary or critical self-analysis on writing also contributes to such variations in the storytelling mode, inviting the reader to take a step back from the reading process.

Similarly, *Western* is replete with distancing methods such as an intrusion of the extradiegetic reader in the body of the novel, according to Genettian metaleptic logic. (Genette 2004, 94)

> [...] you would buy a trinket from Harry and bring it home, you would put it on your fireplace [...] and every time you would sit on your couch it would be there, within your eyeshot, reminding you of the adventures of our thirty-year-old man. [...] and when your friends, who came to visit you, would notice it [...], you would answer them, 'Oh that, it comes from *Western*', and they, carefully laying the object where they had found it, would reply, 'Oh well' (probably they wouldn't have heard of it, and you could [...] undertake to tell them about the adventures of our thirty-year-old man) / vous achèteriez un bibelot de Harry et vous le rapporteriez chez vous, vous le poseriez sur votre cheminée

> [...] et chaque fois, que vous iriez prendre place sur votre canapé, il serait là, dans votre champ de vision, vous rappelant les aventures de notre trentenaire. [...] et lorsque vos amis, venus vous rendre visite, le remarqueraient [...] vous leur répondriez Ah ça, ça vient de *Western*, et eux, reposant précautionneusement l'objet où ils l'ont trouvé, vous répondraient Ah bon (probablement ils n'en auraient pas entendu parler, et vous pourriez [...] entreprendre de leur raconter les aventures de notre trentenaire). (Montalbetti 2005b, 114)

By thus mentioning the reader as a character of the novel, soliciting him complicity and calling for immersion, the narrator seeks to capture a cut-off point between the novel diegesis and the act of reading. The frequent use of the indefinite pronoun "on" (that can be translated as "one", "you" or "we") in *Cinema* fulfils the same goal: to switch the position of narrative instances. The ambiguous value of "on" between depersonalized speech and universal discourse affects the narrative regime in that way that the narrator's point of view is reduced to the spectator's point of view, "one understands that their meeting is of the utmost importance / on comprend que leur rencontre est de la plus haute importance". (Viel 1999, 14) Even if the narrator seems attracted by film visual overload, the image here is less associated with its figurative component than with the logic of interruption within the text. This narrative technique, in some way similar to cinema, is amplified by numerous descriptions, which result in syncretic narrative models.

Moreover, frequent allusions to partial character of visual perception contributes to narrative temporality fragmentation. When filmic images are translated into words, their temporality is sometimes compressed, other times it is dilated by the narrative device of the novel. Film temporality is condensed when a text constitutes a single paragraph, as in *Cinema*. Such a narrative density raises awareness of time extension within the text of the novel. The *Cinema*'s narrator wonders systematically how to transform film sequences to verbal units? There is no perfect equivalence according to him, as well as to Tanguy Viel, since the author demonstrates this impossibility throughout the novel.

In *Western*, time flow is represented as an unavoidable constraint, like when "the second chapter opens with the description of the progression of light / le deuxième chapitre s'ouvre sur une description du progrès de la lumière." The narrator points out to the reader that this lighting process cannot be accelerated, that he must adopt a passive attitude and "wait until the scene is fully lit / attendre que la scène soit entièrement éclairée." (Montalbetti 2005b, 19-20) By refusing to "show" whatever to the reader, the narrator deviates this way from visual aspect of image. Should the reader's passivity be associated with his condition as a spectator? Despite a relative suspension of the action, the descriptions do not suppress the narration process, but give it another value. The story is based on a metafictional logic rather than an actantial principle. Just like this excerpt taken from *Campaign experience*, with a sentence personification that becomes a subject of the action:

> The test of how one sentence is grafted on another, the difficulty of such grafts that do not always work, that may cause rejections [...] It often happens to you to draw in these new forms, from these

> volumes which are assembled for the first time before you, mysterious syntactic resources, as if it were [...] a question of transcribing a ready-made sentence that was asleep in this valley, surrounded by this bark, lurking in this bush, following the line of a façade, a fortiori, contiguous to the geometric statement that must have presided over the development of such a layout / L'épreuve de la façon dont une phrase se greffe sur une autre, de la difficulté de telles greffes, qui ne prennent pas toujours, qui occasionnent des rejets [...] Souvent vous puisez en ces formes inédites, en ces volumes dont l'assemblage se présente pour la première fois à vos yeux, de mystérieuses ressources syntaxiques, comme s'il s'agissait [...] de transcrire une phrase toute prête qui dormait lovée dans ce vallon, entourait cette écorce, se tapissait dans ce buisson, suivait la ligne d'une façade, a fortiori, contiguë à l'énoncé géométrique qui avait bien dû présider à l'élaboration d'un tel tracé. (Montalbetti 2005a, 26-28)

This statement testifies to a singular treatment of time by Montalbetti: time is nothing short of a consequence of duration, while the descriptions result in a form of slowness close to inertia. As the narrative combines distant temporalities and every narrative instance develops an unstable relationship with diegesis, the novelistic writing appears as a reiterated adjustment between unifying plot and image heterogeneity. The image can thus be defined at once as visual datum, as imaginary figure beyond the text and as mental operation conducted by a reader. This leads to a strong visualization of writing, certainly, but above all, the image invests the novel with a narrative technique similar to film editing. The novel exceeds the limits of literary representation while remaining within the verbal boundaries.

Conclusion

The analysis of literary treatment of cinephilia has revealed multiple and varied transformations in the intertextual background and in the narrative structure of the novels, going from direct quotation to valorisation of all kind of visual experience. Better still, to face film and writing interaction also means to redefine the very notion of the image. This issue requires to move beyond the duality between narration and perception, between verbal and visual, in order to consider image as a heterogeneous assemblage. Moreover, it requires to abandon every preestablished hierarchy between word and image in order to reach the common narrative basis of literary and cinematographic media. Therefore, the impact of cinematographic image to literary narrative does not function as an external supplement, but as an impulse to new narrative techniques exploration. We should therefore qualify the cinephilia effects as a revelation of the representative power of writing through the processes borrowed from the cinematograph, putting the novelist in writing on the intersection between the sayable and the visual, the discursiveness and the iconicity, the presence and the representation.

Endnotes:

1. All quotations that follow are my translation from French.
2. The definition of the three types of translation, intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic, was formulated by Roman Jakobson in his essay "On linguistic aspects of translation." It is with the third

type mentioned, the intersemiotic translation or transmutation, that Jakobson introduces his most innovative thesis, without giving any more than a definition: "Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal systems." (Jakobson 1959, 233) Although the author does not speak of the opposite phenomenon, he questions the mutual translatability of languages and is primarily interested in verbal systems. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this article, it is relevant to take this model to the level of artistic forms in general.

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The Laundromat as a Marker for Class in Tim Morris's "Suds" and Lucia Perillo's "For My Washer and Dryer"

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Abstract:

This essay examines how two American writers associate the use of public washers and dryers at the Laundromat with poverty and, by extension, almost unconsciously, with the bad behavior that is often associated with people who live in communities at risk where poverty rules their lives. Tim Morris clearly looks down on the people who use the Laundromat and considers himself lucky because he and his wife "were getting out of that burg" and would therefore be rid of the problem of using the Laundromat. In her poem, Lucia Perillo sees only the negative side of using the Laundromat, from dead flies by the window to a television that does not work right, and once she witnesses a case of extreme violence against a woman, she drives home calculating how to stop using the Laundromat. She considers buying her own washer and dryer her "retreat" from having to use the public machines and witness the "hard luck" of other people. For Morris and Perillo, using Laundromat is a class thing, a temporary inconvenience; they have economic options that other users do not have.

Keywords: class, poverty, hard luck story, the Other, behavior rituals, pulls/pushes, political poetry, public/private spaces

The laundromat is a public space where people avail themselves of equipment that they do not have at home in order to wash their clothes. Although this seems inocuous, many people have come to associate using the laundromat with being a member of America's lower class because only people who cannot afford to buy a washer and dryer use the laundromat. Whether or not one uses the laundromat is therefore associated with whether or not one has the means to move into the kind of housing arrangement that would allow the use of a washer and dryer on the premises. People who cannot afford such an arrangement are stuck with using the laundromat, a place where other people who also cannot afford better arrangements meet to use the public washer and dryer. Because of this connection with economic hard luck, with being a public space where people come and go, the laundromat figures in Tim Morris's "Suds" and Lucia Perillo's "For My Washer and Dryer" as a marker for class. In Morris's essay and Perillo's poem, the laundromat is a place where people go because they have no other choice. Both writers associate the space with poverty, and in Perillo's

poem, the laundromat even becomes a place where people lack sympathy, a place where nobody knows how to do the right thing when they witness the hard luck of others.

The advantage of the laundromats, of course, is that they allow people who cannot afford to buy their own washer and dryer to wear clean clothes, what most people consider a sign of status which, as Sharon O'Dair points out, "is linked closely to material conditions of life" and "requires a certain freedom from economic necessity" (338). Because the laundromat allows people to "represent," to wear clean clothes and appear to have a high social status, one can thus assume that the laundromat is a democratic institution where people from different walks of life meet to use the machines; however, as Krystal D'Costa states in a *Scientific American* blog on the subject, "if someone puts something particularly soiled into a machine, you might not want to be the next person to use that machine" because people "are far more aware of the possibility of contamination in this environment" ("Spin Cycle" np) than they would be if they were using their own machines. Thus, even though the laundromat provides an important service, people who use it are aware that the machines in the laundromat may not be as clean as they should be.

Machines in the laundromat provide a service, but the service is tainted by the very fact that anyone can use the machines at the laundromat. As Anne Tyler writes about the room in which Bet Blevins lives with her son Arnold in utmost poverty, "there was always that feeling of too many lives layered over other lives, like the layers of brownish wallpaper her child had peeled away in the corner by his bed" ("Average Waves" 32). At a laundromat, one can expect to use the machines, but one can also expect to drag home whatever was left of the last user's dirt, as if in fact the lives of others were left as debris in the often used machines. Because so many people use the machines at the laundromat, people also assume that unpleasant things can happen. Krystal D'Costa warns in her blog that, for people who use the laundromat, "contamination and exposure aren't the only concern" because "the public nature of the laundromat means that anyone can walk in off the street and wait for the right opportunity to claim unwatched clothing" ("Spin Cycle" np), and she provides examples when she witnesses such a thing happening. This public exposure to people who can "walk in off the street" speaks to the fear of the "Other" shared by far too many people in America. In Tim Morris's essay, his New Jersey neighbors represent the "Other" while, in Lucia Perillo's poem, the "Other" is a lower class woman who suffers from domestic violence.

Tim Morris, who defines himself as "forty-two years old, at the top of my profession, a full profesor and chair of the English department at a Ph. D.-granting university" bemoans the fact that, on that particular day, he was "doing my wash in a laundromat" called the Quick Wash in Arlington, Texas. He goes on to ponder the meaning of social status in the United States when he says that "people argue about what defines social class in the United States: money, family, education, occupation," but he quickly adds that the real marker of status "lies between people who wash their clothes in a laundromat and people who don't have to." He considers his place in society and explains: "I thought it was my Ivy League doctorate; I thought it was my vowels; but what really made me upper-middle-class was my Lady Kenmore washing machine. When that collapsed, so did

my social status" (55). Social class is thus provided by the ability to buy a washer and dryer, but Sharon O'Dair complicates Morris's choice of buying a new Lady Kenmore when she argues that, "compared to the poorly educated, the highly educated are more concerned with status and status consumption" (350) than people who do not have university degrees.

Morris is now back using a laundromat because the Lady Kenmore at home "suffered a long illness" (55) and died. As a younger man working on his doctorate and living in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Morris goes to what he considers a "rite of passage" (57) as he and his wife load "a wire grocery cart with our laundry bags and ease it down the steps of our four-family building, *thunk thunk thunk thunk thunk*, and out over the pitted Jersey sidewalks to the laundromat next to the Foodtown." Because he and his wife are college students, they must suffer the "rite of passage" of the working poor and use the laundromat where other people in similar circumstances congregate. Morris notes that "the Livingston laundromat was populated by people in some ways like us. None too fashionable, they would put on their last, least wearable clothes for wash day. Their cars were like ours. We had a two-door Civic with a cracked crankshaft; they had inert Novas, ancient Buick Electras with mistmatched fenders, and Yugos whose worn-out floorboards had fissures so big you could see the pavement below" (57); thus it is clear that, when he and his wife were students, they lacked the means to own their own washer and dryer, so they joined their neighbors at the laundromat to wash their clothes, but there is a difference between Morris and his wife and the people who frequented the laundromat in New Jersey. Morris quickly points out that "unlike us, though, the New Brunswick launderers were staying where they were. At fifty they were still chunking quarters into machines; at twentysomething we were in transit between homes with laundry equipment. They chain-smoked; we had quit. They read Fern Michaels's *Texas Heat*; we read Levi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques*. They put no *r* at the end of dryer; we put no dainties in the dryer. We were getting out of that burg, sooner or later" (57). The college students plan to move out, to finish their degrees and pursue their careers elsewhere. For them, using the laundromat was a temporary problem created by the meager stipends that they earned at the time. Their neighbors, however, would be stuck using the laundromat forever.

Morris understands that "taking your clothes in your car to wash them in deluxe Maytags is not exactly like having to beat them on a stone in the middle of a creek, but it's as close as our sheltered society gets" to being downtrodden because, as far as he is concerned, "the last step below this is going dirty" (62). The explanation provided by Morris serves two purposes. It clarifies the fact that he understands that he is not suffering. He does not have to go to the river with a basket of clothes to beat them on a stone. He is privileged enough to have a car that he can use to drive himself to the laundromat where he can wash his clothes in relative comfort; however, he also understands that doing the laundry at the laundromat is not what people of his class do. He is the chair of an English department, and this means that he makes enough money to provide himself a barrier between people like him and the people whom he knew in New Brunswick.

In "For My Washer and Dryer," Lucia Perillo focuses on the ugly side of spending a few hours at the laundromat. The speaker in the poem sees the hours spent "washed in light from the laundromat's flourescent fixture, / that cemetery of a thousand flies" as time wasted performing an ordinary task. Not only is the light unnatural, fluorescent, filled with dead flies, but

> An old black-and-white would be buzzing in the corner
> for an audience of molded plastic chairs
> where last year's magazines and a few men have been spacing
> out a talk show's drone,
> the picture slipping northward band by band, until someone
> summons the courage to slam
> a fist (*bam!*) on the console, restoring the vertical hold,
> at the same time routing us
> from the stupors we wear like a cowboy's chaps, so as not
> to get stuck
> in the brambles of an errant hard-luck story
> beside the change machine (72)

In this laundromat, nothing works right. The magazines are old, the television barely works, and the people who wait for their clothes to finish the cycle of washing or drying have fallen into a "stupor," one that they apparently wear in order to avoid getting involved in the lives of the other people who are, like them, waiting on their clothes. Not wanting to be drawn into the "hard-luck story / beside the change machine" means that no one in the room wants to extend someone the courtesy of giving her a few quarters. This unwillingness to offer assistance combines with the strange image that people at the laundromat "wear" their stupor "like a cowboy's chaps" to suggest that they are wearing protective clothing, a jarring image to suggest that these people do not want to feel anything.

In 1951, Adrienne Rich, before becoming radicalized, writes in "Storm Warnings" about a woman who apparently knows "better than the instrument / What winds are walking overhead, what zone / Of gray unrest is moving across the land" (3), so she protects herself from what is happening by staying home, behind closed doors. The storm raging outside was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, a movement that Rich would later join, but in 1951 the speaker in "Storm Warnings" can only think about protecting herself from the unrest outside. Rich concludes the poem by stressing that this woman has sealed herself off from the elements.

> I draw the curtains as the sky goes black
> And set a match to candles sheathed in glass
> Against the keyhole draught, the insistent whine
> Of weather through the unsealed aperture.
> This is our sole defense against the seasons;

> These are the things that we have learned to do
> Who live in troubled regions. ("Storm Warning" 3)

In an essay written years later, in 1971, Rich refers to the restrain that characterized her early work as "asbestos gloves" (40), the kind of gloves that people used then because thay "allowed [her] to handle materials I could not pick up barehanded" ("When We Dead Awaken" 40-41). In 1951, Rich was not yet ready to plunge into political activism, which is why she writes "Storm Warning." A poem from the 1950s in which the speaker hides inside her house to avoid whatever storm is brewing in America supports Robert Lowell's statement in "Memories of West Street and Lepke" that he lived in "the tranquilized *Fifties*" (*Life Studies* 90), a time when people chose to "draw the curtains" so that they would not have to see that terrible things were happening to other people in America. The choice to protect herself from any connection with the pain of others made by the speaker in a poem published in 1996, however, proves a little disturbing, almost against the grain of the contemporary practice of empathy and involvement.

Regina Kenen, a sociologist who studies the behavior of people in laundromats, believes that "laundromat behaviors appear to display general properties of a subculture" wherein "some of the behavior rituals are locale-specific while others seem to be transpersonal" (179). She argues in "Soapsuds, Space, and Sociability" that "individuals are not open to superficial social contacts" at the laundromat where "even simple 'sociability' appears to be limited to those already known" (170). According to Kenen, "interaction between strangers in the laundromat can be viewed from two perspectives, pulls—perceived reward or penalties resulting from the interaction—and pushes—conditions conducive to, or acting as barriers against, interaction" (179). Kenen believes that "one such 'pull' is the premium most middle-class laundromat users place on privacy and the attempt to prevent intrusion into their territory by developing a ritual of avoidance signs, a grammar of protective armor" (179). Wearing their stupor "like a cowboy's chaps" ("For My Washer and Dryer" 72) suggests that the people in Lucia Perillo's poem do protect themselves from interaction with others by slipping into a stupor while they wait for their clothes to be done.

The speaker in "For My Washer and Dryer," a middle-class woman doing her laundry at the laundromat, values the distance that she has cultivated from other people. She is forced to use the facility because she does not have her own equipment at home. The way she looks at the people at the laundromat, however, creates a clear picture of how separate she perceives herself to be from the other laundromat users, especially the woman whose hard luck story will put a dent in the carefully cultivated stupor that the people at the laundromat have created. She notes that

> This would be the moment she enters, into this crushed lull
> of a resurrected Geraldo:
> young woman wrestling six black garbage bags through
> the laundromat door.
> Two children stripped to their underwear trail behind her

like caged birds chirping.
For almost an hour she hauls the dirty sheets and pj's
from washer to dryer,
the fabric worn thin as the frail threads of her patience,
barking, *Get over here*. ("For My Washer and Dryer" 72)

The woman who arrives with garbage bags full of dirty laundry and two children in tow is described, not by her looks but by her reaction to her own children. When she "barks" at the kids to "*Get over here*," she elicits the comparison made by the speaker between the fabric of the children's pajamas, "worn thin," and the woman's patience, which is also apparently worn thin. The woman is therefore defined by her impatience, her anger at the children who are themselves described as "caged birds chirping."

The woman's impatience manifests itself in anger against her children when she screams at them in order to control them. She does this in public, where other people not only hear her but also witness her children's discomfort. This public display of anger not only breaks unwritten rules of proper behavior at the laundromat but it also crosses the line between the political and the private. Barbara Ozieblo explains in “The Political and the Personal in American Drama” that "the conceit of the political and the personal is intrinsic to the study of American Literature" because "the 'personal,' as related to the value of the individual, has always been of paramount importance in the American conception of self" (13). Ozieblo also points out that "radical feminists of the twentieth century [. . .] rediscovered the value of the personal in identifying oppression and adopted the personal as a measure in the contemplation of new organizational structures" (14). These theorists understood that “myths and taboos affect the lives of both men and women when the private is acknowledged as a significant component of the public sphere” (Ozieblo 15). When the woman at the laundromat "barks" at her children in anger, the reader witnesses the connection between the political and the personal, her public anger born of frustration created, ostensibly, by the children's behavior but more likely by her own dependence on someone who abuses her and her own impotence against his violence.

In an essay on the meaning of "public" and "private" spaces, Mimi Sheller and John Urry point to "the complex and fluid hybridizing of public-and-private life" and argue that there are "multiple mobile relationships between" what people consider "the problem or 'erosion' of the public sphere or 'blurring of boundaries' between the public and the private" (108). Sheller and Urry reference the work of sociologist Richard Sennett as they situate the personal in what they label a "third approach" that "understands the private as more fundamentally rooted in private life and delineated by private space, in which the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion revolve around social relations and physical and symbolic demarcations between different spaces" (112). In this context, Sheller and Urry then use Jeff Weintraub's theories of the public and private spheres to argue that "privacy is viewed as much as a spatial arrangement as a social one, and is something marked off from the 'public spaces' of streets, parks and plazas" (112). Sociologists thus understand that there is a differentce

between the behavior expected of people in public and private spaces, and many are concerned with the ways in which boundaries are being blurred between the two because "the power of civil society crucially depends on the 'space' between these public and private 'spheres'" (114).

In Perillo's poem, the public display of inappropriate behavior in the public sphere of the laundromat crosses the line of what is appropiate when the woman's "ride," her boyfriend or husband, the man in her life, appears to pick her up in his car. The speaker notes that "Finally her ride shows up, a short guy whose pants / straddle his ass low" ("For My Washer and Dryer" 73). The man is recognized only for the role he plays in the woman's life, as her "ride" home from the laundromat, and this description dehumanizes him. He performs a service that she apparently requires. The lack of humanity implied when he is defined by the service that he performs does not improve when the speaker notes how his pants "straddle his ass low" (73). The clothes that he wears suggest his lack of respect for the people around him. He is in fact showing them his derriere as if he does not care, a fact that also defines him as a young and, more often than not, poor inner city dweller. As the woman's ride, he has come to pick her up, but the speaker notes that

> the last quarter on her dryer hasn't cycled through,
> and he's got to kill time staggering
> the aisles, suffering the accusation of women's underthings
> and soiled oven mitts,
> the sputum and rheum that his own kids cough up
> from God knows what recess.
> Until this laundry overcomes him: he yanks the magazine
> out of her hands so she'll have to
>
> *Look at him, goddamnit!* before he ups and hauls the boy
> outside, to their dented sedan. (73)

Impatient at having to wait for her, he demonstrates his displeasure through obvious signs of anger. Whatever has happened between these two before his arrival at the laundromat becomes part of the performance that this man's anger provides for the audience witnessing his antics at the laundromat.

> When she runs after, he makes a fleshy chrysanthemum
> with his right fist
> and slams it into her face, dumping her backward while
> he peels out,
> leaving her saddle-legged, stunned, with the baby girl
> crawling circles on the curb. (73)

The man's appearance at the laundromat brings violence. From the moment he appears with his pants straddling "his ass low" as he staggers "the aisles, suffering the accusation of women's underthings and soiled oven mitts" (73), he is presented as a man out of his element in a place where soiled oven mitts and women's underthings are washed.

The man's anger against the woman who washes his laundry requires no explanation. Perillo presents this as a given, the sort of thing that happens in laundromats where the lower classes gather, but this man's performance has not gone unnoticed. Psychologists, sociologists, and many other scholars have written about violent men and the violence that they perpetrate against women and children; however, this subject lies beyond the scope of this essay. In *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Lewis Herman compares the lives of impoverished women who live with angry men to political captivity. She argues that "political captivity is generally recognized, whereas the domestic captivity of women and children is often unseen" (74). Lewis Herman continues by stating that "children are rendered captive by their condition of dependency" (74), a dependency that is made clear in this poem when the man "ups and hauls the boy outside, to their dented sedan" ("For My Washer and Dryer" 73) without giving him a choice. The boy may or may not be his son, but this man feels entitled to subject him to his anger when he drags him outside without an explanation or even good manners. The woman in the poem appears to do nothing to protect her son from the man's anger, but she actually follows the two of them outside and speaks to the man, which suggests that she may have followed them to ask him or tell him to leave the child alone and wait patiently for their clothes to be done. This is the point when the man "makes a fleshy chrysanthemum with his right fist and slams it into her face" ("For My Washer and Dryer" 73), a peculiar image in which a man's fist is compared to a flower as an act of violence is perpetrated against the woman who is presumably the mother of his children. Violence at home against women and children is exactly the subject of Lewis Herman book where she points out that "women are rendered captive by economic, social, psychological, and legal subordination, as well as by physical force" (74).

After the man hits the woman in front of the laundromat, the people who witness the act simply "stare out the window," but the speaker states that, at that moment, "I imagine what she sees from outside looking in" ("For My Washer and Dryer" 73). According to the speaker, "our mouths are open, our faces green in this light," but she adds the puzzling statement that

> we are crueler than he is,
> our good intentions have always drawn interest
> on someone else's hard luck.
> She raises a hand to shield her face, her head wagging
> sideways as if to signal
> that our most welcome kindness would be turning away now,
> resuming our stupor:
> folding clothes in our baskets and hurrying them home
> while the wicker is warm. (73)

Regina Kenen points out that some traditional laundromat behaviors suggest that "users wall off an active social world from the world of laundromat users-as-strangers" (181) so that they do not have to get involved in the lives of others. In any other situation, people who witness as a man hits a woman could react by defending her or even threatening to call the police. The people in this poem, however, simply watch what happens. The speaker recognizes that the people who witness the violence perpetrated against the woman do nothing to help her; they are in fact too stunned to react, but the poet states that watching what happens makes them "crueler than he is," a questionable statement.

With this scene of random public violence against a very specific woman from the lower class, Lucia Perillo makes a subtle political statement about the lot of poor women who have limited choices or simply women who have chosen the wrong men. The scene itself makes the statement; however, what the poet writes about the people who witness the embarrassing moment being "crueler than he is" seems to undercut the statement made by that scene. Suggesting that the people who witness the violence are as cruel as the man who perpetates the violence creates a very uneven comparison, one that raises serious ethical questions for the reader. Alicia Ostriker argues in "Beyond Confession: The Poetics of Postmodern Witness" that "without a consciousness that desires, suffers, and chooses, there is no ethical or political model for the reader" (319). The speaker in Lucia Perillo's poem does not exhibit a consciousness that desires to help the woman or suffers on behalf of the woman. What she does is choose to escape the connection with this woman and her very publicly lived life, but this is hardly a moral choice.

The speaker in Lucia Perillo's poem chooses to skirt the moral statement made by the poet in "For My Washer and Dryer." When the poet writes about a man hitting a woman, she invites the reader to question what is happening; she invites the reader to think about public displays of violence against women because, as Joan C. Tronto points out in "Beyond Gender and Difference to a Theory of Care," "the morally mature person understands the balance between caring for the self and caring for others" (658), but the speaker in Lucia Perillo's poem shows no sign that she understands this difference. She chooses to protect herself, an act that effectively requires that she ignore what she has just witnessed. She does not feel compelled to help the woman or even call the police, and she even tells herself that the woman would prefer it if she did not get involved.

In "Power and Danger," Adrienne Rich, writing about the work of Judy Grahn, defines a political poem as a poem "concerned with powerlessness and power," and she adds that such political poetry "can come only from the poet's need to identify her relationship to atrocities and injustice, the sources of her pain, fear, and anger" (251). Perillo identifies the atrocity of a woman's powerlessness but chooses not to comment on it any further, which is apparently something that people who study domestic violence claim happens often. Diane Shoos, in "Representing Domestic Violence," points out that, "as private individuals who witness or suspect battering, we may still succumb to the temptation to remain silent out of embarrassment or respect for privacy" (59). The

problem is that the reader cannot make the choice because, in "For My Washer and Dryer," the poet chooses to skirt the ethical quandary that she creates.

The speaker in Lucia Perillo's poem chooses no statement other than the strange assertion that the woman who is hit "raises a hand to shield her face, her head wagging / sideways as if to signal / that our most welcome kindness would be turning away now, / resuming our stupor" ("For My Washer and Dryer" 73). She claims that the woman's raised hand suggests that she wants to be left alone, that she effectively wants the people who witnessed her being battered to just stop looking at her and stop thinking about it. This assumption justifies her doing nothing to help the battered woman, but the fact remains that the woman's raised hand has little to do with what the speaker interprets the raised hand to mean. It could have meant any number of things, but the speaker tells herself what she needs to hear in order to avoid getting involved in the woman's hard luck story. Diane Shoos argues that "awareness" of domestic violence "is not always the same as understanding: the ubiquity and visibility of battering has [sic] not fundamentally changed our attitudes or altered our denial about certain aspects of abuse" because "having heard the voices of battered women and seen their photos, many people [. . .] still have only a superficial knowledge of the emotional labyrinth of the lived experience of domestic violence" (58).

Instead of making a political statement about domestic violence, Lucia Perillo concludes her poem by making it possible for her speaker to escape any further connection to the lower-class world of laundromats where she is exposed to the behavior of men who hit women simply because the laundry is not yet done. The speaker points out that, "the next day I calculated my retreat: the Sears revolving / charge card, the finance plan." She admits that "in this way I let him win, making his fist the fat root / of my own gain" (74). She asks the appropriate questions about the connection between what she calls "the cruelties of men" and the things that people desire, like "the Nazi Volkswagen, the origin of lipstick / in a bloodied mouth?" and she states that "sometimes these relics of the man-made world make me ashamed / about the circuits of my desires." However, the poem culminates with

> Like the day those two guys in greasy coveralls showed up
> and lifted the appliances
> over their heads, high over the fence because the boxes
> wouldn't fit through the gate.
> When they entered my yard, I understood how the women felt
> when Allied troops rolled into France:
> I wanted to pelt them with roses, bring them baskets full
> of linens and exotic fruits.
> I was ready to get on my needs, kiss the scuffed leather
> of their steel-toed, Red Wing boots. (74)

Once again, Perillo creates an unusual comparison between delivery men carrying a washer and dryer into her home and the liberation of France from Nazi tyranny. However grateful the

speaker may have been not to ever have to witness gratuitous violence at the laundromat, the delivery of a washer and dryer to her home cannot compare to the delivery of freedom from Nazi oppresion in France. The speaker in this poem exaggerates the importance of her own liberation from having to do her laundry at the laundromat. Having the means to purchase her own washer and dryer simply means that she will no longer have to associate with people from a class lower than her own, people who do not have access to a Sears credit card.

In Tim Morris's "Suds" and Lucia Perillo's "For My Washer and Dryer," the laundromat appears as a marker for class. The people who use the laundromat are forced to do so by economic necessity, but the two writers admit that they would prefer not to use the laundromat. Morris states that his Lady Kenmore had "suffered a long illness" and died ("Suds" 55), which is what forces him to use the machines at the laundromat. The speaker in Lucia Perillo's poem exposes herself to the chaotic world of lower class lives lived publicly at the laundromat, but a Sears' credit card buys her freedom from exposure to the lives of people from a lower class and removes her from the laundromat forever. For Morris and Perillo, the laundromat is a marker for class.

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Sustaining the *Fin-de-Siècle* Attack: A Diachronic Approach to *Salomé*'s Visual Paratext from Beardsley to Yamamoto

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Abstract:

Resembling Japanese print patterns, Aubrey Beardsley's decadent and grotesque black and white illustrations illuminated Oscar Wilde's radical tragedy, *Salomé* (1891), while simultaneously commenting on it. Beardsley's *Salomé* illustrations were not mere embellishments conceived in a purely decorative form, but produced meanings by virtue of their contingent and intratextual relationships. Art, like language, can benefit from a corresponding semiotic process of analysis. For this reason, this study approaches *Salomé*'s illustrated edition from a diachronic perspective in order to explore its potentials and limitations. First and foremost, this paper elucidates the intrinsic ambiguity that resides in the visual aspects of *Salomé*'s original paratext before providing a diachronic analysis with a view to explain the subsequent diminishing of *Salomé*'s illustrated narrative over the following century. Furthermore, in order to demonstrate how Beardsley's illustrations have inspired contemporary artists, this paper concludes with an examination of Japanese artist Takato Yamamoto's 2005 illustrations of *Salomé*. From the 1894 English edition to the 2011 publication, the passage of time reveals how illustrators have abandoned *Salomé*'s early decadent aesthetics and departed from Beardsley's skilful intratextual dialogue with Wilde's text. On the other hand, Yamamoto seems to look back and draw on Beardsley's controversial and troubling idea of beauty to provide a complementary artistic narrative.

Keywords: Oscar Wilde, Salomé, Aubrey Beardsley, Takato Yamamoto, paratext, semiotics, illustration, decorated book, intertextuality, Japanese erotic art

Oscar Wilde's determination to defy English censorship by publishing *Salomé* in the original French in February 1893 produced one of the most significant endeavours by a writer in a foreign tongue. When the Examiner of Plays, Sir Edward Pigott banned *Salomé*, citing an old law that forbade the depiction of Biblical characters on stage, Wilde was not discouraged. The author charged forth with the publication giving full reign to his creative enterprise. If the constraints of a 'philistine' censorship were to halt the theatrical production, Wilde's tenacity would give birth to the book's publication. *Salomé: Drame En Un Acte* was to become Wilde's greatest and most unforgettable opening night performance. The following year, in 1894, *Salomé*'s textual ambiguity was heightened

due to the much-contested English translation by Lord Alfred Douglas coupled with the intratextual polysemy conveyed by Aubrey Beardsley's accompanying illustrations[1].

Resembling Japanese print patterns, Beardsley's decadent and grotesque black and white illustrations illuminated Wilde's Symbolist text while simultaneously commenting on it. An artist of extreme originality, Beardsley blended horror and beauty as he engaged in a hybrid form of combining drawings with text. Beardsley's *Salomé* drawings are not to be seen as mere embellishments conceived in a purely decorative form, but as capable of producing meanings by virtue of their contingent and intratextual relationships.

In *The Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin-de-Siècle Illustrated Books* (1995), Lorraine Janzen Kooistra contemplates "aesthetic judgments on the degree of graphic or literary excellence and evaluations of image/text compatibility (that) give way to analytical descriptions of verbal/visual interaction" and claims that "illustration always works with the text to establish meanings and direct interpretations for the reader" (4)[2]. When considering Kooistra's idea in relation to Beardsley's pictorial interpretation of Wilde's text, we notice a profound degree of intratextuality as the illustrations enhance the ambiguity of Wilde's pluralistic poetics.

The relationship between word and image provides further interpretive possibilities as the reader engages in an intersemiotic decoding of both the play's text and its illustrations. Umberto Eco's theory of the open work as formulated in *Opera aperta* (1962), according to which "every work of art, even though it is produced by following an explicit or implicit poetics of necessity, is effectively open to (a) virtually unlimited range of possible readings" (1989, 21), allows one to better understand Beardsley's illustrations. Beardsley's original creation of provocative and thought-provoking drawings provides a variety of possible readings. What Wilde achieved in words, Beardsley achieved in pictures.

According to Eco, a work of art has the same structural characteristics as a language. The work of art "cannot be a mere 'presence'; there must be an underlying system of mutual correlations, and thus a semiotic design which cunningly gives the impression of non-semiosis" (1976, 271). Eco's notion seems even more relevant when applied to Beardsley's *Salomé* drawings. Beardsley's art shows a mode of interconnecting meanings and symbols on various discourse levels. Although such elements appear "*ambiguously* organized" (Eco 1976, 271), they "are not realized at random but follow a *precise design*" as "both the normal and the ambiguous devices within a given message exert a *contextual pressure* on both the normal and ambiguous devices within all the others" (Eco 1976, 271). The arrangement of text and image in *Salomé*'s English edition provokes an interpretation with the multiple meanings on its correlative.

One cannot overemphasize the relevance of awarding legitimate attention to Beardsley's juxtaposition of text and image as the reader discovers a freedom of analysis. However, the drawings of contemporary artists tend to depart from Beardsley's visual accompaniment to Wilde's play, their work offering purely decorative images that do not necessarily relate to Wilde's text. Illustrations

produced by contemporary artists often appear ornamental rather than complementary, neglecting to provide a sound visual narrative to the play.

Art, like language, can benefit from a corresponding semiotic process of analysis. For this reason, this study approaches *Salomé*'s illustrated edition from a diachronic perspective in order to explore its potentials and limitations. First and foremost, this paper elucidates the intrinsic ambiguity that resides in the visual aspects of *Salomé*'s original paratext before providing a diachronic analysis with a view to explain the subsequent diminishing of *Salomé*'s illustrated narrative over the following century. This study begins with the original English 1894 edition *Salome A Tragedy in One Act: Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde: Pictured by Aubrey Beardsley* before turning our attention to two very distinct illustrated editions published over the following century: *Oscar Wilde Salomé Newly Translated by Vyvyan Holland Engravings by Frank Martin* (1957) and *Oscar Wilde Salomé A Tragedy in One Act Translated by Joseph Donohue Illustrated by Barry Moser* (2011). Furthermore, in order to demonstrate how Beardsley's illustrations have inspired contemporary artists, this paper concludes with an examination of Japanese artist Takato Yamamoto's 2005 illustrations of *Salomé*. From the 1894 English edition to the 2011 publication, the passage of time reveals how illustrators have abandoned *Salomé*'s early decadent aesthetics and departed from Beardsley's skilful intratextual dialogue with Wilde's text. On the other hand, Yamamoto seems to look back and draw on Beardsley's controversial and troubling idea of beauty to provide a complementary artistic narrative.

The methodology employed in this study to probe the multiple indeterminacies residing in Wilde's *Salomé* is a combination of Umberto Eco's hermeneutic theories of textual cooperation as delineated in *Opera aperta* (1962)[3], *A Theory of Semiotics* (1975) and *The Role of the Reader* (1979). Applying Eco's concept of an open work allows the opportunity to chart ways in which Wilde's *Salomé* can be systematically interpreted and understood paying particular attention to the reader's essential role in the process of constructing interpretative meaning. A close analysis of three rather distinct publications will reveal the fate of aesthetic ambiguity in *Salomé*'s accompanying illustrations.

Furthermore, in order to illustrate the persistence of Beardsley's influence on Victorian literature and culture in our contemporary society, Yamamoto's 2005 Salomé illustrations demonstrate the dynamic influence of Victorian canonical works in current aesthetic representations. Yamamoto has yet to publish an illustrated edition of Wilde's *Salomé*. However, he is one living illustrator in particular who possesses Beardsley's diegetic use of drawings to provide his own narration of the Salomé story and additionally engage the reader in an innovative multiplicity of interpretations. While remaining faithful to *Salomé*'s poetic and visual obscurity, Yamamoto, within the context of his cultural inheritance, pushes the taboo of erotic art to the extreme. Although perhaps not unique to the Japanese tradition of depicting images of women in severe and sexually explicit drawings, Yamamoto's translation of the Salomé story transgresses the boundaries of the illustrated book. This study demonstrates the way in which modern artists provide a visual

accompaniment to Wilde's play. While some artists offer purely decorative images, which do not necessarily relate to the author's text, Yamamoto resonates with Beardsley's strange beauty and his desire to explore the aesthetics of ambiguity.

1. Salome and the Power of the Visual Paratext

Ada Leverson, the eccentric novelist whom Oscar Wilde affectionately named "The Sphinx", was enamoured with Charles Ricketts's 1893 design for John Gray's *Silverpoints*. In the preface to her *Letters to the Sphinx from Oscar Wilde*, published in 1930, Leverson's passion for maximising the decorated book's visual and aesthetic effect upon the reader became the catalyst for the reader's intimate response to the play. The limited first edition of *Salomé* was therefore the visualisation of the play's "unwritten thoughts":

> There was more margin; margin in every sense of the word was in demand, and I remember looking at the poems of John Gray (then considered the incomparable poet of the age), when I saw the tiniest rivulet of text meandering through the very largest meadow of margin, I suggested to Oscar Wilde that he should go a step further than these minor poets; that he should publish a book all margin; full of beautiful unwritten thoughts, and have this blank volume bound in some Nile-green skin powdered with gilt nenuphars and smoothed with hard ivory, decorated with gold by Ricketts and printed on Japanese paper, each volume must be a collector's piece, a numbered one of a limited "first" (and last) edition: "very rare." He approved. (Quoted in Frankel 2000, 1)

Leverson's powerful imagination in visualizing the aesthetic beauty and artistic possibilities of the decorated book reignited the fire of Wilde's dancing princess as she remerged from the flames of banishment. Wilde turned to an ornate and embellished presentation of his work as retribution for the play being banned. In this respect, the first published edition of *Salomé* was a theatrical performance.

Wilde's bold venture managed to challenge Victorian philistine sensibilities with the addition of Beardsley's obscure and cryptic depictions. The English edition ushered in an audacious new dimension to Wilde's drama as readers could discover their freedom of analysis. With the interaction between the text and the image, a more nuanced analysis began to emerge.

As we commence an examination of the publication's ability to inspire a semiotic dialogue we notice that before reading the play's opening line, the reader is already drawn into a world of mystique and ambiguity by *Salomé*'s paratext[4]. Beardsley's deep understanding of *Salomé* is portrayed by his unique and masterful parody of sex and gender. Such an assault on the senses provides a window into Beardsley's interpretation of Wilde's text as he incites the reader to take the initiative to make "a conjecture about the text's intention" (Eco 1992, 64). Considering that Eco's hermeneutic theory is concerned with three types of intention: *intentio operis* (the text's intention), *intentio auctoris* (the author's intention) and *intentio lectoris* (the reader's intention), the *Salomé* reader engages in a variety of legitimate readings through an examination of Beardsley's illustrated

paratext. The semiotic codes within the text are illuminated through the *intention* of *Salomé*'s ambiguous paratext. In other words, the intention "is not displayed by the textual surface... One has to decide to 'see' it" (Eco 1992, 64). Therefore, "it is possible to speak of the [*para*]text's intention only as a result of the conjecture on the part of the reader. The initiative of the reader basically consists in making a conjecture about the [para]text's intention" (Eco 1992, 64).

When one is confronted with the paratextual elements of the published English edition of *Salomé*, the level of ambiguity is intensified. Genette explains that the paratext "marks those elements which lie on the threshold of the text and which help to direct and control the reception of a text by its readers" (Allen 2011, 100). However, *Salomé*'s notion of openness is reinforced due to the fact that its paratextual reception is in a sense, *uncontrollable*. It remains difficult for the artist to manage the reception of the text due to the extreme multiplicity of *Salomé*'s paratextualities. Strictly speaking, the published play's paratext initiates diverse interpretative possibilities as the *Salomé* reader is thrust into the mysterious and the unknown by the intratextual elements of Beardsley's cryptic illustrations. In this manner, intrigue continues to beckon the reader as he or she meditates on the intricate artistic components that furnish Beardsley's work with multiple signifiers. The reading experience is hence enhanced as the varying degrees of interpretations are derived via the paratextual reception that invites the reader to construct textual meaning. Constructing textual meaning through the play's paratextual features supports Genette's claim that the paratext is in itself a text (1997, 7).

Genette's conceptualisation of the paratext includes the *peritext* and the *epitext*. For example, *Salome*'s peritext consists of the play's title, the list of persons of the play and the list of pictures by Aubrey Beardsley. The play's epitext consists of the controversial reviews of the French original, the scandalous banning of the play's opening, interviews with the author, letters from his immediate circle of friends, publicity announcements and "other authorial and editorial discussions – 'outside' of the text'"[5] (Allen 2011, 100). Genette explains:

> The paratext consists as [the] ambiguous prefix suggests, of all those things which we are never certain belong to the text of a work but which contribute to present – or "presentify" – the text by making it into a book. It not only marks a zone of transition between text and the non-text ("*hors-texte*"), but also transaction. (Quoted in Allen 2011, 100)

When applying a semiotic reading of Wilde's choice of title and title page offers a fascinating insight into the play's paratextual features. *Salome A Tragedy in One Act: Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde: Pictured by Aubrey Beardsley* (Fig. 1) is a multilayered and complex directive of ambiguity. As previously mentioned, if the paratext is "not *the* text, it is already *some* text" (Genette 1997, 7), we can approach *Salomé*'s paratext as a text in itself.

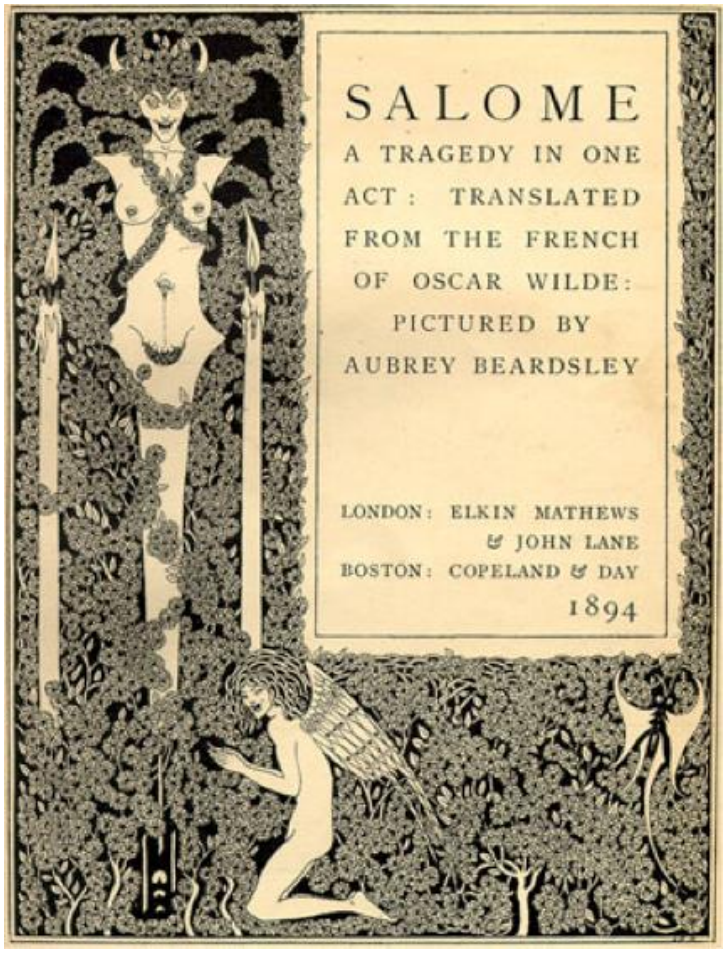

Fig. 1. Aubrey Beardsley: *Title Page* (1894)

The title "Salome"[6] instantly captures the attention of the reader to venture into decadent aesthetics and immediately informs the addressee of the author's departure from previous treatments of the biblical story. In the illustrator's hands, Wilde's dancing princess becomes associated with a satanic element as Beardsley's horned bare chested androgynous figure sinisterly smiles whilst entangled in an intricate garden of evil. Nestled amongst the hellish flora and fauna, the sexually ambiguous figure appears to be mockingly hanging on a cross as the horned pinnacle replaces Christ's crown of thorns. The figure is elevated between two lighted candles presiding over an altar in a blasphemous act of replicating a Christian mass. Beneath the fiendish figure, kneels a naked demonic cherub. Hands clasped in the repose of prayer, the ambiguous winged angel attracts yet repels as it forms a private and intimate connection to the reader.

Beardsley's creation of the title page gains a further degree of ambiguity. His original submission included the disturbing addition of male genitalia to present the demonic figure as a hermaphrodite. Placating to Victorian sensibilities, publishers Matthew and Lane forced Beardsley to reproduce a sanitised version in order to remove the male penis, eliminating the offending member. Assuming the horned naked figure represents Salomé, Beardsley masterfully encapsulates the dancing princess's characteristic indeterminacies. In Beardsley's treatment of the biblical myth, Salomé is the metaphorical hermaphrodite *par excellence*. She embodies both masculine and feminine personality traits as Beardsley oscillates between both sexes to greet the reader with a perplexing notion of gender ambiguity. Alluding to such gender indeterminacies in the title page immediately thrusts the reader into Salomé's den of iniquity. Armed with the aforementioned signifiers, the reader is presented with a multitude of conflicting ambiguities, which ultimately find their voice in the proceeding acts of degeneracy. Wilde's Salomé narcissistically relishes debased acts of sexual abjection. Namely, inciting incest, which leads to murder and ultimately to the disturbing act of self-gratifyingly necrophilia.



Fig. 2. Aubrey Beardsley: *The Woman in the Moon* (1894)

Eco's notion of code and decoding and how this concept can also be applied to non-linguistic forms of communication offers the reader a revealing insight into *Salome*'s title page which is aesthetically bolstered by Beardsley's accompanying frontispiece entitled "The Woman in the Moon" (Fig. 2). Throughout the book, Beardsley deliberately uses gender ambiguity, androgynous figures, hermaphrodites, sexual explicit imagery and grotesque fantasy to radically alter the play's referential function. Eco explains that establishing syntactic relationships that violate the usual laws of the code eliminate the possibility for a univocal decoding (1989, 195). Presented with such ambivalence, the *Salome* reader discovers "that the current code has been violated to such an extent that it can no longer help. The addressee thus finds himself in a situation of cryptographer forced to decode a message whose code is unknown, and who therefore has to learn the code of the message from the message itself" (Eco 1989, 195).

Aligning oneself with Beardsley's sub-textual imagery, the addressee is confronted with the ambiguity of sexual symbols infused into an ironic and destabilising reading of Wilde's play offering a transforming counter-narrative for *Salome* by mimicking the author's themes (Kooistra 1995, 132). Nothing could be more faithful to the notion of multiplicity initiated from Beardsley's commentary of Wilde's text than the frontispiece as the confronting image strongly advances the semiotic dialogue of the play. This is clearly demonstrated by the diverse readings it has provoked. "The Woman in the Moon" offers a fascinating example when considering Eco's notion of openness and the role of the reader in interpreting a text or an image. The addressee becomes the co-author in order to complete the meaning established by Beardsley as he himself interprets Wilde's text. In this regard, there is an intratextual triangular effect as the reader participates in an active role of co-authorship. For example, Wilde composes the play; Beardsley interprets the drama in a pictorial form then as the addressee, the reader, interprets the scene's *bi-textual* nature. The placement of the

illustration within the printed book is intriguing in relation to Wilde's text as "The Woman in the Moon" refers to the opening lines of the play:

> *The Young Syrian*: How beautiful is the Princess Salome tonight!
> *The Page of Herodias*: Look at the moon. How strange the moon seems! She is like a woman rising from the tomb. She is like a dead woman. One might fancy she was looking for dead things.
> *The Young Syrian*: She has a strange look. She is like a little princess who wears a yellow veil, and whose feet are of silver. She is like a princess who has little white doves for feet. One might fancy she was dancing.
> *The Page of Herodias*: She is like a woman who is dead. She moves very slowly. (44)[7]

The frontispiece immediately draws the reader into the opening action of the play and the ambiguities that the first scene initiates. The foundation of this ambivalence is produced by Wilde's employment of a strange symbolist language and the effect of uncertainty that such rhetoric incites. The play begins as the moon entrances the two characters and immediately sets the scene for the profound ambiguity that Wilde threads throughout his entire drama. The image elicits a mixed and divisive range of interpretations. Showwalter describes the two androgynous figures as a "frightened couple" (1990, 152) and cites Marcus for praising "The Woman in the Moon" as the only appropriate illustration of Beardsley's interpretation of Wilde's play. However, Marcus's description of the image is unsupported by Wilde's text as she assumes that the androgynous figure is Salomé: "John and Salome [...] cowering in comradely innocence before Herod's face in the moon" (1990, 152). Marcus is not alone in assuming that the male nude is John the Baptist and the feminized figure is Salomé as Dellamora suggests, "John screens Salomé from the lustful regard of Wilde/the Moon-figure. But John's frontal nudity reveals the actual object of Wilde's gaze, namely, the youthful male body. In this instance the screen discloses a specifically male-male sexual desire" (1990, 256).

Gillespie also remains perplexed regarding the characters depicted in the image as he suggests: "presenting unidentified figures in a situation never directly addressed within the play, calls into immediate question any application of linear interpretation" (1996, 148). Walker goes as far as to imply that "the drawing has little connection with the play" (1967 (1957), 26) and Snodgrass cites Arthur Symons who also wrongly identified the human figures to be Narraboth and Salomé suggesting that the frontispiece is "an indication of just how successfully disorienting Beardsley's pictures were" (1995, 276). There appears to be an abundance of possible readings regarding "The Woman in the Moon" thus confirming Eco's theories of interpretation.

Beardsley's depiction of the moon becomes even more ambiguous as he adorns the moon's face with a caricature of the author. What was Beardsley trying to achieve by inserting Wilde's facial features in the moon's face? The moon, or in this case, Wilde's eyes are conspicuously fixated on the couple. The nude male is feminized by his discernable effeminate posture. Furthermore, the clothed figure is extremely feminized by the choice of clothing and feminine attributes. Was Beardsley

conveying a subliminal message in referring to Wilde's clandestine homosexuality? Is the ambiguous facial expression one of envy, desire, shame, secrecy, sorrow, or even despondency?

Beardsley was masterful at playing with the ambivalences Wilde created within the text providing the reader with an invitation to delve into an intriguing world of fantasy. Beardsley's allure of the grotesque incited interpretation and advanced the semiotic and perceptual stimuli before the reader arrives at *Salomé*'s opening scene. The title page and adjacent frontispiece complement one another as the multilayered subtextual codes convey the artist's deep understanding of Wilde's work. Set apart from Wilde's text the two images offer their own distinct narrative and bolster the aesthetic and textual intensity of the play.

In contrast, the 1957 publication strays from such an example of open work and diminishes the limitless interpretative possibilities penned by Beardsley. When Frank Martin was commissioned to illustrate Vyvyan Holland's new translation in 1957, his engravings were more decorative and therefore departed from Beardsley's dialogue with the *Salomé* text. For example, the frontispiece of the 1957 publication portrays the dancing Salomé as a lone figure; her arms extended above her head as the movement of her veils conceal her near naked body (Fig. 3). In contrast to Beardsley, there is no use of gender ambiguity, nor does Martin offer a conspicuous and sexual insight into the play's diverse and multi-layered characters. On the contrary, the dancing Salomé performs her exotic dance alone. This one-dimensional figure is restrictive in the sense that she conforms to the cultural view of the subservient female dancer. Her role is to provoke a desire as Martin references the critical dramatic juncture that is the Dance of the Seven Veils.



Fig. 3. Frank Martin: Frontispiece
Engraving from *Salomé* (The Folio Society, 1957) with permission from the Frank Martin Estate

While the reader can appreciate Martin's intent to portray the infamous dance as he highlights the dancer's feminine beauty and the engraving's power to evoke orientalist imagery already associated with the Salomé story, the frontispiece is controlled in its one dimensional style and therefore presents a closed work. Martin restricts the reader's ability to derive interpretative possibilities.

Highlighting the feminine attributes of the dancing Salomé is a theme which runs through the entirety of Martin's work as the artist continues to make a complete departure from Beardsley's interpretation of gender ambiguity, a central theme

throughout Wilde's drama. Martin's decorative prints reinforce his period's patriarchal notion of masculinized soldiers and subservient female slaves. This is shown, for example, in the untitled image of the Princess Salomé reclining on a chair as near naked female slaves attend to her while the queen Hérodias leans forward and speaks in Salomé's ear. This engraving would probably be more suited to Flaubert's treatment (*Hérodias* 1877) in referencing the queen's control as she orchestrates the death of the prophet. Furthermore, in Wilde's reading there are no female characters other than Hérodias and Salomé, who interact with only males in the play reinforcing Salomé as the central role of the drama. This engraving highlights the fact that Martin's work is mostly decorative and exhibits a limited relationship to Wilde's text.

There is, however, an original aspect in Martin's approach here, as he clearly acknowledged Salomé as the central and leading character of Wilde's interpretation of the Biblical drama. The fact that Martin presents the reader with a portrayal of Wilde's one-line stage direction "Salome dances the dance of the seven veils" (140) in the form of a dancing Salomé reinforces the notion that, for Martin, Salomé's dance is the critical and dramatic turning point of the play. Martin also duplicated the aesthetic affect in the use of the colour green to emphasize and highlight the title, which appears on the opposite page. The dancing princess swirls and bathes gloriously in green tones, which also envelop the moonlit sky, the foliage of the garden and the palace adornments. Martin's 1957 frontispiece is nevertheless paratextually engaging as it proposes an understanding of the artist's interpretation of the play.

Nonetheless, in the original English edition, Beardsley departs from the relative banality of simply depicting an oriental dance in his seventh illustration entitled "The Stomach Dance" (Fig. 4) to produce a very subversive interpretation of Salomé's dance[8]. As the ambiguous and provocative title suggests, Beardsley offers the reader a glimpse into his world of eroticism as he "removes the scene from Judea to the Far East" (Kuryluk 1987, 236). In Beardsley's hands, Salomé becomes the corrupt and distorted ballerina; the antithesis to the graceful and delicate *coryphée* depicted by artists such as Edgar Degas during the second half of the nineteenth century. In "The Stomach Dance," the dancer is no longer portrayed as elegantly poised against a barre but rather she is perverted and aggressive[9]. Here the dance is showcased as a confrontation, the dancing princess staring intently at her entranced viewer. Her powerful seduction is as aggressive as it is sexual. Beardsley depicts a provocative Salomé whose eyes are not downcast to assume a subservient position, a slave to man's desires or as the pawn to her mother's ambitions. Rather, she is a woman who issues a challenge. Her expression is defiant and striking. Beardsley empowers the image to mirror Wilde's emboldening declarations when Salomé affirms: "I am Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judea" (76). Salomé's power and confidence radiates from the image, as her eyes appear threatening. Her seduction is, in a sense, diabolical.

Both Martin and Beardsley depict dance movement as polar opposites. While Martin masterfully captures the fluid movement of Salomé's dance by the circling action of cascading veils and the swirling flow of her dress, Beardsley depicts a smoldering angular movement depicted by a

masculinized stance. Movement is furthermore enhanced by the free-floating roses, which are replicated by her rose adorned breasts. The eroticism displayed by the placement of the roses on her nipples enhances Salomé's blatant sexuality. In this regard Beardsley's image appears threatening to the male viewer while Martin's depiction of the dancing Salomé conforms to the non-threatening stereotype, distancing his work from Wilde's text.



Fig. 4. Aubrey Beardsley: *The Stomach Dance* (1894)

Salomé's monstrous desires are pushed to the extreme in Beardsley's "The Stomach Dance". For example, one should note the presence of the demonic gargoyle that dwells in the underworld. The underworld is made prominent by dividing the image into black and white. Situating the gargoyle in the blackness references his demonic presence. The satanic figure is symbolic of the fires of hell as his hair is also depicted as flames. The monstrous facial expression appears to revel in a certain mysteriously evil intent as the gargoyle plays his instrument providing the musical accompaniment to Salomé's dance. Salomé appears to ascend from the darkness of hell, rising as a seductive phoenix to taunt all who succumb to her wiles. Salomé's brazen sexuality is further emphasized by the gargoyle's presence.

Beardsley's artistic interpretation of the multifaceted Salomé closely resembles the aggressive nature of Wilde's unique positioning of the dancing *femme fatale*. While Martin encapsulates the vibrancy of the Middle Eastern dancer, the artist's frontispiece reduces all ambiguity. However, a half a century that followed Martin's decorative engravings, we see yet a further departure as the 2011 contemporary published edition abandons Beardsley's objective and as a result diminishes *Salomé*'s alluring indeterminacies.

2. The Diminishing of Salomé's Alluring Indeterminacies

There is a significant contrast between the levels of interpretative possibilities when one compares Beardsley's original frontispiece to that of Barry Moser which was featured in the 2011 modern English edition of *Salomé* (Fig. 5). A straightforward portrait, Moser's work appears purely realistic and lacks the ability to engender diverse interpretations. It contrasts markedly from Beardsley's ability to translate Wilde's text in a mysterious and subtextual manner to offer the reader the opportunity to become, in Eco's terms, a co-author to the text. In comparison, Moser presents a work that is *closed*. Although Moser displays an exquisite technique and presents the reader with a beautiful work of art, the main (if not the only) possible interpretation of a Wildean portrait is a biographical commentary of the play. The addressee/reader may in fact see *Salomé* as the most autobiographical of all of Wilde's works and like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) shrouds the work with a metaphorical veil in order to mask the hidden desires of homoerotic desire[10]. However, an elegant yet straightforward portrait is simply that, a portrait. Unlike Beardsley, Moser declines to offer a particular commentary of Wilde's unique Symbolist work. Moser's engraving does not provide the reader any insight into an understanding of the play, nor does such a portrait incite the reader to engage with the play's subsequent text.



Fig. 5. Barry Moser: Frontispiece
Engraving from *Salomé* (University of Virginia Press, 2011) with permission of the artist.

For Moser, the choice of portraiture and still life to illustrate the play requires very little critical response from the reader. One such example is the engraving entitled "Fruits are brought", which one could consider being a reference to the King's banquet. Unfortunately, such still-life imagery appears rather mundane and irrelevant to Wilde's text. This image once again fails to provide the reader with an opportunity to engage with the play on a deeper semiotic level. The images are decorative and at random, neglecting any insightful commentary. In this regard, Moser misses the opportunity as an artist to enrich the play. Of course his engravings are open to interpretation and certain readers may find opportunity for such interpretation. Nonetheless, when we compare Moser's artistic rendering to that of Beardsley's, the rich diversity of meanings that Beardsley is able to inspire is not matched by Moser.

As previously mentioned, Beardsley utilizes the play's frontispiece to deliver a homosexual reading of Wilde's drama while playing with gender ambiguity in the depiction of the Young Syrian and the Page. However, Moser decides to abandon any reflection or commentary on the relationship between the two characters: their intimacy, their tragedy, or their sexuality. Instead, he prefers to offer the reader two adjacent portraits entitled "The Young Syrian" and "Herodias's Page" (Fig. 6). The characters that in Beardsley's illustration embodied gender and sexual ambiguities now remain fixed as separate identities with no visible connection to one another except that they exist on the same page.

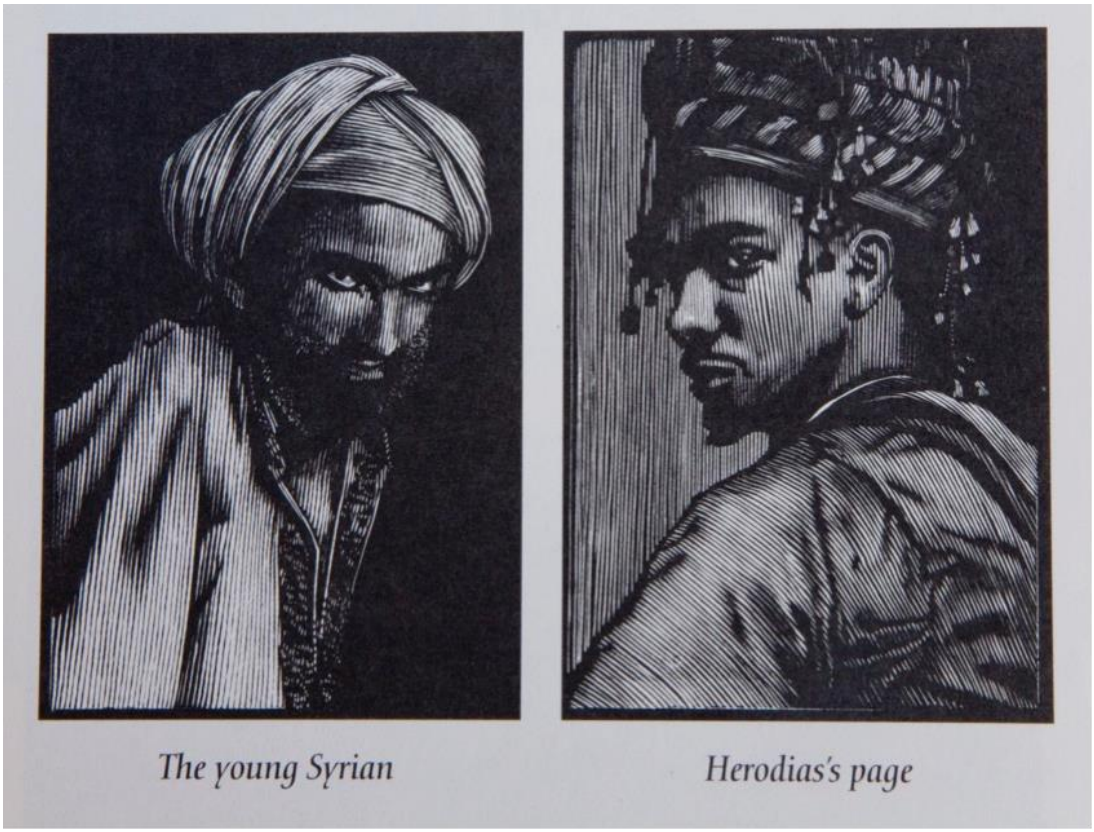

Fig. 6. Barry Moser: *The young Syrian* and *Herodias's Page*
Engraving from *Salomé* (University of Virginia Press, 2011) with permission of the artist.

While Moser has portrayed both men of ethnic origin to perhaps familiarize the reader with the geographical location of the play, these two adjacent portraits appear purely descriptive and negate the possibility to delve deeper within Wilde's Symbolist text. Moreover, Moser has made a further departure from Beardsley's feminization of the page to disambiguate gender ambivalences within the image, hence neglecting Wilde's subliminal subtext of homoeroticism.

Existing as individual artworks separated from Wilde's texts, Moser's engravings are of high quality and certainly would find an appreciative audience for their aesthetic value. However, the declaration made on the edition's dust jacket does not support an intratextual relationship with Wilde's play:

> Barry Moser is an artist who speaks the blunt yet fluent language of present-day communication through the penetrating gestural vocabulary of the graphic arts. The resulting combination of words, and images directly engages with Wilde's characters and their story, setting a bold new standard for the melding of literary and pictorial excellence. At the same time, it leads readers and audiences alike to rediscover perennially significant themes – of love, death, power, and individuality. (2011)

The above claim is not sustained within Moser's work as his engravings distance themselves from Wilde's most ambiguous text. In contrast, one should be reminded that Beardsley, as the original pictorial translator of *Salomé*, provides the reader not only an interpretative guidance but also "the potential for expansive imaginative responses" (Gillespie, 139). This becomes both an invitation and a challenge. From this perspective, artists such as Martin and Moser depart from Beardsley's visual accompaniment and therefore, the opportunity to administer a refreshing modern illustrative translation of Wilde's play.

Translation is inherently manipulative since "all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose" (Hermans 1985, 11). However, translation is first and foremost interpretation. For Eco, "a translation is an actualized and manifested interpretation– therefore an important witness" (1979, 35). When taking Eco's notion into consideration, one can apply his concept and administer it to *Salomé*'s illustrations. A modern artist such as Moser abandons Eco's approach to act as an "important witness" and instead offers purely decorative images. Images, that from the perspective of this present study, do not necessarily relate to Wilde's text. Furthermore, the titles associated with his engravings such as the previously mentioned "Fruits are brought" limit their ability to create an ambiguous web of mystery and intrigue. Titles, such as those that Beardsley's cryptic nature provided, seduces the reader to venture forward and discover their original aesthetic judgements that will in turn interact and influence their individual reading of Wilde's play.

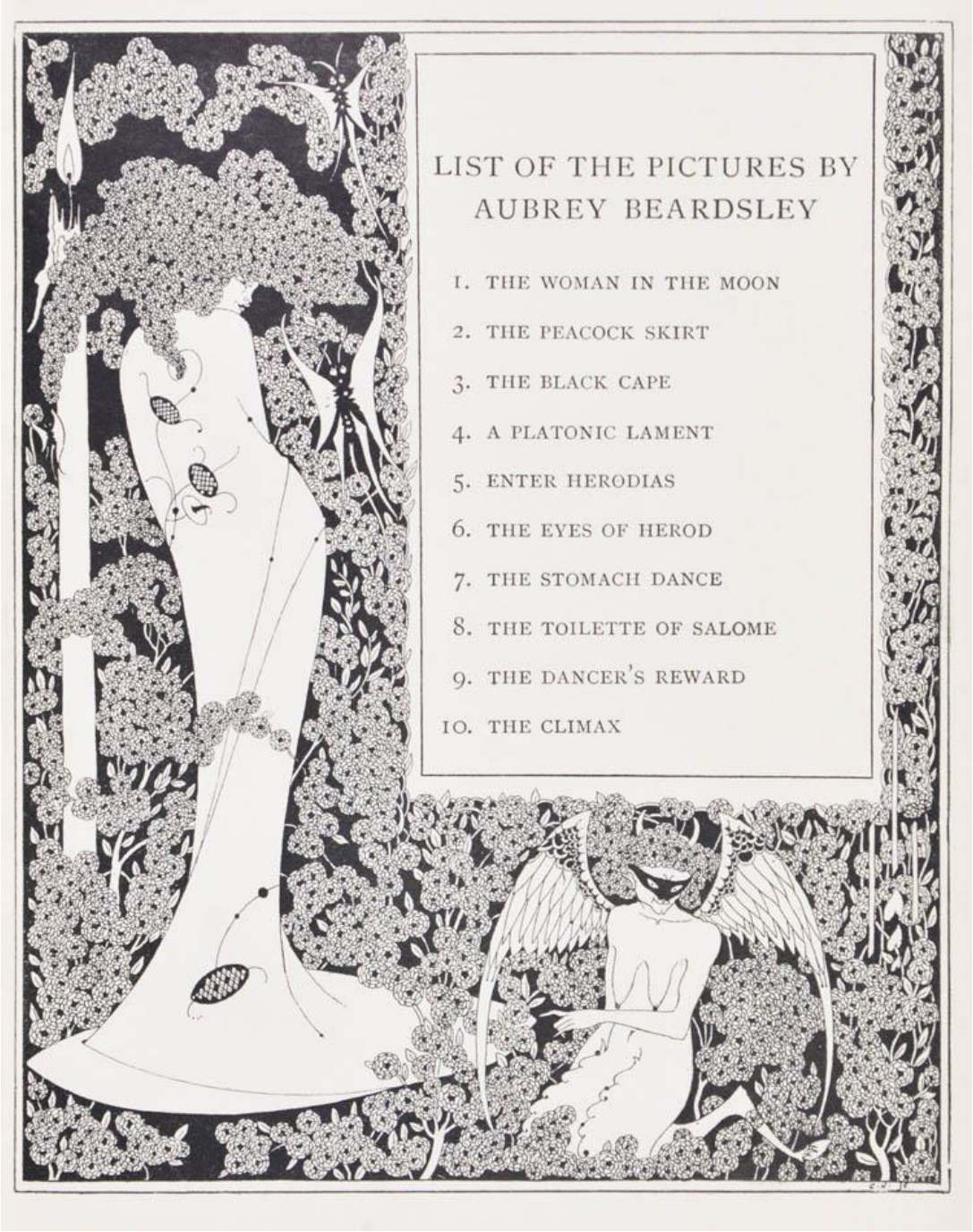

Fig. 7. Aubrey Beardsley: *List of Pictures* (1894)

Beardsley positions a chronological "List of Pictures" (Fig. 7) within *Salomé*'s opening pages so that his artistic interpretation acts as a prelude to the play. Such a paratextual feature is a foretaste to the ambiguities residing in the forthcoming text. The position of the "List of Pictures" which immediately follows *Salomé*'s frontispiece and title page reinforces Genette's notion that the paratext is rather a "threshold" or a "vestibule that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back" (1997, 2). The *Salomé* reader stands at this threshold, the "List of Pictures" acts as a gateway to the play and entices the reader for further exploration. Genette speaks

of "an edge" or "a fringe" to explain the zone which "controls one's whole reading of the text". Genette elaborates:

> Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that – whether well or poorly understood and achieved - is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies). (1997, 2)

The list of titles naming Beardsley's forthcoming illustrations certainly offers the reader a "better reception for the text" in assisting him or her to decode the ambiguous nature of the play. Beardsley's own ambiguous interpretations of the play are already evident in the ambivalent naming of each drawing: *The Woman in the Moon, The Peacock Skirt, The Black Cape, A Platonic Lament, The Eyes of Herod, The Stomach Dance, The Dancer's Reward* and *The Climax*. Such titles constitute an ambiguous narrative in and of themselves.

In this way, Beardsley's "List of Pictures" advances the semiotic nature of illustration. Allen suggests, that "decisions as to what paintings are to hung together, or what paintings to reproduce within a book, set up relations between individual paintings which normally could not have been part of their original design and intention" (2011, 172). However, such a mosaic in the hands of an artist like Beardsley becomes predominantly ambiguous. In this regard, the reader once again becomes the co-author as he or she derives their personal interpretation of Wilde's play. For Eco, the essential concept of interpretation is compelled by the text itself and as such, *Salomé*'s illustrated and titled paratext "tells us which kind of reader it postulates. The exactness of the textual project makes for the freedom of its Model Reader" (1979, 10). Beardsley foresees a model of the *Salomé* reader who is "able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author (in this case the illustrator) deals generatively with them" (1979, 7). Beardsley's "List of Pictures" disclose the action of the play "by clearly calling for a very specialized kind of reader" (1979, 7), nourished by the ambivalent nature of the play's paratext.

In a similar fashion to *Salomé*'s frontispiece and title page, the "List of Pictures" is encased within the depravity of Beardsley's underworld. The overpowering figure that is the sexually suggestive Salomé, her formfitting dress accentuating her elegant yet foreboding stance, is sexually intensified by her concealed hands and inward angle of her arms "a position Beardsley repeatedly employed in other pictures to suggest masturbation" (Snodgrass 1995, 63). Her over shoulder provocative smirk shuns "the grotesque molten wax on the phallic candle" (Snodgrass 1995, 63). She is no ordinary woman but a dangerous *femme fatale*, threatening in her omnipresence.

As Salomé shuns the phallic candle, she supersedes the hermaphrodite deity from the previous title page hijacking its feminine attributes. For example, the hermaphrodite who is flanked by two candles becomes a woman, as Beardsley "seems to have addressed a key problematical element, in

effect splitting the hermaphrodite in half" (Snodgrass 1995, 63). One could interpret that Salomé takes possession of the feminine candle as she internalizes her masculine traits, hiding them from outside appearances. Seated beside her, the kneeling yet fallen angel appears monstrous. Her aged and sagging breasts perpetuate the theatricality of the occult. A horned and winged angel, she emerges as the perverse and animalistic seraph to demonize the validity of ancient wisdom. Wearing a mask, she hides her identity to suggest an element of deception and trickery.

When Salomé leers with lascivious interest, glancing maliciously towards the "List of Pictures", she attracts yet repels. Her sly look peers menacingly through the multitude of surrounding roses that are not simply woven throughout her tresses but become a large ornamental headpiece. As a result an element of artificiality heightens her intrigue when Beardsley adorns her with a large obscure crown. Salomé curiously averts her glance to the cryptic titles enticing the reader to step over the threshold as he or she decides to either turn back or venture forth into *Salomé*'s tale of perversion. If the reader does decide to venture forth into the Salomé story, he or she encounters an obscure text.

When artists neglect Beardsley's taste for ambiguity and create decorative illustrations to provide the visual accompaniment, we see a significant decline in the levels of ambiguity. Both the play's poetics and aesthetics are altered in a compelling way. The modern 2011 English edition makes such a significant departure from Wilde's text and therefore yields to a semiotic reduction, which, in turn, drastically restricts the reader's interpretative possibilities. In order for a modern adaption to remain consistent with a symbolist inspired work such as *Salomé*, a contemporary adaptation of *fin-de-siècle* decadent culture, the published editions of the play could benefit from employing illustrators who work in harmony with the *intentio operis* (the text's intention) and the *intentio auctoris* (the author's intention). Contemporary artists who have excelled in this manner have often engaged in an intertextual dialogue with Beardsley's original work.

3. The Intertextual Dialogue Between the Perverse and the Obscure

When we consider that intertextuality can often radically challenge established accounts of non-literary art forms (Allen 2011, 171), it seems logical that artists who have been inspired by the Salomé story have often engaged in a semiotic dialogue with Wilde's text through the imitation of Beardsley's illustrations. Beardsley's illustrations, therefore, prompt reflections on the nature of intertextuality. Allen reminds us that it is possible to speak of the 'language' of painting as it is also possible to use this term when examining the intertextual relationship of both cinema and architecture for example (2011, 169). The language of painting involves "productions of complex patterns of encoding, re-encoding, allusion, echo, transposing of previous systems and codes" (Allen 2011, 169). Allen further elaborates:

> To interpret a painting or a building we inevitably rely on the ability to interpret that painting's or building's relationship to previous 'languages' or 'systems' of painting or architectural design. Films,

> symphonies, buildings, paintings, just like literary texts, constantly talk to each other as well as talking to the other arts. (2011, 169-170)

A cross-disciplinary approach allows theoretical interests to overlap. In this regard, applying theories of intertextuality to the study of non-literary arts offers an invaluable insight into an artist's dominant influences and the way in which such influences engage in a critical dialogue with one another. Wilde's *Salomé* seems especially well adapted to this type of study when we consider the number of illustrated published editions of Wilde's *Salomé* both in the original French (Alastair) and various English and German (Behmer) translations. While the 2011 illustrated English edition departs from Beardsley's skilful intratextual dialogue with Wilde's text, artists such as Alastair or Marcus Behmer remained faithful to their predecessor and consistent in establishing the required visual poetics of ambiguity. As previously discussed, *Salomé*'s original illustrated English edition offers a unique relationship between word and image. Wilde's text and Beardsley's illustrations are interconnected and are closely related to one another as the intratextual element initiates a complementary dialogue to illuminate the subtextual codes of interpretation within the play. Taking this into consideration, Japanese illustrator Takato Yamamoto is one living artist in particular who possesses the appropriate diegetic proficiency akin to Beardsley in order to engage the reader in an innovative multiplicity of interpretations while remaining faithful to *Salomé*'s poetic and visual obscurity.

Born in Akita, Japan in 1960, Yamamoto is renowned for developing his own bold and innovative style that he termed "Heisei aestheticism". Using traditional techniques, the principle of "Heisei aestheticism" rests on the amalgamation of Japanese *ukiyp-e* painting with Western gothic art to imply a surrealistic narrative. Yamamoto creates a phantasmagorical world brimming with morbid depictions of perverse beauty as he exhibits confronting images of sex and death. His alluring subjects transcend gender as they engage in surreal and often adverse acts outside the safe, the known and the natural. Yamamoto is an artist whose work has been profoundly influenced by Beardsley and provides an excellent example of an intertextual dialogue between two artists. In Yamamoto's work, Steiner's discussion of intertextuality comes into play as she views that:

> it is only by viewing paintings in light of other paintings or works of literature, music, and so forth that the 'missing' semiotic power of pictorial art can be augmented – which is to say that the power is not missing at all, but merely absent in the conventional account of the structure of art. (1985, 58)

Yamamoto has yet to publish an illustrated edition of Wilde's *Salomé*. However, his two paintings entitled "Salome" (2005) (Fig. 8) and "J'ai Baisé Ta Bouche Jokanaan" (2005) (Fig. 9) resonate with Beardsley's controversial and troubling beauty. Beardsley's work bears a strong resemblance to Japanese art and although Wilde himself was initially expecting a Byzantine style similar to Gustave Moreau, he found the Japanese style "quite wonderful" and recognized "the homicidal energy of Beardsley's work" (Ellmann 1988, 376)[11]. Yamamoto, within the context of his

cultural inheritance, pushes the taboo of erotic art to the extreme. Although perhaps not unique to the Japanese tradition of depicting images of women in severe and sexually explicit drawings, Yamamoto's translation of the Salomé story transgresses the boundaries of the illustrated book.



Fig. 8. Takato Yamamoto: *Salome* (2005) with permission of the artist.



Fig. 9. Takato Yamamoto: *J'ai Baisé Ta Bouche Jokanaan* (2005) with permission of the artist.

The painting which best illustrates Beardsley's profound influence on Yamamoto's work captures Wilde's iconic closing monologue where Salomé addresses the severed head of the prophet. The composition of "J'ai Baisé Ta Bouche Jokanaan" is a direct parody of Beardsley's tenth and last full-page illustration entitled "The Climax" whereby Salomé appears to be suspended in air, gazing

with intensity at the bleeding head held between her hands. Yamamoto replicates Beardsley's gender inversion whereby "the two feminized faces closely resemble rather than exactly reflect one another" suggesting "female homoeroticism" (Fernbach 2002, 57). While Beardsley obscures Salomé's hair to depict locks "dancing like two snakes" (Kuryluk 1987, 237) Yamamoto relies on the traditional tightly bound Japanese hairstyle, accentuating her feminized features. The free flowing hair of Jokanaan also reinforces his feminine attributes. Both Beardsley and Yamamoto engage in gender ambiguity as they abandon "the grotesque in favour of mythical pathos". (Kuryluk 1987, 237)

Similar to Beardsley, Yamamoto's drawings invite the reader to view his work as part of a visual translation to the play. It is not surprising that Beardsley's illustrations form the perfect accompaniment to Wilde's text. The text's repetitive language becomes a sensual cantata, the repeated metaphors strengthening the visual imagination making the transition to the visual narrative a harmonic process. The numerous and repetitive descriptions of the moon, for example, establish a narrative arch while illuminating Salomé's character as she journeys from virginal white to murderous red. Yamamoto supports the moon narrative in his work. As Salomé holds the severed head in her hands, the prophet's head appears to be on a red bloody platter as the moon has the dual purpose of depicting both death and beauty. Yamamoto evokes both erotic sensuality and horror as the dominant colour pattern within the picture evokes metaphysical qualities of both physical and spiritual desires.

While Beardsley's "The Climax" depicts the prophet's blood as it drips from the Iokanaan's severed head, Yamamoto's prophet almost seems as if his head is served on a bloody platter. The black coils of free flowing hair conjure up images of Beardsley's snake-like locks. The red of the moon stands in stark contrast to the composition's black and white tones. Yamamoto's "J'ai Baisé Ta Bouche Jokanaan" serves as an example of the illustrator's illicit intertextuality with Beardsley's art, seeking to derive its meaning through referencing "The Climax". Salomé's final monologue is transcended at a symbolic level to capture the grotesque intensity of Wilde's text.

In "Salome", Yamamoto takes the near naked princess from "J'ai Baisé Ta Bouche Jokanaan" and thrusts the female image into the extremes of illicit and pornographic sex. Her eyes are no longer closed while floating in the midst of ecstasy, rather Salomé stares intently at the viewer in an almost provoking manner. While pushing her bare legs apart, her naked sex is salaciously hidden by the prophet's severed head as Yamamoto alludes to the debased act of necrophilia. Engaging in cunnilingus, the androgynous head drips blood onto a small plater. The scarlet moon hovering in the background mirrors the prophet's blood. This is the lascivious Salomé at her most diabolical. She relishes in the combined pleasure of murder and erotic sexuality.

Having produced two illustrations inspired by Wilde's *Salomé*, Yamamoto excels in capturing the essential core elements of ambiguity residing in Wilde's Symbolist text. Combined with Yamamoto's striking and provoking illustrations, a new and improved English illustrated edition would serve as an exquisite volume and state-of-the-art publication. Such an edition is capable of showcasing *Salomé*'s unique collaboration of text and image. The intratextual correlation that

Beardsley achieved triumphs as the play's intrinsic aesthetic feature. Providing a visual narrative enhances the reader's experience as he or she is immediately thrust into the thresholds of interpretation by *Salomé*'s visual narrative beginning with the power of the visual paratext.

This study has demonstrated the manner in which the contextual relationship between image and text provides two distinct functions of semiotics, which through their forced intratextual union, initiate an accelerated degree of interpretation. Taking this into consideration, a diachronic approach provides insight for a better understanding and appreciation of the potentials and limitations of the decorated book. The artists who provided the visual dialect for the two subsequent *Salomé* editions (1957 and 2011) that followed the original English translation (1894) deviated from the high level of ambiguity originally established by Beardsley. This can be seen particularly in the blurring of gender. Both Martin's and Moser's depictions of the various characters in *Salomé* remain within the confines of masculinized males and subservient females. The most significant example of such a closed work is the play's paratext. While Beardsley offers the reader an array of possible interpretations due to the visual ambiguity of the grotesque, both Martin and Moser offer purely decorative engravings that diminish the number of possible readings. If we take for instance Eco's description of an open work in the visual arts: "the kind of painting that thrives on ambiguity, indeterminacy, the full fecundity of the informal, the kind of painting that wants to offer the eye the most liberating adventure while remaining a form of communication" (1989, 98), we receive a more stimulating experience from Beardsley's compelling visual translation of Wilde's work.

Salomé is an "open work" providing the reader with multiple interpretations. The play's strength lies in its ability to suggest rather than to prescribe a univocal reading. *Salomé* "relies upon the imagination of the reader to complete the aesthetic experience that the work itself only suggests" (Gillespie 1996, 153). This study has promoted an insistence on pluralism to enhance such an aesthetic and interpretative experience of *Salomé*'s visual paratext. Beardsley, like Wilde, is an artist that continues to bewilder admirers of the decorated book and who prevails as a strong witness to the persistence of Victorian culture in our contemporary society. As the 21st century reader holds the physical illustrated book in his or her hands and opens the cover to Wilde's *Salomé*, he or she is transported into a world of symbols, decadence and most of all poetic beauty. The crisp sound of the turning of the first page marks the beginning of the play as the curtain dramatically rises to reveal the power of the visual paratext and enduring force of the *fin-de-siècle* attack.

Endnotes:

1. The study of intratextuality deals with the internal relations within the text in contrast to intertextuality, which involves external relations to other texts.
2. Bitextuality, a term coined by Kooistra, "incorporates the strategies of both visual and verbal interpretation in order to understand how the dialogue between picture and word produces meaning within a network of cultural discourses. Representation – whether verbal or visual – is best understood as a social relationship in which various forms of power, knowledge and desire are enacted and disseminated. The marriage of image and text operates within this kind of social structure" (Kooistra 1995, 5).

3. "An open text is a paramount instance of a syntactic-semantico-pragmatic device whose foreseen interpretation is a part of its generative process" (Eco 1979, 3), Semantico [Semantics]
4. For Genette, the paratext "is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public" (1997, 1).
5. Frankel supports this theory when he states: "In fact, the censor's ban itself became a sign of the play's decadence; it was cited in a number of reviews of the 1893 edition as well as in Bodley Head's advertising for the play" (2000, 54).
6. Navarre (1995) offers a detailed account of Salome's original English edition title page (See pages 104-116). Navarre questions the play's Anglicized version of the title: "Why the accent aigu does not appear on the title-page of the 1894 Bodley Head edition remains a mystery" (1995, 104). Although one may determine that Navarre's query is quite obvious, due to the fact that the English edition requires an Anglicized title to correspond to an English translation, the two subsequent English translations used for this study (Holland and Donohue) both use the accent aigu (Salomé) for the play's title.
7. The printed text of Salomé is cited from the bi-lingual edition (Paris, Flammarion, 2006), which presents the first English translation on the page opposite the French version.
8. It is interesting to note that "The Stomach Dance", which portrays Salomé's "dance of the seven veils", chronologically occupies the seventh illustration.
9. Barre: a handrail placed at hip height, used by a dancer to maintain balance during practice.
10. See Kate Millet (1971) and Elaine Showalter (1990).
11. Wilde stated: "They are all too Japanese, while my play is Byzantine. My Herod is like the Herod of Gustave Moreau - wrapped in jewels and sorrows. My Salome is a mystic, the sister of Salammbô, a Sainte Thérèse who worships the moon" (Julian 1969, 257, quoted by Ricketts in Recollections of Oscar Wilde (1932).

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Robert Lowell's "Raw" and "Cooked" Poetics: From the Formal Traditions of Modernism to the Transformations of the Confessionals

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Abstract:

In 1960, Robert Lowell won the National Poetry Award for his collection *Life Studies*. In his Award Acceptance Speech, Lowell talked about two types of poetry that were, at the time, vying for prominence: "cooked," tightly-structured poetry which, following the formal dictates of New Criticism, can only be "digested by a graduate seminar;" and "raw," more loosely-patterned poetry which, breaching the New Critical poetic decorum, can be delightfully "dished up for midnight listeners" (Lowell 1960). An appraisal of Lowell's works, therefore, shows that his poetry itself is a mixed bag, in the sense that his early poems read as "cooked" poetry, while his late poems are the ones that have catapulted him into the revolutionary realm of "raw" aesthetics. Here, I introduce Confessional poetry and the sweeping aesthetic transformations it has brought about. But it is always worthwhile to note that, breaking with the Modernist tradition of impersonality, Confessional poetry has often been denounced as visceral, introspective, and self-centered. A deeper appreciation of this literary mode, of Lowell's late poetry in particular, shows that the personal is but a gateway to wider political and cultural concerns, for it presents a first-person speaker resistant to the pressure to conform to the overall containment culture of the fifties and early sixties in the United States.

Keywords: Modernist Tradition; Impersonality; Objectivity; Confessional Poetry; Postwar America

1. Robert Lowell's Literary Influences:

When we talk about tradition and transformation in Lowell's poetics, it would be remiss not to talk about two major poetic fathers, if so we may call them, who colored his career as a poet. They are Allen Tate and William Carlos Williams, the poetry of each associated with a different style: Tate's being formal, while Williams's being free. In this regard, eloquently describing Lowell's literary influences, Steven Gould Axelrod (1978, 20) states that the poet "was torn between the 'paleface' notion of art as a discipline and the 'redskin' notion of art as a liberating opportunity for self-expression." Towards the end of his career, Lowell seemed to have moved full steam ahead into art as a liberating self-expression, into what he calls "raw poetry," as mentioned above.

Notably, in their early attempts at composing poems, many poets began writing traditionally, using elaborate rhyme and meter. Lowell was no exception, as he had been much influenced by High Modernists such as T.S. Eliot and his tenet of impersonality, one that Lowell himself later sought to overturn. But prior to that, Lowell believed that the personal emotions of the poet had to be suppressed or at least expressed through what T. S. Eliot refers to as an "objective correlative" of art. As Paula Hayes (2003, 114-15) explains:

> Largely the view held within the Tate and Eliot camp was that a poem should not contain an obvious reference to the life of the poet, but this view arose from these critics' interpretation of what it meant in nineteenth-century aesthetics for the subjectivity of the artist to merge with the objectivity of art's form.

It follows, then, that under the influence of the early modernists, Lowell managed to transform his emotions and personal experiences into those impersonal patterns, believing that his personal life should be depersonalized, as it were, in order for him to produce what was, at the time, perceived of as "pure" art.

Later in his artistic career, Lowell felt the urge to depart, gradually, from the role that had long been assigned to poets—that of presenting the self and the poet's emotions through the Eliotic "objective correlative," realizing that there was probably no such a thing as an emotionless art. Lowell became rather intrigued by poetics that he equated with "huge blood-dripping gobbets of unseasoned experience," as he puts it in his National Award Speech. He was particularly enthralled by Allen Ginsberg's revolutionary poem "Howl" (1956), feeling that his own poems (i.e., Lowell's) are too stifled and rigid in tone and structure, thus paling in comparison with Ginsberg's free and "raw" poetics. Expressing his disenchantment with his own poems, Lowell wrote:

> I became sorely aware of how few poems I had written, and that these few had been finished at the latest three or four years earlier. Their style seemed distant, symbol-ridden and willfully difficult. I began to paraphrase my Latin quotations, and to add extra syllables to a line to make it clearer and more colloquial. I felt my old poems hid what they were really about, and many times offered a stiff, humorless and even impenetrable surface. I am no convert to the "beats." ... My own poems seemed like prehistoric monsters dragged down into the bog and death by their ponderous armor. I was reciting what I no longer felt. ... When I returned to my home, I began writing lines in a new style. (Qtd. in Ostroff 1964, 14)

This "new style" signals Lowell's break from the modernist tradition and his engagement with what came to be known, later, as the Confessional mode of writing.

In fact, aligning itself with the Beat's aesthetics, Lowell's *Life Studies* (1959) initiated the so-called Confessional poetry, a new poetic mode in which the poet inscribed his most tantalizing personal difficulties with pungent honesty and great intensity. Accordingly, Lowell readmitted

intention and emotion back into art in a bold departure from, particularly, T. S. Eliot's dictum of impersonality. Although they address slightly different issues, Beat poetry and Confessional poetry are less irreconcilable than they might seem, for both schools seek to shed light on the humdrum life of the post-war period, and on the plight of the many people left behind like so much human flotsam.

2. The Emergence of Confessional Poetry

It was M. L. Rosenthal who first coined, quite reductively, the label "confessional poetry," while commenting on Robert Lowell's *Life Studies.* His grouping of Confessional poets includes Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Anne Sexton, and Sylvia Plath. This label has remained a bone of contention not only within academic circles, but also among Confessionals themselves, who expressed on several occasions their rejection of such an appellation. The identification of specific poets under the confessional label is equally contentious. In her article "What Was Confessional Poetry?" Diane Middlebrook, for example, regards Snodgrass as a Confessional poet while excluding Berryman. Thomas Travisano (1999, 42), for his part, argues that Elizabeth Bishop "would seem to qualify not merely as a confessional poet, but as, perhaps, the school's most decisive progenitor."

Confessional poetry is widely considered as the poetry of the self, dealing exclusively with personal experience, pouring the poet's traumas and distresses into verse and, in doing so, shattering the otherwise inviolable boundary of the taboo. However, such appraisal can obscure other subjects that the poetry addresses, for it would be myopic to enclose this mode of poetry in the tight confines of the personal and the autobiographical, allowing it to speak about little else. On this note, Robert Phillips (1973, 4) writes:

> The confessional mode ... has always been with us. It merely has not until recently been officially 'named.' It is that writing which is highly subjective, which is in direct opposition to that other school of which Auden and Eliot are modern members—writers who consciously strove all but to obliterate their own concrete personalities in their poems ... in opposition to, or reaction from, the Eliotic aesthetic which influenced several generations of poets.

Confessional poets, in this respect, seek to liberate their poetry from the rigid confines of formalism and the mandates of New Criticism such as unity, coherence, harmony, organization, clarity, and precision—aspects that, to the New Critics, constitute the makings of "good" poetry.

It is noteworthy, in this sense, that Confessional poetry has drawn both acclaim and approbation. Robert Burns Shaw (1973, 12) talks about "the amorphous quality of the Confessionalist movement, [having always seemed] less a movement than an ill-defined crowd." As a result, critical opinions of this literary mode have wavered between those who "maligned it as 'confessionalism' [and those who] hailed it as a liberation from the tyranny of poetic decorum" (Beach 2003, 154). Adherents of the first view have routinely lauded Confessional poets for rebelling against the tenets of New Criticism, particularly T. S. Eliot's idea that the poet's emotion, in order

to be translated into true poetry, needs to manifest itself in an "objective correlative," as stated above. They also commend its breaking of the rigid divide between the private and the public spheres, disrupting political discourse by challenging its premises. Jo Gill (2006, 20), like other advocates of the movement, describes Confessional poetry as "autobiographical, therapeutic and unflinchingly truthful," being not only a breakthrough but also, and most importantly, "a break out" from "earlier orthodoxies." The birth of this new type of poetry is manifest in the sudden shift from highly impersonal poetry to "an exceedingly personal free voice" (Bawer 2007, 6). It is also an art that features an excruciating disclosure of private matters, subtly echoing the political turmoil following the Second World War and the malaise engendered by the Cold War.

The converse stance undervalues poetic Confessionalism allegedly for its want of literary standards, disparaging it as an overly introspective, sensational, visceral, self-centered form of poetry and, worse still, as a deviation from what has long been known as good poetics. Richard Wilbur, an adamant opponent of the Confessionals, describes the difference between the Confessional poem and the lyric using the metaphor of a house—a suggestive figure, as home is a towering metaphor in American history and politics generally, but especially in the post-war era. Wilbur (1950, 7) regards the lyric poem as a window that offers "a partial vision of the world," arguing that the poet who fails to understand the architecture of the lyric, such as the Confessional poet in Wilbur's view, is a poet who takes the window for a door, making the world "an extension of himself." Wilbur (1950, 7) further elucidates the metaphor as follows:

> Some writers think of art as a window, and some think of it as a door. If art is a window, then the poem is something intermediate in character, limited, synecdochic, a partial vision of a part of the world.... If art is conceived to be a door ... the artist no longer perceives a wall between him and the world; the world becomes an extension of himself, and is deprived of its reality. The poet's words cease to be a means of liaison with the world; they take the place of the world. This is bad aesthetics—and incidentally, bad morals.

Here, Wilbur espouses the view of art as "a window" and seems to insinuate that the Confessionals' poetic choices produce "bad aesthetics" because these poets perceive of art as "a door." Nevertheless, Confessional poets do think of their connection with the world around them as a kind of window through which they view and reflect on reality; but, in a rebellious act, they also seek to smash that window entirely.

Commenting on Wilbur's metaphor, and describing the Confessionals as "the rebels" of the fifties, poet Mark Doty (1991, 137) states that "a generation of poets would then find it necessary not only to open the windows but to break them, to widen them into doors, and the result would be a revisioning of the entire house." Accordingly, a new radicalized and groundbreaking poetics is born. And contrary to what the New Critics thought of Confessional writings, the Confessionals produced an art devoted to what Bawer (2007, 8) calls "intimate particulars," striking an emotional

chord among readers, and awakening in them "a sense of common humanity, a mature recognition that the essentials of one life are the essentials of all."

The debate over Confessional poetry seems interminable, so much so that even Rosenthal (1974, 25), who first labeled it, eventually grew skeptical of the appellation, acknowledging its limitations and arguing in his book *The New Poets* that "it was a term both helpful and too limited, and very possibly the conception of a confessional school has by now done a certain amount of damage." Steven K. Hoffman (1978, 687) seems to consolidate Rosenthal's doubts, holding that the term *confessional* has indeed become "a token of derision and outright contempt." As the term *confessional* remained quite controversial, the twilight of the 1960s paved the way for "new but no more adequate labels," as Hoffman states, "including Alvarez's 'extremist' poetry, Monroe Spears' 'open' poetry, and Marjorie Perloff's 'documentary' verse" (1978, 687). Among these appellations, Alvarez's has found the greatest purchase among scholars and critics.

3. Confessional Poetry as "The Poetry of Revolt"

In his introduction to his *American Poetry Since 1960*, Shaw (1973, 11) writes:

> I note first that these essays support the prevalent view of sixties poetry as a poetry of revolt.... *Howl* might not have been enough to shutter the hegemony of academic formalism, but *Life Studies* certainly signaled its declining power. The basic challenge, whether it came from Ginsberg or Lowell, was directed against the Eliotic cult of impersonality. The poet no longer hedged himself about with ironic literary illusions, but presented the reader with (we were asked to believe) unvarnished portraits of himself, the more warts the better.

In keeping with Shaw's views, Confessional poetry is also understood as a mutation, if not a subversion, of critical poetic standards.

An examination of the cultural milieu that propelled the rise of Confessional poetry helps account for this mode of poetry as "poetry of revolt." Molesworth (1976, 163) stresses "the emotional vacuity of public language in America and the insisting psychologizing of a society adrift from purpose and meaningful labor." The fifties gave rise to "a mass man," disenchanted, disenfranchised and disappointed by a hollow public discourse. Confessional poets seek salvation from this void in self-directedness, and especially through the language they create in order to voice "the split between revealing intimate details in an unvarnished context and obscuring the occult curve of their own dissociated self-concealing emotional lives" (Molesworth 1976, 168). Commenting on the stylishness of Confessional poets, Molesworth (1976, 168) suggests that it is as though their language "were asking us not to regard what we see but rather to admire the speaker's ability to maintain an interest in words when the experience ought to result in incoherence or silence."

It is equally noteworthy that Confessionalism sprouted in a politically agitated era—an era dominated by containment culture that created a highly-politicized cultural milieu, in which the

lines drawn between the political and the social, the public and the private, become significantly blurred. Confessional poetry, in this respect, not only explores the insidious repercussions of those strategies on the individual, but also strives to challenge and subvert the hegemonic rhetoric of the period. These poets point out that repressing and containing those anxieties was sure to eventually boomerang, one way or another.

The anxieties generated by the Cold War affected people's economic, social and cultural lives; they impacted the world of literature as well. In fact, while the 1930s witnessed the rise of a highly politicized generation of poets (chief among them W. H. Auden), the end of the Second World War saw a considerable steering away from such political suffusions in poetry. That reaction was soon overcome by a relentless and vibrant political preoccupation in the mode of poetry that aimed unflinchingly to expose deep personal experiences and present "the domestic space as highly inflected with public and political anxieties" (H. Stevens 2005, 164).

Probably nowhere is the Confessionals' transformations and the Modernists' traditions better described than in John Paul Russo's words (1988, 198) when he posits that:

> The New Critics invented the tranquilized [with reference to Robert Lowell's "tranquilized fifties"] poem; they performed surgery upon a poem as if it were a patient etherized upon a table. In the event, the poem was not tranquil, only tranquilized; artificially drugged and immobilized were the political, social, and historical implications of the text which still bore all the suppressed and conflictual problems.

Confessional poetry is, therefore, more than a mere documentation of the poet's life and traumas, or an outspoken confiding of the poet's secrets, as is often claimed. It is rather a deep brooding over the cultural, social, and political realities of the era. It is also "not overtly political, but it participated in the protest against impersonality as a poetic value by reinstating an insistently autobiographical first person engaged in resistance to the pressure to conform" (Middlebrook 1993, 635), not only to the principles of New Criticism, but also to the prevailing ideologies of the era.

4. Personal and Cultural Confessions in Robert Lowell's "Skunk Hour": A Meta-poetry of Survival and Transformation

In his seminal essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot (1981, 40) states that "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates" and that the poet should find a "transforming catalyst" in order to integrate his fragmentary and incongruent experiences into the autonomous unity of the poem. "Skunk Hour" is the best illustration of Lowell's departure from this Eliotic dictum.

"Skunk Hour" is set in "Nautilus Island," an indirect reference to Castine in Maine, reportedly Lowell's cottage in 1957. The poem is composed of eight, almost symmetrical stanzas. The first part probes into the public world while the second part delves into the private realm of the poet. Although they seem separate spheres, the public and the private are very much intertwined, here, in

the sense that the personal dejection dominating the second part of the poem is but a direct reflection of the decay casting its spell on the speaker's outer surroundings. By association, moral, social and even religious deprivation—which he evokes in the first four stanzas—entails the speaker's malaise, if not sickness. The self becomes an extension of the world, mirroring its ailments and distress, a characteristic feature of Confessional poetry. In this sense, the poem reads as a psychological as well as a cultural confession of all sorts of ailments, which substantiates M. L. Rosenthal's observation that the speaker of a confessional poem is placed "at the centre of the poem in such a way as to make his psychological vulnerability and shame an embodiment of his civilization" (Rosenthal 1974, 79).

Back to the public degradation that the speaker observes around him, we notice that the first part of the poem reeks, indeed, of a sense of sterility, rearing its head in an entire social structure that Lowell describes as futile, desperate and decaying. The "hermit heiress ... is in her dotage/ Thirsting for/ the hierarchic privacy/ of Queen Victoria's century." To her dismay, though, she buys instead "the eyesores facing her shore/ and lets them fall" (Lowell 1959, 89). "The summer millionaire" is also a failure, for "his nine-knot yawl/ was auctioned off to lobstermen" (Lowell 1959, 89). "The fairy decorator" is no exception; "there is no money in his work,/ he'd rather marry," the speaker tells us " (Lowell 1959, 89).

The sterility of the setting makes the speaker call to mind "one dark night" during which he felt so empty and useless—"an existential night" as Lowell himself calls it and describes it even further as such:

> The first four stanzas are meant to give a dawdling more or less amiable picture of a declining Maine sea town. I move from the ocean inland. Sterility howls through the scenery, but I try to give a tone of tolerance, humor, and randomness to the sad prospect. The composition drifts, its direction sinks out of sight into the casual, chancy arrangements of nature and decay. Then all comes alive in stanzas V and VI. This is the dark night. I hoped my readers would remember St. John of the Cross's poem. My night is not gracious, but secular, puritan, and agnostical. An Existentialist night. (Qtd. in Parkinson 1968, 131-32)

The shift from "the season's ill" to "my mind's not right" at "the dark night of my soul" is intriguing and comes as no surprise, actually, as it reinforces an already dismal place. "I myself is hell," the speaker adds, which implies that hell is both within and without. Nowhere is the speaker's emptiness and vacuity better expressed than in the following, contracted line: "Nobody's here" (Lowell 1959, 90)

In an attempt to divest himself of the feeling of hollowness that gnaws at him, the speaker engages in two voyeuristic experiences, if so we may call them. The first experience adds to his distress, while the second one brings solace to his despondent soul. First, he drives up a hill and watches "love-cars:"

One dark night,
my Tudor Ford climbed the hill's skull,
I watched for love-cars. Lights turned down,
they lay together, hull to hull,
where the graveyard shelves on the town. ...
My mind's not right.

A car radio bleats,
'Love, O careless Love . ...' I hear
my ill-spirit sob in each blood cell,
as if my hand were at its throat . ...
I myself am hell;
nobody's here— (Lowell 1959, 90)

Even love is "careless," as expressed in the above lines. Worse still, the speaker sets on watching "love-cars" and not "lovers." Love is automatized, as it were. The radio "bleats" a love song, in a sheep-like, if not sheepish sound. The setting is also telling as it helps impart a haunting effect analogous to the one permeating the first part of the poem: the speaker is on the "hill's skull .../ where the graveyards shelves on the town" (Lowell 1959, 90). In a word, love is equally rotten and dying, which affects the speaker's psyche.

Most important, the register of decay and contamination prevalent in the first part of the poem—as in "eyesore," "fall," "dotage," "ill," "lost," "stain," etc.—is further compounded with a lexical field of gloom and blankness: "dark," "skull," "graveyard," "not right," "careless," "ill-spirit," "sob," and "hell." Such blankness and wretchedness, ailing society and the speaker's self alike, are set against the bold attitude of the skunk family, as revealed in the second, more promising voyeuristic experience the speaker goes through. The speaker's dispiriting remark, "Nobody's here—" is soon qualified with his observation of the family skunk, when he says: "only skunk, that search/ in the moonlight for a bite to eat" (Lowell 1959, 90). These skunks, it seems, are the only creatures that endow the setting, and symbolically the poem, with life and energy. Their scavenging for food in the town's "garbage pail" testifies to their commitment to life, despite the odds.

The skunks, in this regard, seem to provide the only glimmer of hope in the midst of all this dejection and depravity. With her "column of kittens," mother skunk symbolizes integrity long lost on human beings. And it seems that human love and care is rather embodied within the skunk family. Skunks are neither intimidated by nor scared of such vacuity. In the midst of decay, they move on, looking for life-sustaining food, even it be in the garbage pail. The skunk's commitment to life and their content with leftovers are inspiring—an attitude that runs counter to "the hermit heiress," who just lets the worlds "fall." "[The skunks] march on their soles up Main Street," the speaker tells us (Lowell 1959, 90). They are real, which is subtly conveyed through the intriguing

pun in "soles" and "souls." Their eyes are "red-fire," fiercely cast against the bleached, "chalk-dry" church walls. Together, they form a reinvigorating force.

"I stand on top/ of our back steps and breathe the rich air," the speaker says (Lowell 1959, 90). The shift from the dark, suffocating night to "the rich air" is revelatory of the speaker's new solace. Axelrod further comments on this, saying:

> They swill the garbage pail, the refuse of the past. The skunks are an image of the new world Lowell has entered, and an image of Lowell himself, having entered. He breathes the "rich air," accommodating himself to this present, this future. (Axelrod 1978, 131)

The world that Axelrod alludes to is notably Lowell's poetics and his aesthetic imagination. Accordingly, the meta-poetic aspect inherent in the skunk symbolism cannot be overlooked. Put differently, the skunks' nonchalant and defiant attitude might stand for the poet's desire to veer from the rigid confines of formalism. Such association is substantiated especially when examining the working draft of this poem, originally entitled "Inspiration." As revealed in the drafts, the "fairy decorator" that we find in the printed version of the poem proves to be the poet himself, saying:

> My shades are drawn, my daylight bulb is on;
> Writing verses like a Turk,
> I lie in bed from sun to sun—
> There is no money in this work,
> You have to love it. (Qtd. in Axelrod, 1978, 250)

Like the decorator, Lowell had probably found himself caught within a precarious job—writing. That is why, "You have to love it," he avers. He seems enamored with this new mode of poetry, what he calls "raw poetry"—probably as savage, fervent and unpredictable as the skunks themselves. The skunks "cannot scare," Lowell writes—which implies that they do not scare and that they cannot be scared, either. Along these lines, commenting on Lowell's collection *Life Studies* and on the symbolic value of this particular poem in the formation and the development of Lowell's poetics, Charles Altieri (1970, 183) writes:

> The emblem of the skunk suggests a new secular mode for art. As it swills the garbage in its desperate quest to live and provide for its family, it is doing exactly what Lowell does with his past in *Life Studies.* And, the volume successfully completed, Lowell too "will not scare." At the end of his essay on "Skunk Hour," Lowell returns to one of the basic motifs in the volume to summarize the importance of this last poem, "With Berryman, too, I go on a strange journey! Thank God, we both come out clinging to spars, enough floating matter to save us, though faithless."

Like the skunk family, Lowell ultimately manages to overcome all the bleakness of the world. He manages to find "enough floating matter to save [him]." He clings to "spars," but these are definitely not the "chalk-dry and spar spire/ of the Trinitarian Church," he alludes to in his poem (Lowell 1959, 90). He simply survives, "faithless," as he puts it. Lowell concluded his National Award Acceptance Speech by saying: "When I finished *Life Studies*, I was left hanging on a question mark. I am still hanging there. I don't know whether it is a death-rope or a life-line." Doubtless, "Skunk Hour" is a *life-line*. The skunks "cannot scare," and so is the case with Lowell's new poetics of transformation and revolt.

5. Conclusion

James Merrill once wrote, "To sound personal is the point" (qtd. in Perloff 1970, 470)—a statement to which Lowell seemed to have fully ascribed to as he composed his more mature poems. But the disenchantent characterising his age was never lost on him, either. Accordingly, writing personally was not a purely aesthetic choice; it was also a political decision as the poet tried to internalize the moral and political disturbances of his/her times, and to undergo them personally. Lowell's late, "transformed" poetics has long been considered as a form of therapy. However, as Walter Kirn (2005, web) quipped: "Lowell's poems proved that if writing is a form of therapy, it's a uniquely unsuccessful one, at least in medical terms, and that insights into the larger human predicament don't guarantee their author a good night's sleep, a stable marriage or a dignified passing." They rather generate, in Wallace Stevens's words, "a violence from within that protects us from a violence without ..., the expression of it, the sound of its words, helps us to live our lives" (W. Stevens 1960, 36).

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Tradition and Transformation: Frost's "Home Burial" and the Poetics of Mild Transformation

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Abstract:

In negotiation with the modernist literary agenda, Frost wrote his *North of Boston* and strived to publish it in London at a time when American publishers mostly aligned with the then-new trend of modernism. When the book won Frost both national and international acclaim – as it was favorably reviewed by Ezra Pound, one of the pillars of modernist poetry – Henry Holt hastened to win the prerogative of becoming Frost's first American publisher. Endeavoring to understand the book's special character, the present article sheds light on "Home Burial," one of the narrative pieces in *North of Boston* which shows Robert Frost at his best as both traditionalist and innovator. A study of the poem's poetic structure, narrative design, and language will seek to explain how the New England poet, thanks to the special strategy he adopts – what this article calls 'poetics of mild transformation'– managed to reconcile the old with the new without wholly surrendering to the dictations of modernist poetics.

Keywords: Modernist; Traditionalist; Mild Transformation

Introduction

It was in London that Robert Frost had to seek publishers for his *North of Boston* at a time when American editors favored European modernism (Hart 2017, 157) and considered Frost's verse old-fashioned and traditionalist (Sharpe 2007, 10; Bloom1999, 11). Indeed, as Bloom in his *Twentieth-century American Literature* (1985, 1484) provokingly puts it, "Frost might have had the Nobel Prize if so many New York critics hadn't gone whoring after European gods." Rendering homage to the New England local flavor, the book's 1914 London publication by David Nutt thus came to announce the birth of Frost's accredited poetic career after years of non-recognition home (Sanders 2011, 13). The poet's dream of success soon started to materialize and Henry Holt warmly accepted to be Frost's first American publisher (Dickstein 2010, 95). Among *North of Boston*'s most challenging pieces, "Home Burial" has hitherto invited special attention owing to its remarkable psychological insight and poetic expertise.[1] Through study of its poetic structure, narrative design, and language, the present article purports to explicate how the poem equally dramatizes the Frostian tricky relations with the poetics of the age showing the poet thinking his way through tradition and innovation, producing, in the meanwhile, what this article considers Frost's own brand of modernism, his politics of detached engagement, resulting in *poetics of mild transformation*.

1. Structure and the Poetics of Mild Transformation in "Home Burial"

As he compares Larkin to Frost and to fellow poets of the same era, Waterman (2014, 14) highlights aspects typical of their poems which "immediately promise a story or anecdote, and open in a chatty register." In most of these, he adds, "a strong sense of narrative intimacy immediately pulls reader and writer together in shared experience as audience and story-teller, or listener and speaker" (Waterman 2014, 15). As this section purports to explain, the structure of Frost's "Home Burial" proves the poet to be an eminent 'traditionalist modernist'.

The poem opens with what might resemble an exposition moment whereby the reader is introduced to the narrative's two protagonists and to the spatial setting: the stairs where the main action would take place. The first seventeen lines part/stanza depicts an initial tension-fraught situation. Significantly, in this section exposition and complication seem to overlap as the characters ramble up and down the stairs without managing to overcome the predicament that cripples their thoughts. That the circular structure of the narrative shows the couple ending where they began testifies to the piece's modernist flavor (Sheehan 2002, 158) and despite the reversal of their respective topographic positions by the end of the episode – Amy, the wife, has descended the stairs while her entreating unnamed husband has mounted them – no real progress is made and the spouses still fail to reach any reconciliation what so ever.

Resisting closure, the narrative halts and leaves the husband's questions unanswered as Amy persistently denies his ability to appropriately speak of their child's decease. Responding to his words by the negative modal 'don't' (as in "don't," "Don't, don't, don't, don't" (L.32), "You don't" (L.20), "You don't know how to ask it" (L.45)), 'can't' (as in "You can't because you don't know how to speak (L.75)) or 'couldn't' (as in "You *couldn't* care!" (L.101), she ceaselessly challenges her husband's capacity to 'see' or 'speak'. This highlights the piece's anti-closure, an aspect of modernist poetics (Vogel 2009, 129). In fact, the poem's narrative does not conclude; it just ends, giving birth to what Gioia (2014, 78) calls Frost's "innovative ... dramatic narratives."

2. Narrative Design and the Poetics of Mild Transformation in "Home Burial"

In many respects original, the poem still shows aspects of traditional narrative verse, a feature Frost seems to have willingly kept alive in his work so as not to lose touch with the majority of readers. Indeed, despite the high modernists' growing disparagement of popular verse, Frost knew that he needed for his success the support, not of the few among the intellectual modernist elite, but, rather, of the large reading public, those he called "the general reader" (Sanders 2011, 19). Meanwhile, he endeavored to enact his special poetics of smooth transformation.

Indisputably, aspects of traditional narrative like third-person narration, dialogue, and blank verse are present in "Home Burial." Frost preferred, for that matter, to stay considerably faithful to the tradition of the turn-of-the-century-fireside poets – Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, and Holmes, among others – who enjoyed wide appeal to American individuals, families, and institutions (Kete 2011, 31). This tradition provided poetry that spoke the regional tongue of

American New England farmers and valorized the local community's ethics, what Buell (2001, 112) describes as "the vision of a regional Yankee culture past its apogee, however admirable for wit, stoicism, and rectitude."

Of the most prominent pieces in *North of Boston*, "Home Burial" revisits the marital life theme equally central to other pieces in the book – like "A Servant to Servants," "The Death of the Hired Man" and "The Fear" – and to pre-modern fireside domestic narrative poems. As it depicts a climatic episode in the life of a bereaved couple, "Home Burial" seems to act out the metaphorical burial of a home no longer prone to reanimation. It shows Amy, the wife, utterly incapable of pardon as she could not forget her spouse's burial of their deceased child in what he describes as "[t]he little graveyard where my people are" (L24). Nor could she accept to forgive his ultimate return to everyday concerns. Her fixation on the memory of the husband's grave digging transformed the act into something of a crime.

Now, the very choice of the narrative mode can tell of Frost's adherence to the fireside tradition (Kilcup 1998, 195). Indeed, this poem of his obliquely tells the story of a broken marriage via conversation and action. Though minimal, this action is based on symbolic postures whereby fear, misunderstanding, despair, disappointment, and psychological distance are movingly staged via the two characters' movements up and down the stairs. The window, the bedroom, the family graveyard, and the door all acquire symbolic functions as they suggest, each, a knot in the thread of the poem's narrative. These sub-locales endow the setting with special complexity. They equally color the narrative with the subjective significance of the different spots. The latter, thus, grow into different frames wherefrom action is perceived by the telling voice(s), an aspect evocative of modernist poetics' multiplicity of point of view (Childs 1986, 139).

Indeed, amidst the most dramatic of narratives in *North of Boston*, "Home Burial" also makes proof of Frost's innovative capacity to blur the lines between a poem and a play (Shiojiri 2014, 94). After a burning conversation dramatising a wife and husband verbal and physical confrontation, a closing tableau anchors the conflict at its white heat and makes the narrative chunks read much like stage directions that specify the postures, positions, facial expressions, and speaking tones of the characters. Thus, although essentially narrative, Frost's "Home Burial" cannot be read as fairly traditional.

Further, the piece tacitly manages to negotiate with the tradition of regional domestic narratives as it transcends its generic belonging to it by appearing as both dramatic (dialogue-based) and lyrical (musically alliterative and highly subjective) despite its narrative nature. This generic complexity is liable to make of the poem a modern dramatic narrative, a lyrical narrative, and, to a considerable extent, a dramatic lyric, a hybrid type showing the poet's dexterity and his poetics of smooth transformation whereby the passage from the traditionalist to the modernist mode appears soft, detached, and never irretrievable.

Additionally, although a third-person narrative, the poem fails to fully materialise the objectivity of omniscient narration; Amy's voice prevails over the piece's separate chunks and even

the husband seems to be described from her own vantage point ("She let him look, sure that he wouldn't see,/ *Blind creature*" (L16-17; emphasis added). Ultimately, when he desperately tells her: "There's something I should like to ask you, dear," she interrupts him saying: "You don't know how to ask it." His subsequent call for her: "Help me then" is, significantly enough, utterly ignored.

Thus, depicting a rural household predicament after the death and interment of a firstborn, Frost's narrator seems to have lost objectivity and balance and to have, on many occasions, become the spokesman of the female protagonist, the bereaved mother. In this respect, studying what she calls "Frost's complex feminine measures," Kilcup brings to the fore "Frost's affirmation of a feminine voice in poetry and the echoes, sometimes clearly deliberate, that this voice elaborates of a prior sentimental tradition" (1998, 21).

Notably, the poem ends with the dramatic inconclusiveness of a situation made desperately enigmatic. Fleeing the verbal impotence of her husband, Amy is very likely leaving home to join "someone" that might, after all, turn out to be just as incapable of linguistic efficiency. Understandably, the piece heavily relies on interrupted dialogue, on few stage direction-like narrative interventions, and, above all, on silence – whether through dashes or through topographical spaces between unevenly lengthy speeches. All these aspects create a fresh narrative identity and mildly bring this piece closer to modernist poetics.

3. Language and the Poetics of Mild Transformation in "Home Burial"

In his *The Living Moment*, Jeffrey Hart (2012, 16) contends that "Frost was a concealed modernist" and attempts to unveil modernist aspects marking the poet's verse. For all its pertinence, such a claim fails to do justice to the poet's complex relationship with the modernist movement. In what follows, emphasis will be put on the language of "Home Burial" so as to show how it displays what this article claims to be Frost's malleable ties to both traditionalism and modernism. Accordingly, it will be claimed that Frost's poetics relies on politics of 'detached engagement' (Stamburk 1999, 534) whereby the language of a poem like "Home Burial" would appear modernist enough to the few who, just like Pound, wanted poetry "to make it new"[2] while seeming adequately traditionalist to the conservative reading public for whom Frost devised "old ways to be new" (Baym 1973, 278).

Undeniably, the first decades of the twentieth century saw the slow yet steady move to a fresh poetics, the so-called "new verse" or "free verse" (Silkin 1997, 6). And while "American proponents of free verse emphasized its American roots and often cited Walt Whitman, Edgar Allen Poe, or both as its originators" (Churchill and Jaffee 2012, 310), its opponents denigrated its foreign origins and insisted on its being in continuity with European imagist and decadent movements (ibid). Suspicious of its motives, some "critics [even] saw th[is] self-centered poetry (and the self-gratifying poets) as a threat to the social order, a threat that implied moral corruption and sexual decadence" (Churchill and Jaffee 2012, 312). A heated debate about the future of poetry thus ensued and made it somehow necessary for poets and critics to take sides with one of the two camps.

Here, Robert Frost chose not to follow Pound's "new ways to be new." Fervently denouncing the modernist free verse, he once told his rival poet Sandburg: "I'd as soon play tennis with the net down as write free verse" (qtd.in Hall 1983, 172). Yet, as this article contends, Frost did not utterly swim against the tide; conscious of what Henry Hart (1983, 237) calls "his insecure position in a literary landscape dominated by the high modernists," Frost tactically preferred "the old ways to be new" (Gerber 1966, 80) and made the language of his poetry the very token of gradual change via his 'sound of sense', a 'Frostian' theory which "Home Burial" seems to neatly bring to fruition.

By displaying a hot scene of conjugal dispute in a country home, the poem contributes to the overall effect *North of Boston* creates and pays homage to the rustic people of Derry, New Hampshire (Sanders 2011, 3). The piece equally reads faithful to the late nineteenth century tradition of regional poetry (Hoffman 2001, 5). In fact, employing mundane language, it shows lines of unrhymed iambic pentameter; and while its narrator uses Standard English – the formal language of an educated voice – for the purpose of comment and description, the couple converse in the informal New England *local vernacular*. Remarkably, the linguistic idiom employed in this narrative makes use of various techniques whereby the floor is given to the characters to speak their minds, or so it seems.

As Frost would have it, blank verse is likely to valorize the Yankee dialect discernible from the austere diction of questions like "What is it you see / From up there always—for I want to know'" (L6-7), from the many carry-over lines showing the characters' intense emotion, and from the abundant – and often double – caesura as in the husband's "I will find out now—you must tell me, dear" (L12) and the wife's "Not you! Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!" (L46-47). Proud of its impact, Frost maintains,

> [t]here are the very regular preestablished accent and measure of blank verse; and there are the very irregular accent and measure of speaking intonation. I am never more pleased than when I can get these into strained relation. (*Selected Letters* 128)

These aspects make the poem read like a piece of unrhymed metrical verse abiding by traditional standards of prosody, standards that remind of the American fireside tradition (Burns 2002, 217), on the one hand, and of English canonical figures, on the other.

Indeed, the poem sounds musical despite the absence of rhymes. This blank verse quality whereby unhymed lines of iambic pentameter would create their own tune owing to their rhythmic pattern has always been distinctive of great poets like Shakespeare and Wordsworth (Hobsbaum1996, 17). In "Home Burial" Frost endeavors to be a legitimate rival of these, it seems. Certainly, as Kemp (1979, 156) defensibly claims,

> Frost's control of rhythm and sound in these supposedly prosaic lines might have impressed even such consummately musical poet as Edgar Allan Poe ... Frost deserves to be seen not as opponent or apostate to the nineteenth century masters, but as a successor – when he wanted to be – capable of rivaling their achievement.

Understandably, therefore, Kemp praises the poem's music notably heard in "the symmetrical sonorities of line 77 (*roll* and *hole* at the beginning and end of the line, *down* and *mound* in the middle)" (Ibid).

Now, the poem sings various secreted melodies through the traditional auditory effects it employs. Throughout, many words alliterate as in "*H*e" and "*h*er," "*s*aw" and "*s*tairs," "*b*ottom" and "*b*efore," "*s*aw" and "*s*tarting." Additionally, many are repeated – most remarkable among which are "*see*," "*what*," and "*don't*." The outcome is tuneful verse mimicking the music of conversational Yankee dialect, an aspect Gioia (2014, 80) considers a token of Frost's own version of modernism.

Taking into account Klarer's claim (2004, 15) that in the heyday of modernism, "Pound, ... so vocally presented himself as ... innovative ... [for his] Poundian hallmarks ...of unusual vocabulary, complex constructions, heavy use of allusion, integration of foreign languages, and fractured dialogue and setting," it grows explicable that Frost did not find it easy to market his own version of innovative poetics which uses "a more relaxed prosodic structure, not free verse so much as a highly effective and flexible blank verse" (Cooper 2014, 90).

Commenting on Frost's attitude to modernism, Beach (2003, 14) insisted that "Frost's relationship to the modernist movement in American poetry was a rather distant one." Nevertheless, he maintained that

> it was [Robinson's] fellow New Englander Robert Frost who would make the decisive break from the inflated style of Victorian and genteel poetry. Where Robinson's poems remain highly "literary" in their diction and syntax, *Frost adopts the idiosyncratic, colloquial, and locally inflected voice of the New England farmer ... [He] advocated what he called the "sound of sense" ... [which] allowed him to introduce a rural New England dialect that had never been used in poetry before*. (Beach 2003, 13; emphasis added)

Frost used, for that matter, simple language and simple syntax, and avoided literary diction and style. Famous for his abhorrence of the modernist experimentation with language and rhythm, Frost managed to create his own poetics of mild transformation.

Exemplifying the New England poet's "sound of sense," "Home Burial" does, thus, acquaint the reader with Frost's special brand of iambic pentameter adjusted to the tones of the Yankee idiom. With its rural intonation, its sudden pauses highlighted through caesura, and the breathless emotionality of its run-on-lines, the poem gives the reader access to what the poet calls the "vocal imagination" (Frost 1995, 789) communicating, as it were, the sad melody of a marriage failure and depicting the understated tone of austere Yankee idiom. No fun can the conversation of the couple bring; just the tension and grief of a home about to be entombed with the partners' mounting estrangement.

In many other ways "Home Burial" strikes the reader with the passionate immediacy of its language which smoothly integrates modernist techniques of fragmentation, ellipsis, and

juxtaposition (Gioia 2014, 81). Take, for instance, Amy's nervous retort: "Not you! Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!/ I must get out of here. I must get air/ I don't know rightly whether any man can" (38-40). Starting with the fragment "Not you!", this reply juxtaposes the contrasting interrogative and exclamative clauses (Oh, where's my hat? I don't need it!), thereby highlighting the female 'hysterical' reaction to the husband's tentatives of expression. The last word ("can") brings to the fore the indeterminacy of the ellipsis and mostly highlights the likely failure of any masculine figure to adequately communicate. Equally salient in this respect are the dashes of the last lines (L116-120) dramatizing the fragmented speeches of both husband and wife whose conflict reaches an irretrievable zenith by the end.

As negatives succeed one another to create what Hammond (1996, 110) describes as a "journey ... of negatives" and Phelan (2004, 627) calls a "wrenching lyric narrative" of high emotional intensity, the piece emerges as remarkably oral, and distinctly modern. Most prominent of these negatives are the famous "don't, don't, don't, don't" which Amy uttered as her husband realised the true source of her grief: "the child's mound." Statements like "I don't know," "I can't say, "I don't like," "I'm not, I'm not," "A man can't speak of his own child that's dead" all bear explicit negation showing the husband's torment and absolute confusion. However, somehow suggesting the grimness and uncertainty of a pessimistic modernist tone, these negatives are still capable of alluding to other alternatives whereby meaning remains postponed and the poet's engagement stays flexible as his poetics heralds a preference for mild transformation.

Conclusion

As has been argued in this article, "Home Burial" transcends the old-fashioned repetition of obsolete patterns and thus provides a sample of Frost's "old ways to be new." This was achieved by displaying the Yankee poet's 'sound of sense', his innovative anti-closure structure, and his novel verse form: the dramatic narrative. However, whether through its use of the iambic pentameter, of traditional structural narrative moments, or of a domestic narrative paradigm, Frost's "Home Burial" appears to have paid tribute to tradition in the heyday of modernism and to have realized the poet's wish to make his passage to a new poetics a distinguished show of mild transformation.

Endnotes

1. In the last years of the twentieth century, the works of some distinguished critics like Randall Jarrell (1999 [1962]), Seamus Heaney (1996), and Joseph Brodsky (1996), among others, emphasized the poem's powerful rendering of the female character's emotional experience. Similarly, famous Frost scholars – including Frank Lentricchia (1975), Richard Poirier (1977), Katherine Kearns (1994), Fagan (2007), and Faggen (1997, 2001, 2008) endeavored to shed light on the work's special character as a wrenching piece of remarkable psychological insights.
2. See Ezra Pound's *Literary Essays* where the doctrine of "Make it New" is preached.

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Vicissitudes of East Asia Development: Past, Present, and Future

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Abstract:

Human civilizations throughout time have all grappled with the challenge of molding geographical and environmental conditions for the purpose of developing their respective societies and cultures. Empires of old have imposed their imperial will over subject populations to have them 'fit' into a prescribed empirical development paradigm. This is no less true in regions of East Asia when, in the aftermath of World War II, Western nations – led especially by the United States – began to impose political and economic policies that galvanized the ethos of a 'modern' development paradigm in the East Asian realm. This situation has led to a clash of societal traditions and cultural values that has not abated for more than seventy years. The purpose of this short study, then, is to examine the impact of the so-called 'Western development architecture' in East Asia, and to acknowledge changes that have produced a dichotomy of Western and Eastern development paradigms in the current political-economic situation of the early 21st century.

Keywords: East Asia, development architecture, Bretton Woods, paradigm, Washington Consensus, Beijing Consensus

Introduction

For countless millennia, humans have striven to adapt to the material and physical environments around them. Students of 'development studies' – and practitioners of the same – have come to understand that the First World (the 'North') and the Second- and Third-Worlds (the 'South') have each inculcated its own sense of development, and how such development should proceed for the benefit of its client populations. Since the end of World War II, even with the dismantling of colonial rule throughout Africa and Asia, the installation of the Bretton Woods institutions – especially, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank – served as a buttress against political and social changes occurring in the aftermath of the War, principally to contain what was known as the Second-World: "...the Soviet Union..." (Bello 2006, 35), and other Warsaw Pact nations of the time.

Focus of this Study

The mechanical pragmatism of many of the Bretton Woods institutions' policies and programs invites the asking of an almost rhetorical question: "Whose development" is this anyway?

(Crewe & Harrison 1998). For exploring the nuances of this question, the existence of 'Oriental' Eastern cultural values and societal traditions will be juxtaposed to those of the 'Occidental' West, especially given the fact that modern development practices for nearly 70 years have been embedded in the Western post-Enlightenment worldview (see Tarnas 1991).[1] This study, therefore, will assess and evaluate the Western (North) presupposition that nothing on the scale of so-called 'modern development' had ever occurred before; therefore, there was an apparent felt-need for such a paradigm as was initiated by the U.S. after World War II. This study then indicates how this presupposition caused a clash of Western and Eastern values and traditions, in turn, creating a development-paradigm duality.

Historical Reflection on East Asian Development (to the 15th Century C.E.)

China:

In the history of imperial peoples and cultures, no other empire matched or surpassed the grandeur and accomplishments of China (and, for a time, Mongolia). While the empire of the Western world which encompassed what has come to be known as *Pax Romana*[2] was quite impressive at its height, its most enduring legacy is preserved only in the various "romance languages," in which Latin left an indelible mark. China, on the other hand, retains much of the physical land and geography which it invaded and conquered in over two millennia of physical presence and social development. Indeed, at the end of the first millennium C.E., significant trade relationships with neighboring peoples in Southeast Asia (and India and East Africa) worked to spread Chinese influence far beyond its imperial dynastic borders. Organic products, including various spices and opium, were in great demand by all trade populations, as well as manufactured goods such as Chinese silk products and textiles, etc. Various Chinese dynasties over the past two to three thousand years have left lasting impressions on peoples and cultures in and around continental and insular Asia.

The Han Dynasty was the first of these imperial forces to impact society and culture in China. In the spirit of Adam Smithian *laissez-faire*, "...there was almost unfettered capitalism and the accumulation of great fortunes by merchants" (Mason 2000, 54) under the Han at this time in Chinese history. Likewise, the Han influence on Chinese societal and cultural values would be indelible.

> The synthesis of all various elements contributing to the Chinese worldview was achieved during the Han dynasty. The core belief is that Heaven, humankind and Earth ideally constitute a single, harmonious, natural order. This order is both balanced, through the interaction of *yin* and *yang*, and moral, in that its ideal harmony rests on an ethical basis. The central figure in this scheme of things – the point, as it were, where Heaven and Earth converge – was the emperor. (Stuart-Fox 2003, 17; italics in original)

For many centuries afterwards, the Han presence would be felt and would, in turn, influence successive Chinese dynasties. In the tenth century, the Tang dynasty would carry on Han values and tradition.

> Chinese manufacture, especially the fine porcelain that came to be known as *china*, was in demand throughout the world and commanded an immense export trade by the standards of the time. Canton became one of the world's biggest ports. Book printing had become commonplace and many private citizens had libraries.... (Mason 2000, 77; italics in original)

Less than one hundred years after the Tang, the Sung[3] dynasty also boasted a sophisticated and vibrant social and economic system.

> [While] the Tang Chinese began building their own merchant ships...the Song continued this tradition of boat-building. When the dynasty lost control of northern China, it needed to construct a substantial navy to defend its new capital on the Yangtze River. The impetus this gave to Chinese maritime trade particularly affected Southeast Asia, not least through the growth of Chinese merchant communities in the region. (Stuart-Fox 2003, 47)

Continuing in this prosperous development mode, "...the Mongols built up the largest empire the world had yet seen, including the greater part of the Eurasian landmass.... The Chinese section of this vast empire was ruled directly by the Great Khans, Genghis himself, and his successors..." (Mason 2000, 76). Under Kubilai Khan, the empire expanded over the whole of China, and down into the insular regions of present-day Indonesia. When Kubilai Khan wanted to exact tribute from the Indonesian Javanese subjects, he was rebuffed and retaliated with significant military force.

> The arrival of this substantial force presented Prince Vijaya,...[as] designated heir, with a golden opportunity. In return for accepting Chinese suzerainty, he sought Mongol assistance in defeating...[a] usurper. The Mongol commander agreed and the usurper was duly crushed. Vijaya then turned on his allies, picking off scattered contingents of the Mongol force until the Mongol position became untenable and the fleet was forced to withdraw. (Stuart-Fox 2003, 63)

Despite this setback, the influence and results of East Asian development under Chinese dominance during those 1500-plus years were unequaled, although other East Asian peoples tried to challenge the Chinese dynastic success, especially the civilizations of the Indian subcontinent.

India:

In central East Asia, the influence of the subcontinent of India must be mentioned, especially in regards to Southeast Asian lands and populations directly affected by these expert maritime

sailors. A few thousand years B.C.E., the first cultured Indian civilization, the Harappa, was known for metallurgy and arts.

> The Harappa showed considerable artistry in small objects. Among the ruins small figures in soapstone, alabaster and marble have been found depicting people, often in sophisticated and lively style. There was a well-developed, distinctive system of weights and measures. Copper and bronze were used for weapons, tools and ornaments. (Mason 2000, 14)

The Aryans moved into the north of the Indian subcontinent and instituted "one of the major aspects of the culture that evolved during this Aryan expansion...[namely] a class system..." (ibid. 17), becoming the underpinning to the predominant religion, Hinduism. The Indians studied and followed the monsoon patterns which propelled them to Sumatra (Indonesia) and the Malaysian peninsula during the solar months of June to November. Then, they could return during the months of December to May to their subcontinent origin. "It was probably in this way their customs, religion and art begun to spread Eastward, as far as the China Sea coast of Vietnam" (ibid. 29). This is corroborated further in the statement that

> the Hindu-Buddhist states of Srivijaya, Champa, Mataram, [and] Angkor were to become the cultural centers of Southeast Asia. The process of Indianization was to take deep root in the mainland areas of Southeast Asia (i.e., the present status of Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam), while the Island World (the present states of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Southern Philippines), although influenced by Hindu-Buddhist traditions through the Srivijaya and Madjapahit Empires, were to turn Muslim permanently, beginning in the 13th century. (Evangelista 1988, 16)

In this manner, then, Indians also contributed directly to the development of the East Asia, especially peninsular and insular Southeast Asia.

Arabia:

The Middle-East region of Arabia bears mentioning as well, especially given the fact that it gave birth to another large East Asian religion – Islam. As with their Indian counterparts, the Arabs were accomplished maritime merchant sailors in their own right; indeed, they rivaled Indian merchants for trade with China at the turn of the second millennium (1000 C.E.).

The mixture of Arabian Islamic zeal with merchant marine prowess resulted in an intimidating impact upon the East Asian landscape of the second millennium. A sense of pride and religious urgency led to "...participation in the international trade..., during the ninth century, [which] extended from Morocco to China – a trade particularly controlled by Muslim merchants of diverse nationalities by principally Arabs" (Majul 1974, 2). Just as Hinduism had been as much a culture as a religion to the Indians (Mason 2000, 17), so did Islam also spread formidably as a cultural-force to be reckoned with in many parts of Southeast Asia.

> [T]he spread of Islam to the Malayan race came after the defeat of the Muslim Abbasid [Arabic] empire state. Islam was spread by the Sufi mystics who came and lived their interpretation of Islam.... For example, they reinterpreted the Hindu drama, Ramayana, and filled it with Islamic content. A process of assimilation resulted in conversion to Islam.... (McAmis 2002, 17)

Fueled by such socio-religious fervor, Muslim Arabs left their imprint and influence upon areas of insular Southeast Asia that continue to the present day.

The Region of Insular Southeast Asia

The region of insular Southeast Asia historically has been marked as the intersection of Indian Hindu-Buddhist and Arab Muslim influences. Furthermore, thanks to copious studies of the "Sulu Zone" by Warren (1982; 1985; 2000; 2002), trade relationships and networks between Indians or Arabs and the Chinese, via the Sulu-Zone, is well-established.

The network-interaction of insular East Asian areas with mainland China was solidified especially through: economic trade; intermarriage; and a pervasive religious and cultural value-system. With each respective ethnic and cultural society affecting and cross-pollinating each other (the Chinese with the Sulus, the Sulus with the Indians, the Indians with the Arabs, etc.), the result was a social stimulus to solidifying economic relationships and cultural interactions. Nearly 1200 years after the height of *Pax Romana* in the Roman Empire came the East Asian equivalent – a veritable *Pax Orientalia* – which would define economic, social and cultural interactions until the invasions and incursions by European powers especially in the fifteenth century C.E.

Western Colonialism and Disruption of Pax Orientalia

Enter the Iberians:

The Portuguese are mentioned almost in passing, since they have only left their imprint on Macau in China. During the so-called Open Door Policy of China in the 19th century, the Portuguese (along with other European powers) took advantage of the good nature – and crumbling influence – of the Qing dynastic rulers. By the time China closed its doors solidly to foreigners in the later 19th century, Portugal was relegated to the island outpost of Macau as a symbol of what could-have-been under different trade circumstances.

The Spanish are more known for their exploits in what is now known as the Philippines (named after King Philip of Spain). Obsessed by the desire to enter into and control the spice trade from Asia to Europe, Spain proved to be rather culturally intolerant of Asian cultural values and social traditions. The aggression of the Spaniards in the Philippine islands is an unfortunate and well-documented epoch which is beyond the scope of this study.[4] Being overly zealous in their desire to effect change to the social fabric of the indigenous populations of the Philippine archipelago, the Spanish colonizing mentality manifested as virtual apartheid to the subject indigent population.

Enter the Dutch and the British:

Along with the Iberians came the Dutch, first in India with the Dutch East India Company (Mason 2000, 148), and then into Southeast Asia (especially Celebes – today known as Sulawesi) in search of valuable spices. Just as the Malay Muslim people of Sulu – the Tausugs – had been a pivot-point for Arab and Indian merchant-marines to enter into trade with China, so did the Malay Muslim people indigenous to Mindanao – the Maguindanaons – serve as the intermediary for the Dutch (and, later, the British) to enter into trade relationships with the ruling sultans of Ternate and Celebes (islands of the present-day Indonesian archipelago). At one point during the mid- to late-seventeenth century, "...the role of the Dutch in the years 1663-1718 [wa]s undeniably instrumental in allowing Maguindanao to evolve and remain powerful and prosperous" (Laarhoven 1989, 181) in the insular trade networks formed between Europeans and East Asians.

Although Britain's role and influence was felt, especially by Malay Muslim populations trying to counter attacks and raids by the Spaniards, its influence was less than that of other European imperial powers. Having said that, "Burma, Malaysia, Singapore...[and] Hong Kong" (Mason 2000, 114) were all under the British sphere at some point in the totality of the British Empire. Only Singapore continues to have any formal dealings with the British Commonwealth today – a result of those other countries and city-states wishing to rid all semblances of former colonial control.

Americans as 'Awkward' Imperialists:

Only because the United States was at war with Spain over the Caribbean islands and territories at the end of the 19th century did she stumble upon receiving the Philippines as a colony due to the peace treaty that ended that war in 1898. Gowing (1983, 67ff) makes it clear that the United States only had experience with Native-American tribes in late 19th century America when she came into contact with the Muslims of the Philippines. Because it was soon realized that these Philippine Muslims were "oppressively autocratic," the idea of using a reservation system (as had been done for the Native Americans) was disregarded (ibid. 68). Other tactics (such as promises made and broken) and outright warfare to put a stop to Islamic sedition (ibid. 236-242) were used, causing much social and cultural consternation between Americans and their Filipino Muslim wards for years to come.

Similar treatment of the Philippines, before and after World War II, and activities and involvement in the East Asian countries of Korea (1950-1953) and Vietnam (1954-1975) would give the United States the rather unsavory reputation among East Asian and Southeast Asian nations that Americans were trying to win them all to the side of anti-communism. What happened to North Vietnam in peninsular Southeast Asia and to Indonesia in insular Southeast Asia in the 1960s was enough to make the United States worry about a so-called 'domino effect' that the whole region would fall to Soviet or Chinese communist control.

The Clash of Western & Eastern Development in the Early 20th Century

What is apparent by now in the details of this chronology is the willful disregard for the organic evolution of East Asian development by those Western colonial powers that entered the area from the 16th century onward. Partially due to an ethos of the West that "might makes right" (the West had superior military technology and maritime weaponry in those times), and also partially due to the Asian value of deferring to others, certain East Asian regions allowed Western colonial powers to occupy and direct economic and social reconstruction that would be of most benefit to the colonizers' home countries. It was tantamount to imperialism.

> The imperial dissection of Asia followed a definite geographic pattern. The British Empire was Westernmost, extending East from India through Burma to small, lately-acquired possessions in Malaysia. Beyond Thailand...was French Indo-China, now Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Holland controlled the Western half of archipelago south-east Asia – what is now Indonesia. The...islands farther East became the Philippines, the colony first of Spain and later of the United States.
>
> China was too big a fish for any single European state swallow whole, or, indeed, to be permitted by its rivals to do so....
>
> Japan maintained her independence only because she had 'Westernised' her economy and industry with remarkable speed and energy and...[became] a colonial power herself, annexing Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria.
>
> This geographic organisation of Asia to suit the dominators...had some strange and at times disastrous consequences. Everywhere one now looks in Asia anomalies remain – peoples divided between two or more nations, minorities cut off from the majority of their race.... The tensions caused by these things are important, active influences in the Asia of today and will have unpredictable effects on future events. (Mason 2000, 114-115)

Such "tensions" and "unpredictable effects" all coalesced together to form the hotbed of social and cultural forces that characterized East Asia before the advent of World War II.

East Asia in the Aftermath of World War II

Western-led Restructuring of East Asian Trade Networks:

In the face of the worst wartime destruction East Asia had ever known, the United States (leading the Allied forces) sought to rebuild areas and countries in East Asia in similar fashion to the reconstruction of Europe under the Marshall Plan. Since Manila had been fire-bombed as equally as – if not more so than – Berlin, much reconstructive planning and capital-infusion were needed to return Manila to her status as the seat of the Southeast Asian government most favorable to American presence and intrusion at that time. The cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan were decimated by two atom bombs dropped on each respective city. Tokyo itself needed help in rebuilding its infrastructure if it were to become the primary East Asian partner with the U.S. and the United Nations in fulfilling the adage of "making the world safe for democracy."

The Bretton Woods Conference, the U.N. and a 'New' International Agenda:

In anticipating post-war needs in this regard, representatives from Britain and the U.S. met at Bretton Woods in 1944 for a conference regarding what kinds of institutions would be necessary to carry out the mandate of reconstruction for war-torn European and Asian regions (Bello 2006, 36). The first institution, known as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was to be "...the guardian of global liquidity, a function that it was supposed to fulfill by monitoring member countries' maintenance of stable exchange rates and providing facilities on which they could periodically draw to overcome cyclical balance of payments difficulties" (ibid.). The second institution, commonly known today as the World Bank, has the full name of the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The World Bank was to have more direct linkage to how each member country would work for 'reconstruction' (after World War II and – now – after any war that ravages any member nation) and 'development' (as prescribed by IBRD guidelines).

In this manner, then, a new international agenda was initiated and enforced through member countries subscribing to policies (and the value-system that drives them) set forth by the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations in partnership. The 'general ideal' was to work towards democracy in governance and free-market capitalism in economics for creating a veritable *Pax Occidentalia* via the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations. Rather than using the awkward moniker of *Pax Occidentalia*, this Western-led development agenda is now known in the literature as the 'Washington Consensus."[5] The structure of those macro-economic policies prescribed by this post-WWII Bretton-Woods scheme has filled substantial volumes already and is beyond the scope of this study.[6] Important to note, however, is the apparent 'clash of civilizations' that occurred when top-down edicts of Western development were imposed upon the cultural landscapes of certain East Asian member countries to create the so-called East Asian Miracle in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The Case of the "East Asian Miracle"

The Mechanics of Western Development Architecture:

With the apparent success of rebuilding and improving social and economic infrastructure in war-torn nations of Europe under the Marshall Plan, the U.S.-led effort of instituting the policies and frameworks of the Bretton Woods institutions in East Asian countries went into full-scale operation by the beginning of the 1950s (see Todaro & Smith 2015). Whether by design or default, the more 'micro' approach of creating Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) was more successful in Asian cultures where participant-driven and communitarian programs were received better than those 'macro,' top-down designs. It is not an understatement to say that

> several experiences confirm the importance of the role of SMEs in the East Asian economies...[i.e.,] considerable capability weaknesses are experienced in certain industries. This occurred in Korea...[and] it implemented a vigorous policy to foster the development of SMEs.... Korea took

> account of Japanese SME policy. A similar process has been seen recently in Malaysia. In contrast to Korea, sustained development of SMEs can be seen in Taiwan.... (Hosono 1998, 21)

Another faulty assumption of the Western 'macro' scheme was to enforce the ideal that laissez-faire capitalism and free-market mechanisms would spur on the best growth in these recovering economies. This is because

> export successes...provided the primary impetus for arguments by market fundamentalists...that economic growth is best served by allowing market forces, free enterprise, and open economies to prevail.... However, evidence from East Asia does not support this view.... In South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore (as in Japan earlier and to a large degree China more recently), the production and composition of exports was not left to the market but resulted from planned intervention by the government.... (Todaro & Smith 2015, 635)

So, while the Western development architecture of the Washington Consensus goes blindly along, thinking all is well in the mechanism of the process, East Asian cultural values and social traditions attempt to find their way into that mechanism and are challenged to adapt as best as possible – similar to the proverbial square peg in a round hole.

Case-in-Point – The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis:

A coalescing of different situations in the early- to mid-1990s began to indicate that there was a strain on the East Asian Miracle of the 1970s and 1980s. The crisis situation was triggered in Thailand with a currency fluctuation. This led other interdependent markets in the region to shift their currency values in commodities-trading fashion. In a practical domino-effect, the North East Asian currencies of South Korea and Japan lost a lot of value over many weeks and, in Southeast Asia, Thailand and Indonesia were hit the hardest by currency devaluation in the markets. Other countries such as the Philippines also suffered, but not nearly to the extent that those other East Asian nations did.

> [T]he economic consequence of the 1997-98 crisis was a heavy blow to the economies of the region in terms of the fiscal cost of bailing out and reconstructing the financial sector.... Moreover, there was some concern that the social impact of the crisis may have a lasting effect of the economy over the long term. Such concern has drawn greater attention to the question of social cohesion and domestic governance in East Asian societies. (Fukasaku & Trzeciak-Duval 2005, 4)

The Specter of 'Globalization' in East Asia

The West versus the Rest:

Immediately, a polarization emerged between the guardians of this Western-led development architecture and those nations which were supposed to benefit – and improve – from that

architecture. As indicated above, attention was focused more on "the question of social cohesion and domestic governance in East Asian societies" (ibid. 4) rather than on evaluating the mechanisms under which these countries were subjected. The arrogant confidence of the West in regards to its development approach had advanced a crisis of leadership in certain East Asian recipient nations: "Globalization has posed serious challenges to governance in East Asian countries. Crises in development have greatly eroded the legitimacy of the existing political economic model, while East Asian governments' failure to overcome the crisis has brought about political instability" (Chung 2002, 20).

There is an unfortunate similarity, therefore, between the defiant colonial mentality of their European and American counterparts of the 16th to the 19th centuries, and this Washington Consensus development apparatus:

> [G]lobalization has exerted tremendous impacts on the lives of people, firms, and states on this globe: how they can survive and who can win is not determined to a great extent in global markets. Globalization has transformed the environment in which the actors live and compete [by implementing]...the challenge of adapting to global standards. In order to participate in the global economy and the world community, nations and firms are required to act in accordance with globally accepted rules and norms. Certainly, pressures from international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and powerful states like the United States play a major role. (Chung 2002, 22-23)

Significantly, this push was not going unnoticed with the remaining value-system and mechanics of the older *Pax Orientalia*, disrupted earlier by the European colonialists but still embedded in the socio-economic networks of the region.

> Although East Asia is extremely diverse, something close to consensus occasionally emerges which is different from the views of the Western countries or the international organizations. For instance, many East Asian countries are uncomfortable with the idea of unrestrained markets, the IMF's response to the Asian financial crisis, and the World Bank's development framework where poverty reduction is the only goal. (Ohno 2002, 8)

This pronouncement that, in East Asia, "...something close to consensus occasionally emerges..." is significant, and will be highlighted below towards the end of this study.

Regional Consternation and International Tension:

Because of the Washington Consensus, even the regional network known as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) began to feel the strain and consternation of pressure from the West in acting on policies to be implemented in the region. In seeming patronal fashion, the Western-led apparatus was more comfortable in acknowledging "ASEAN + 3" (Ohno 2002, 8, note

#4) – the three others being Japan, South Korea, and China. This occurred because the states and governance statutes of those three nations is perceived to be more stable – a situation apparently more welcoming to the policies of Western globalization.

> Many economists and businessmen began to accept that the state was inefficient while markets were efficient, and the result was criticism of state control in East Asian development. Therefore, at the structural and ideological level, the crisis of East Asian development reflects American influence over East Asia in the struggle for global supremacy. East Asia, dependent upon Western markets and capital and divided among themselves, was deprived of the opportunity to decide its future role in the global economy, and subsequently, fell into the developmental crisis. (Chung 2002, 29-30)

Tensions Inherent in this Western Development Architecture

The Rhetorical Question – 'Whose Development?'

As has been stated earlier, the Western-led development apparatus is very mechanistic – similar to the Adam Smith ideal of the invisible-hand which guides the movement of finance, capital and labor to usher agrarian societies into their own industrial revolutions. Because it is mechanistic, with little regard for detailing the process along the way, it fits into a more broadstroke, "functional approach" (World Bank 1993; quoted in Stallings 1998, 55), in which 'the ends justify the means.' In seeking to be the guardian of democracy in this socio-economic approach, the result is actually less democratic and more imposed upon the recipient population; less 'universal' and more impositional of the Western ethos. One East Asian religious community makes this insight:

> A frequent criticism of the [international community] and the [UN] concept of human rights by Muslim scholars, is that it is not universal at all, but arises from a Western, Judaeo-Christian concept of life, and as such the whole notion of human rights does not sit comfortably with traditional Islam. There is more than a little truth in this. (ISIC 2000)

Resentment and Reaction by East Asia over Western Globalization:

Due to the paternalistic nature in which the Washington Consensus has been forced upon recipient nations in East Asia, reaction and resentment to such an imperial imposition has taken two main forms. First, there is an awareness – even from analysts in the West – that governance and other political issues (such as class-struggle, understood in the Marxist sense) have reached "crisis" proportions (Burkett & Hart-Landsberg 2000, 151ff) due to the top-down mechanism of Globalization. Secondly, there is a strong religious reaction because this Western architecture tends to leave the respective East Asian recipient country with a socio-religious contradiction. Since most of the West is now secular-humanist in its outlook, the idea that religion has any bearing on development does not register in most Western thinking along these lines. Because it is perceived that the recipient culture is not being respected or listened to, the reaction to an institutional top-

down approach reinforces sentiments of political, economic, and cultural imperialism by those East Asian receptor nations.

East Asian Social and Cultural Forces in Opposition to this Western Architecture:

In the midst of widespread destruction in the aftermath of World War II, the East Asian countries of Japan and the Philippines, especially, were grateful for the assistance by the Allied Forces (led by the United States) in the reconstruction of devastated land areas and the rebuilding of the societies in each of those respective countries. This situation created a perceptible 'debt of gratitude' to the United States and the West, such that subscribing to the ethos of this Bretton Woods development scheme was implied and expected. This worked fairly well until the mid-1990s, when the East Asian Miracle devolved into an Asian currency crisis. Not being allowed to continue in the long-standing ethos of *Pax Orientalia* has caused many of these countries to lose their way in their own sense of development which not only meets their needs but also speaks to the social values and cultural traditions of each respective East Asian nation. One analyst predicts this disallowance will affect the region for some time to come:

> Which path are East Asian countries heading for? The crisis of development has already robbed East Asians of their confidence in realizing a prosperous future and the emerging crisis of governance will deprive them of a sense of direction and determination.... After the debt crisis, Latin American countries spent the 1980s in a 'lost decade.' Japan lost the decade of the 1990s after the burst of its bubble economy. (Chung 2002, 40-41)

Resilience in the Face of Adversity:

Despite this downcast assessment, the countries of East Asia are strong in their socio-cultural values and economic potential; therefore, Western nations must come to terms about virtually forcing some of their policies to 'fit' better into the cultural fabric of the region. Meanwhile, the nations of East Asia, themselves, are more willing to band together in order to form – or re-form – a united front ("...something close to consensus...") that champions the organic *Pax Orientalia* of old.

> [E]conomic cooperation in East Asia has emphasized human resource development, building infrastructure, promoting small and medium enterprises and 'supporting industries,' creating various institutions for industrialization, coping with negative aspects of growth, and intellectual aid on policy formulation. These overlap with the priority areas of assistance by Japan, the top donor in East Asia.... Cooperation has been promoted through voluntary action and peer pressure, not by forced conditionalities or uniform deadlines. (Ohno 2002, 7)

An Admonition for the West Regarding East Asia Development:

The history of the world is replete with episodes of one human empire usurping another due to superior weaponry and technology. In the current 21st Century atmosphere of international terrorism and regional warfare, it seems arrogant and foolish to "...force...conditionalities or uniform

deadlines…" through the use of more restrictive development architecture. Instead, if the clash-of-civilizations between Western Globalization and the non-West continues, future conflicts could be worse than those before.

> It is imperative, therefore, that those in charge of [this Western-led development architecture], whether in home offices or in the field, be imbued with the right philosophy of development. It must be a philosophy that is premised on respect for the recipient-country. It must regard development assistance as benefiting not only the receiver but also the donor. After all, the long-term goal of development cooperation is not just the promotion of bilateral relations, but most of all, the advancement of humanity and the world. Finally, the philosophy of development must be grounded on the full appreciation of human nature – that to develop persons and societies, we need not transform their identities or disturb their environment. The development process should instead work within the framework of the target beneficiaries: what they think of themselves and what they want for themselves. (Villacorta 2004, 279-280)

Whither Other Paradigms of Development?

Reports by such socio-economic analysts as Burkett & Hart-Landsberg (2000) and Bello (2006) remind us that key players have become disillusioned with the Washington Consensus development agenda; this indeed has challenged to the core the whole framework, mechanics, and ethos of what is now termed as Globalization.[7] As is now apparent, part of the disillusionment stems from "forced conditionalities" (Ohno 2002, 7), seemingly inherent in the Western development architecture, that contributes to social and cultural resentments in certain East Asian nations.[8]

Part of the solution to this enormous problem is apparent in the social and cultural fabric that characterizes East Asia itself. In permitting the forming or re-forming of the extant *Pax Orientalia*, it is postulated that the whole socio-economic framework would be allowed "…more space…[and] more flexibility…" in moving forward into this new millennium:

> It is in such a more fluid, less structured, more pluralistic world, with multiple checks and balances, that the nations and communities of the South [the non-Western developing world] – and the North [the Western developed world] – will be able to carve out the space to develop based on their values, their rhythms, and the strategies of their choice. (Bello 2006, 118)

Burkett & Hart-Landsberg (2000, 213) add that this allowance would contribute to "…the building of movements guided by both an accurate understanding of capitalism and worker-community centered visions of development" – that is, a bottom-up approach that resonates more with East Asian societal and cultural values.

The long-standing trait of 'resilience' in East Asia can foster an environment where the idea of "more space" will also lead to a greater sense of "more flexibility" (Bello 2006, 118) which, as intimated above, would benefit not only East Asia but also the West.

> There are reasons to believe that East Asia will continue to lead the world as the most dynamic growth centre. Over the past years East Asian economies as a whole have demonstrated remarkable resilience to multiple shocks.... Moreover, new growth dynamics are at work in the region, including the ascendancy of China...and the emergence of new players, such as Viet Nam, the rapid growth in intra-regional trade, and a coming of age of the Asian consumer in terms of greater sophistication and purchasing power. (Fukasaku & Trzeciak-Duval 2005, 4)

Recall again Ohno's (2002, 7) pronouncement (above) that "...something close to consensus occasionally emerges...." There is an East Asian 'consensus' that has emerged in the past 20 years – the 'Beijing Consensus'[9]:

> The "Beijing Consensus" (BC) as a concept has been utilised to make the point that China's successful economic development experience...offers an alternative to the policy toolkit offered to developing countries by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the so-called "Washington Consensus" (WC). (Yagci 2016, 30)

Such a consensus, as a competing paradigm for development in East Asia, is not surprising, given the tension caused by the short-sighted thinking that the Washington Consensus has universal applications.

> [C]ertain forms of 'development' have been associated with processes of eradicating particular cultural practices. These claims of cultural homogenization have been exacerbated by the increasing inter-connectedness of the world.... There has been much talk of the 'McDonaldization' or 'Coca-Colaization' of the world as large corporations spread both their production centres and also their sales outlets to more and more remote parts of the globe.... For some, this spread of 'Western' consumption practices is interpreted as a form of neo-colonialism.... (Willis 2011, 217)

Conclusion

In concluding this examination of the vicissitudes of East Asian development, we identify the most recent dichotomy between Western development architecture – the Washington Consensus (WC) – and what is called the Beijing Consensus (BC) in the literature. Certain Western analysts have seen the Beijing Consensus as the only competing alternative – similar in scope and stature to the Washington Consensus paradigm – which betrays myopic Globalization thinking on their part. Ultimately, another over-arching 'consensus' may not necessarily be the development paradigm that such East Asian developing nations want to adopt.

> Despite these characterizations of the BC, it should be noted that even for the developmental states of East Asia, we cannot talk about a unique East Asian economic development model because of divergent historical, institutional and political contexts within which development policies have been implemented.... China as an example of [an] economic development success story offers very

> important lessons for other [East Asian] developing countries but it is better to see it as the "Chinese economic development experience" with unique Chinese characteristics rather than a model to be utilised in other contexts. (Yagci 2016, 36)

Yagci's final statement above is indirectly echoed by Bello. As part of what Bello calls 'deglobalization,' there is a need to "decommission" and to "neuter" the WC Bretton Woods institutions (2006, 116). By working to 'decommission' the Washington Consensus paradigm, the creation of 'more space' will allow regional and local paradigms of development to emerge organically in respective East Asian nations. Bello (2006, 118) then quotes from British philosopher John Gray to indicate the benefit of the emergence of such incipient paradigms: "[These paradigms would] express and protect local and national cultures by embodying and sheltering their distinctive practices" (Gray 1995, 181).

Despite these optimistic pronouncements, there is the plain realization by analysts (like Bello and Yagci) that the Washington Consensus may "...not take lightly challenges to its hegemony" (Bello 2006, 114). While the Beijing Consensus (BC) is likewise a restrictive, top-down model of development, BC does have its champions among certain East Asian neighbors.

> Across Southeast Asia, China's [BC] model has gained considerable acclaim. "There are, of course, no official statements from [Southeast Asian] countries about their decisions to follow the Beijing Consensus or not," writes prominent Indonesian scholar Ignatius Wibowo. "The attraction to the Chinese model is unconscious."
>
> Still, it is possible to quantify this "unconscious" appeal. Having analyzed surveys of political values in Southeast Asia going back a decade, Wibowo concludes that people in many Southeast Asian share a willingness to abandon some of their democratic values for higher growth, and the kind of increasingly state-directed economic system that many of these countries had, in their authoritarian days, and that China still has today. Southeast Asian nations "have shifted their development strategy from one based on free markets and democracy to one based on semi-free markets and an illiberal political system," Wibowo writes. (Kurlantzick 2013)

To quote a phrase, then, 'The jury is still out' – with regards to the organic or seemingly forced adoption of a particular development paradigm by respective East Asian developmental states. Only time will tell how individual East Asian nations will respond to the external and internal pressures that will affect development in their particular societies well into the 21st century.

Endnotes:

1. "In economic terms, 'modernity' encompasses industrialization, urbanization and the increased use of technology within all sectors of the economy. This application of technology and scientific principles is also reflected within social and cultural spheres. What has been termed the 'Enlightenment' period in Western Europe in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries involved the growing importance of rational and scientific approaches to understanding the world and

progress.... This was contrasted with previous understandings that were often rooted in religious explanations.... Approaches to medicine, the legal and political systems and economic development were all affected by this shift in perspective." (Willis 2011, 3)

2. While *Pax Romana* (the 'Roman Peace') is known as a particular 200-year period of the Roman Empire (see Goldsworthy 2016), the term can be representative of other Latin idioms for other human empirical civilizations – e.g., *Pax Sinaica* (the Chinese imperial dynastic periods); and, *Pax Britannica* (the British Empire); etc.
3. Different romanized phonetic systems for Chinese languages – especially, the so-called Wade-Giles of the period before the People's Republic of China (PRC); and, *pinyin*, created in the early years of the PRC – continuously lead to notable variations of romanized Chinese-language written orthography – i.e, 'Song' (Wade-Giles), or 'Sung' (*pinyin*).
4. The interested reader is directed to Majul (1999) for an overview of how the Philippines fared under 300+ years of Spanish colonial rule.
5. Development policies "...offered to developing countries by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank...[has been more recently termed] the so-called 'Washington Consensus' (WC)." (Yagci 2016, 30)
6. Todaro & Smith (2015) give an elaborate summary of the various stages of Western "development" as manifested economically since the end of World War II: 1) 1950-60s: the Stages-of-Growth model (120); 2) 1960-70s: Structural Change models (124-131); 3) 1970s: International Dependence models (131-135); and, 4) 1980-90s: Neo-Classical models (135-140).
7. For example, Bello (2006, xiv) writes: "A paradigm [of Western development] is really in crisis when its best practitioners desert it,...among them Jeffrey Sachs, noted earlier for his advocacy of 'free market' shock treatment in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s; Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist of the World Bank; Columbia Professor Jagdish Bhagwati, who called for global controls on capital flows; and financier George Soros, who condemned the lack of controls in the global financial system that had enriched him."
8. Past and present episodes of social unrest in the Hindu countries of Nepal and India, the Buddhist regimes of Myanmar and Cambodia, and (most notably) the jihad mentality of the Asian Muslim world is attributable to the 'virtual imperialism' of the Washington Consensus programs and institutions (i.e., IMF, World Bank, etc.) within the cultural milieu of these East Asian countries.
9. First coined in Ramo (2004), the 'Beijing Consensus' (BC) now has a growing literature which is beyond the scope of this short study. The interested reader is directed to Yagci (2016) for an astute comparison of BC to the 'Washington Consensus' (WC).

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A Space for Art in Post-agreement Environments: The Case of Belfast

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Abstract:

The boundary between the built environment and social reality in post-agreement environments is difficult to distinguish. In Belfast, Northern Ireland, now over two decades since the Good Friday Agreement, the legacy of the Troubles remains. Over time these environments transform, changing what is inscribed and erased, created and contested; public art is often an element of these spaces and can become a dominant fixture in a city's visual landscape. Such spaces are where different social groups become visible to each other, publicly proclaiming their identities, communicating and interacting. Public spaces become mirrored representations of the society in which they exist. In this, public art and space play an essential role in the symbolic perpetuation or challenging of cultures of violence. By exploring Belfast, this article examines the relationship between public space and art and how it can help further our understanding of post-agreement environments.

Keywords: Public space, public art, Northern Ireland, Belfast, post-agreement.

Introduction

The relationship between public art, space, and post-agreement environments is complex. Public art is often an element of these environments and can become a dominant fixture in a city's visual space. Public art can take many forms, such as murals or monuments or it may take no form at all, such as intervention or performance and involves individuals and communities creating art in response to a place (Moran 2010, 5).

Two teachings may serve as a starting point for exploring the debate surrounding the relationship between public art, space and post-agreement areas. First, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory emphasizes physiological, survival needs or basic human needs before self-actualization and self-transcendence (Koltko-Rivera 2006, 303). Following this model, cultural aspirations can only be achieved after the fulfilment of physiological and security needs along with the need for belonging, love, and self-esteem (Salzburg Global Seminar 2014, 11). Cultural endeavours such as, art, are likely to be viewed as luxuries that must be forfeited until other basic needs like food, security and shelter have been obtained (Cohen 2005, 69).

Second, Theodor Adorno maintains "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (1981, 34). This assertion appears to distil the modern dilemma of the burden of living in a world that is the legacy to regimes of violence so extreme, yet so directly associated with modernity, that these legacies overpower the human capacity to describe or understand, much less accept and move on (Stern 2014, 258). In this, after periods of suffering that generate experiences that are "beyond the limit, human expression and artistic endeavour fall short. Representation is a mirage. To pretend that culture can redeem its own failure is an absurdity. To consider art possible is to fall into a consoling but barbaric illusion" (Stern 2014, 258); to create art about suffering demeans that suffering (Salzburg Global Seminar 2014, 11).

Though these notions have merit, they arguably fail to recognize the potential significance of art in post-agreement environments. Even in situations where basic human needs have not been met, art has thrived (Salzburg Global Seminar 2014, 11-12). In some instances, art may have the capacity to express what is limited by the constraints of formal language (Milton 2014, 2). People that have survived the trauma of conflict can use art to express and give shape to their suffering and experiences that are too horrific for words. In the aftermath of violent conflict, rational deliberation may not be enough to rebuild broken societies. In the aftermath of civil war, the transformation of aggression into empathy and the desire for revenge into the desire for rebuilding relationships is an evolutionary and emotion-based process. It is not a process of purposeful rationality (Cohen 2005, 69).

Likewise, the general fields of psychology and neurobiology contribute to the knowledge of the connections between art and the inner self. Art provides the opportunity for individuals or groups to consider, participate, reflect, think and respond. Art promotes the notion of "feeling thinking" and dignifies human experience by providing a platform for voices to be heard; this triggers the recognition of personal humanity and in turn, the consideration of the collective humanity. In this, the aesthetic experience allows individuals and groups to confront the rational self, emotions, intuitions and physical perceptions (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017, 6). Even Adorno later acknowledged, "perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems" (Adorno 2007, 362). It can be argued that to not create art after suffering would be to allow barbarity to remain unchallenged. As such, it is essential to recognize the role that art can have in making complicated pasts understandable, even if only partially (Milton 2014, 2). Art can also help communities critique the past and the present, the government and themselves; they offer a way to express, collaborate and remember (Carey Jr. and Little 2010, 6) and can help communities begin to rebuild selves and society (O'Rawe and Phelan 2016, 2). However, it is essential that artistic endeavours adhere to a moral obligation of critique to ensure such mediums do not fuel conflict or violence (Salzburg Global Seminar 2014, 12).

Defining Public Art and Space

As the field of public art grows and the range of creative expressions in the public sphere increases, creating a clear set of parameters for what constitutes public art becomes more difficult (Becker 2004, 5). Public art may be thought of as mediums of art that are located outside traditional art spaces like galleries or museums. However, implicit to this definition is the notion that the mainstream contemporary art practice excludes public art, or at the very least positions public art as secondary to art situated inside conventional art spaces (Shaffrey 2010, 9).

One problem in defining public art is that it includes many different forms and practices, such as political activism, socially-engaged practices, permanent or temporary art, and community-based projects. Because public art encompasses so many forms and practices, it can be argued that public art cannot be classified and that "public art is just art" (Shaffrey 2010, 9). The second problem in defining public art is determining what constitutes public and private spaces. Public art is commonly associated with outside spaces. However, art can be located outside in private spaces, such as private housing estates or shopping malls or inside public places, such as publicly funded hospitals, libraries, galleries or museums (Moran 2010, 4-7). Public space is also often defined through the classification of state or private ownership. This perspective is not sustainable because in some cases public bodies provide private spaces like social housing and in other cases, private owners can provide public places like shopping malls. Public and private spaces cannot be interpreted as black-and-white dichotomies. Instead, the boundaries between these spaces are often blurred and exist in a gray area. Because these boundaries are blurred, it is necessary to create a flexible definition (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 112-113). Public space should be considered a cluster concept whereby it can have many different and occasionally contradictory definitions (Kohn 2004, 9). In this, what constitutes public space and art is often unclear and shared definitions elusive (Shaffrey 2010, 9).

Three parameters may help clarify what public art is. First, public art is often commissioned and can require long-term planning, consultation, and approval, however, public art is gradually becoming more artist-led. Second, an emphasis is placed on the audience and the relationship the art will have with those for which it is created. Third, the environment in which the art will be installed must be considered. Context is an essential element in the way art is created, conceived, located and understood. The triangulation of the relationship between the artist, the situation and the public, defines how public art is produced, diluted, negotiated, and received (Shaffrey 2010, 12-14).

Public art is often commissioned and used to promote the "usefulness of art." Art may be used to "fill the 'social bond,' create visual coherence of a city or transform the image of a public body" (Shaffrey 2010, 14). There is debate around how successful commissioned public art is at serving these functions. The promotion of non-controversial commissioned art that aims to create a coherency across public spaces can lead to many plain or bland pieces of art like those found along motorways or outside corporate buildings (Shaffrey 2010, 14). Here, it is also important to look at the idea of creating coherency across public spaces. This concept assumes a homogenous society and a singular public: however, public space serves different functions at different times for diverse sets

of individuals or groups. In Belfast, government policies to create coherency across public space has led to a dualistic landscape and further division (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 110-111); this is discussed later in the article.

The reception of public art can also prove problematic and may be unpredictable; this becomes complicated if the public believes that art has been imposed on them (Shaffrey 2010, 14). The values of public art are often thought to be independent of the difficulties of city life. A portion of public art fails to create a public, a phenomenon related to the differing interests of the artist and the public (Miles 1997, 12-13). This issue is illustrated in a program implemented by the Belfast City Council Community Service Department between 1977 and 1981. This initiative aimed to create more welcoming and inclusive environments in Northern Ireland. Many of the murals created under the scheme had public acceptability and were considered badges of local pride and identity. However, other murals were rejected by the communities for which they were intended. Local communities were often sceptical of the appropriateness or benefit of the repetitive depictions of the animal and jungle scenes, circuses and fairy tales often found in the public art (Crowley 2011, 27).

A mural that was painted on a sixty-yard-long wall in Springhill, Belfast demonstrates this point. Des Wilson, the West Belfast community priest at the time commented that the mural was painted with "brilliant flair and astounding absence of sensitivity" on the part of the artist. After the mural was painted the local population was left to contemplate the image and question if the wild animals in the jungle represented the artists' perception of them. Local children altered the image through a series of additions and deletions. Wilson noted, "the mural may have been an outsider's comment on the district; the emendations were the children's comment on the artist" (Wilson 1983, 19). This image illustrates the disconnect between the government, artists' intentions and the public. The local population did not identify with the mural and was unsure about its content. Conversely, the mural represented the official government stamp, promoted the caring side of the government and legitimized the Community Service Department of Belfast City Council (Wilson 1983, 19).

Public art like the Springhill mural can develop into conflicts over art and culture or words and images. The shared social position of offense develops when there is public disagreement over words and images (Tepper 2011, 2). In conflicts over art and culture, there is a "social construction of acceptability" of what is and what is not considered acceptable art in a specific space. The offense to the art is a construction of "social life and collective definitions;" the shared property of a collective community. How a public receives public art is determined by the demographics and the political and institutional structures of a place (Tepper 2011, 2). In this, public artworks

> ...often serve as lightning rods, bringing forward and giving voice to underlying tension caused by social change. When communities experience an influx of new populations, new institutions, new types of families, new patterns of leisure, and new technologies, community members fight over symbols such as art and culture as a way to assert themselves. When everything feels "up for grabs," people grab onto

> symbols as a way to make sense of change and affirm their identity and place in the world (Tepper 2011, 3).

Controversies over public art are not merely the result of varying personalities or values but are characterized by the democratic outcome of a population grappling with the consequences of social change and are representative of more profound societal struggles (Tepper 2011, 3).

The construction of public space and the creation of public art can be considered a social relational process; "public art intrinsically inhabits a socio-spatial reality beyond its reified dimension, this is a material reality" (Zabracki 2014, paragraph 13). The art is not just a physical reality, but it becomes part of the social reality of the space in which it exists. Though artists, collaborators and commissioning bodies, like the Community Service Department of Belfast City Council, may try to create art that is acceptable for specific spaces, this endeavour may not always prove successful. Instead, art may reflect personal or institutional perspectives of economic, political, social, physical aesthetic or cultural symbolic roles of public art (Zabracki 2014, paragraph 13). If public art like the Springhill mural is created for their audiences, the public, they should ideally have been involved in deciding what art was appropriate for a given space. Though this may be the case, there is tension between the "ideal discourse and the everyday experiences of social inclusionary, or exclusionary, practices of public art (Zabracki 2014, paragraph 10). Some governments even have initiatives that try to deal with issues of inclusion and exclusion in public space through socially-engaged or participatory processes. Public art that uses socially-engaged or participatory processes is regularly encouraged to increase access to the arts through social inclusion. However, governments commonly try to make up for social exclusion by implementing socially inclusive policies, while simultaneously the structural inequalities remain unquestioned (Shaffrey 2010, 14).

The Construction of Public Space and Art in Belfast

Post-agreement environments are spaces of continual transformation (O'Rawe and Phelan 2016, 2) where public space becomes an avenue for different social groups to assert positions and beliefs, interact, communicate and demand legitimacy. As such, public space becomes a place of both inclusion and exclusion, of visibility and invisibility (Poposki and Todorova 2016, 98). The constructed environment of public spaces like street patterns, buildings or territorial markings can have an intentional or unintentional influence on a population's behaviour and perceptions and can shape or mirror social reality. The population shapes the built environment, and afterward, the population is shaped by the environment (Brand 2009, 37-38).

Difference is seemingly an inherent characteristic of all spatial relations, but it mainly manifests itself in urban spaces, like Belfast, where differences are founded in population density and lived spaces, the juxtaposition of activities and land management and the high level of interaction and interconnections. Urban spaces constitute intersecting publics and public spaces, with the population engaging in fragmented systems of activity and connections (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie

2015, 110). In these urban environments, particularly in contested cities, the relationship between the built space and social reality becomes difficult to distinguish between (Brand 2009, 38). Much of the public art in Belfast is a visual manifestation of the political situation from which it was created. The content of the public art has shifted from representations of the resolve of war no matter the cost to representations of the human price of the conflict, culture and local community pride (Brand 2009, 47). These spaces are mirrored representations of society and have come to reflect not only the political climate but structures of perceived ownership and usage; these claims of ownership over space question its supposed publicness. Belfast and other urban spaces across Northern Ireland remain segregated and polarized and have the potential to become contested (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 126).

Though public space has the option of co-consumption by multiple users, equitable consumption is not guaranteed. The inequitable use of public space can potentially lead to competition or conflict over the limited resource of space; this can become more problematic in areas that constitute polarized, heterogeneous societies. Public places are spatially constructed, accounting for social and economic factors which can result in zones that are by one group perceived as inclusionary, and by another as exclusionary or places of division and inequality. Individuals and groups can create public spaces that are polarized, inequitable and sites of resistance, power, and identity. These symbolic landscapes are areas of exclusion and inclusion and refusal and entitlement. This dynamic creates a symbolic landscape that decides who will be seen, who should not be seen and who obtains the rights to public space, which is determined by a more extensive social struggle (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 110-113).

Public space and art play a crucial role in the symbolic persistence or defiance of a culture of violence, especially in post-agreement societies. Symbolic representation in urban spaces is as much about communicating to 'the other' as it is about speaking to the converted. The significance of symbolic representation is not only about the message being sent to 'the other' but also the message being communicated to its supporters (Jargon 2007, 97).

Since the ceasefires and formal peace agreements in Northern Ireland, attempts have been made to create shared space by removing sectarian murals and depoliticizing these spaces. These actions can be understood as the unequal distribution of the restriction on the expression of cultural identity and have generated resentment between communities; the "dislike of 'outsiders' with different identities moving into 'their communities'" (Haydon, McAlister and Scraton 2013, 9-10). In the context of young people, this has caused racist acts that can be seen as an "extension of sectarianism – the expectation that defense of one's own identity and place necessitated rejection and exclusion of 'others'" (Haydon, McAlister and Scraton 2013, 10).

Public spaces are socially and culturally constructed embodying the actions and statements carried out within them (Paeslack 2016, 38). The processes that individuals and communities use to create landscapes are never predetermined. Though the perceptions of and reactions to a landscape are contextually spatial and historical, the creation of landscapes is not predefined because those

perceptions and reactions are unpredictable. In this, communities create time and place just as they are shaped by them (Bender 2001, 4).

In these landscapes, there are systems of signs and symbols that can be interpreted. These systems become a part of the formation of the post-agreement city and those that live within that city, shaping "time, space and memory" (Paeslack 2016, 38). In Belfast, these systems and signs are present in the public representation of community separation. The public symbolic representations come in many forms like murals, banners, and flags. Public displays like these can be considered offensive, oppressive and antagonistic (Northern Ireland Foundation n.d.). The problem in Northern Ireland is not that the symbols are not understood but that two communities understand them in two distinct ways. Embedded between two communities is distrust, fear, and sectarianism (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 20). This phenomenon has developed over years of opposition and distorts the understanding of the expressive activities of 'the other.' The control over space infers power, and this can be interpreted as either oppressive or positive expression, depending on an individual's or group's position in Belfast (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 120).

Psychological and physical borders or boundaries serve as mental maps of variation and belonging. As such, these borders or boundaries cannot be understood as a "spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact which shapes place." Deep-rooted memories, identities, and perceptions of 'the other' have generated predisposed notions of 'the other' and intensified the mental maps of places of accessibility and places of denial. Though post-agreement environments are continually shaped and re-shaped, it is not possible to erase conflicts over identity and space. In this, the lived experiences of those in Belfast have become socially embedded, and the landscape embodies the population's experiences and beliefs (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 116).

Urban spaces often experience attempts to efface the memory and history of recent conflicts. These tendencies frequently originate from motivations to eliminate the memory of the "vanquished other," yet at the same time they may also tangibly reproduce psychological trauma because following violence there can be a collective ambition to forget; "to chase a mirage of closure" (O'Rawe and Phelan 2016, 2). In other cases, conflict transformation in the form of urban regeneration is part of broader narratives like nation building, established on "mythologised pasts" that silence the memories of marginalized groups. The desired necessity to erase history as part of urban regeneration can operate as a "politically expedient form of amnesia" (O'Rawe and Phelan 2016, 2).

Public spaces of memory are constructed by individuals or groups to help give meaning to, and shape lived experiences of absences, fears, and desires that plague modern society. Conventionally national spaces of memory were formed and understood as revering the pasts of a population. However, in the contemporary context, these spaces include troubling absences and broken accounts of violence. Landscapes and practices dedicated to the commemoration and memorialization of the past are inherently guided by criteria of inclusion and exclusion within the social fabric that is part of the broader expression of recognition that disposes claims of egalitarian

redistribution and fosters prejudice and chauvinism, separatism, authoritarianism, and patriarchalism (Graham and Whelan 2007, 479).

Marginalized or excluded groups may also find themselves erased from, and invisible in the landscape. Visibility in public space is one way for excluded groups to affirm history and physically establish their right to exist in the landscape; exclusion is partly the experience of a diminished or absent sense of identity. An essential part in the reintegration process of excluded populations is helping them regain their voice and express their experiences, confirm their traditions and histories, create a collective identity and assist them in developing self-confidence (Paddison, Pollock and Sharp 2005, 1007). Public places of memory seek to remember the past and recognize absences that may be framed as "modernity's ghosts of a nation." Historic sites are often considered "eyewitnesses to the past." For some individuals visiting these sites can be cathartic and a way to work through haunting emotions of the past like guilt, anger, fear, shame, longing, unease or sadness. Through this kind of representation, space is marked by shared needs, desires and notions of the future through the past (Till 2005, 9).

From this perspective, urban spaces serve as both physical and metaphysical metaphors for post-agreement states. These sites become archives of memory, and difficult histories (O'Rawe and Phelan 2016, 2); no conflict can exist without at least two competing histories (Tidwell 2001, 123). Northern Ireland is considered a place that "simmered unhealthily in its mythological juices" or national and sectarian mythologies that arguably, at least to some extent, still exist (Janousova 2002, 162-163).

Urban spaces are socially and culturally constructed, mirroring the complexities of public space (Paeslack 2016, 38). Public spaces representing the greater society, provide many functions for different individuals or groups at various times and with different agendas. In this, the concept of a singular public becomes questionable. There is a purposeful construction of public spaces to try and minimalize encounters with others that are perceived to be a threat to accepted narratives of a given space, giving rise to the contradictory state of public spaces where they are both inclusive and exclusive and more accessible but more closed off to different groups (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 110).

In Belfast, this has created public territories reflecting different claims of identity, which is the spatial outcome of national identity and ownership that result from societal divisions (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 110). Public policy that has tried to introduce a sense of order into the socially unsettled landscape of Belfast has to some degree further emphasized fragmentation and parcelled the public spaces of the city. These spaces can be understood as cosmopolitan, shared, neutral or ethnic. Cosmopolitan spaces constitute areas like the Titanic and the Cathedral Quarters, entities like integrated schools represent shared spaces, city centres are examples of neutral spaces, and ethnic spaces can be seen in segregated residential areas. The cosmopolitan areas of Belfast are generally located near the city centre with the docklands of the Titanic Quarter as the obvious exception. These zones are removed from the city's perceivably Troubles areas and try to avoid reference to

features of Belfast that are associated with divisive ethnonational symbolic markers (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 111). Aspects of cities are not developed with the simple intent to make them beautiful. Instead, the development of beautiful cities is done to obscure the incompatibility of a city's development with a free society (Paddison, Pollock and Sharp 2005, 1014). In the context of Belfast, it can be argued, "There is something almost schizophrenic about a city that wipes virtually all evidence of the Troubles from its newly polished centre, even as it finds that tours of the murals, monuments and painted kerbstones of some of its residential suburbs are among its most popular and distinctive tourist attractions" (Rolston 2010, 304).

After the 1998 peace accord, Northern Ireland became a state of fluctuation and change, with the implementation of many schemes aimed at redevelopment and regeneration. Many of these projects have concentrated on urban areas like Belfast (Komarova 2008). These regeneration projects often promote division; this is demonstrated by nine-four percent of social housing in Belfast being segregated (McClements 2018) and the imposed dualistic nature of Belfast within the normalized city centre, sanitized from the conflict and away from the Troubles areas (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 111). Rooted in a history of division, the segregation of Northern Ireland is both facilitated and made visible by social, cultural and physical barriers like housing estates, flags, murals and architecture (Abraham and Selim 2016, 205). Though the peace process has made progress, symbols and signs of sectarian division and remnants of the conflict can still be seen throughout the city's landscape and can be interpreted as "physical scars on the landscape" (Brand 2009, 36-37).

Consequently, Belfast has become a city of dualism. On the one hand, there is the "Consumerist Belfast" which includes the retail areas of the city centre and the redeveloped Titanic Quarter. On the other hand, there are the segregated working-class communities which represent the "Troubles Belfast" (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 111). In 1989 the Belfast Urban Area Plan sought to make the city centre a symbol of normality; the corporate logos of newly constructed developments and retailers came to symbolize a normal Northern Ireland. The developments and retailers were touted as icons to contest the multiple images painted throughout the city's landscape which represent contentious symbols of the past (Hocking 2015, 69). The urban planning initiatives in Belfast can be used to understand the existing power structures (Brand 2009, 38), rendering the city centre a neutral space for individuals and communities that can afford it; this is maintained in the post-agreement era (Hocking 2015, 69). In this, much of the population has not experienced the benefits of a "Troubles-free city" (Bielenberg 2018).

The continuation of the ethno-sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland shows that, even in the era of globalization, the homogenization of culture and increased consumerism, the connections between ethno-sectarian separation and fear are significant factors in understanding the logic of the violence and cultural polarization enacted in these landscapes. In this, the capability of localized, nationalist and anti-pluralist policies to maintain the perpetuation of residential segregation through particularistic frameworks of the notion of truth and the recreation of history remains a regular feature of such environments (Shirlow 2003, 76). With this, public space in Belfast cannot be

understood as a "singular space within a homogeneous society" (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 113). Instead, it must be interpreted as "exasperating existing socio-spatial polarisation; a virtual Petri dish so as to observe and investigate the cacophony of conflicts that are played out upon the urban canvas in an attempt to attain the control and capture of the value of a given public place" (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 113). However, the government in Northern Ireland has continued to sanitize public spaces (Henry, Lloyd and Ritchie 2015, 113-114).

Physical and mental divisions in Northern Ireland can also be seen in the potent symbol of the peace walls that separate communities and towns. One of the most well-known peace and most substantial walls, the Cupar Way wall, divides the Loyalist Shankill area from the Catholic Falls Road. It was initially constructed as a short-term measure (Bielenberg 2018) in 1969 (BBC News 2009) and is almost twice the height of the Berlin Wall (Bielenberg 2018). There are more peace walls in post-agreement Northern Ireland than before the 1998 formal peace agreements. These walls are in areas that experience the most social deprivation and have been deeply affected by the Troubles. Seventy percent of Trouble-related killings happened within 500 yards of peace walls. The peace walls of post-agreement Northern Ireland can be considered less about security and more as ways to demarcate territory and protect identities (Bielenberg 2018).

In Northern Ireland legislation alone cannot create an inclusive environment. Sectarianism, from a cultural perspective, is a matter of attitudes that are encoded and facilitated through the indoctrination of the younger generations to understand the world through an 'us versus them' or 'the other' perspective (Janousova 2002, 167-168). Mentalities or claims of identity can be observed in localized public spaces across Northern Ireland and often manifest in the form of commemorative or memorial sites to the people who have died because of the conflict. Following the 1998 peace accords, existing commemorative and memorial sites have been maintained, and new ones constructed. These sites can be understood as enduring expressions of contested identity. The dead are being used to legitimize and perpetuate the political debate in Northern Ireland around sectarianism and ethnonationalism. In this, "there is little sense of reconciliation through shared loss" (Graham and Whelan 2007, 480).

Spaces of commemoration have become places where different groups compete for the right of hegemonic victimhood through the proclamation of opposing identities and irreconcilable differences (Graham and Whelan 2007, 480). In a sense, a hierarchy of the dead has developed (Graham and Whelan 2007, 488). The imagery of these sites can be interpreted as violent or at the very least, imply violence because the collective identities of each group are embodied in violence where collective memory becomes a place to store wounds and scars (Graham and Whelan 2007, 480). As such, it is more likely for memory to be triggered by contestation and amnesia to be activated by an aspiration for reconciliation (Rolston 2010, 285).

It can be argued that the past should not be an enduring and regressive frame of reference in democratic states (Graham and Whelan 2007, 479). Instead, the fictional lineage of heritage should be reconfigured and considered in terms of a "rhizome history of disinheritance," where the "erasure

of heritage…the objects of the past…should be mobilized as disinheritance…in order to make the past implode into the present and across spatial scales in ways that unsettle fundamental social imaginary significations" (Graham and Whelan 2007, 279; Landzelius 2003, 195). In this, claims of the past, including sectarian claims, should be assessed and deconstructed to undermine and reject all claims of imagined unbroken lineage and entitlement to the past, to disinherit every claim (Landzelius 2003, 207-208).

In another way, there is a struggle between survivors and the sovereign powers that they oppose which revolves around memory and forgetting (Graham and Whelan 2007, 479); "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (Edkins 2003, xv). In the context of Northern Ireland remembering the past in a new way is central to transformation. There is a need for a change "from destructive remembrance to constructive amnesia – and from cynical, selective forgetting to responsible, alarming memory" (Graham and Whelan 2007, 492).

Conclusion

The boundary between the built environment and social realities in post-agreement environments are often blurred. Public space and art are important elements of this dynamic because public art and these spaces become mirror representations of the social and political climate. Two ideas that help inform the debate around public art and space in post-agreement settings. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Theodor Adorno's notion that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." Both question the use of artistic and cultural endeavours in the aftermath of violent conflict. However, despite their objections, these endeavours can help societies negotiate the past, present, and future as well as collaborate to rebuild selves and society.

Before exploring public art and space in Belfast, what constitutes public art and space is examined. There are two primary problems in reaching a shared definition of these terms. First, because public art comes in many different forms like socially engaged practices, political activism, and temporary or permanent art, some argue that public art is simply undefinable and that public art is just art. Second, distinguishing between private and public spaces can prove problematic. Public art is typically associated with outside areas; however, it can be located inside public spaces like publicly funded galleries, hospitals or libraries or located in outdoor spaces in privately owned housing estates or shopping malls. In this, public space needs a flexible definition and should be considered a cluster concept where it can have various and sometimes contradictory interpretations.

Three main parameters that help provide insight into the constitution of public art. First, public art is often commissioned though it is becoming more artist driven. Second, emphasis needs to be placed on the relationship between the art itself and the audience for which it is created. Third, it is essential that the context that the art will be located is considered. This triangulation of relationships between the artist, the public and the situation defines how public art is created, diluted, negotiated, compromised, and received. The reception of art in public spaces is especially

critical and can prove problematic if the audience feels the art has been imposed on them; this can lead to conflicts over art and culture or words and images.

Public spaces and art in Belfast continually change, transforming what is created and erased. The constructed environment is built by society, and afterward, society is shaped by the environment. Most of the public art in Belfast is a visual representation of the political climate from which it was created. The content of the public art moved from depictions of the resolve of war at any cost to the representation of the human price of the Troubles, culture and community pride. These symbolic representations play an essential role in perpetuating or defying culture and violence.

After the ceasefire and formal peace accords in Northern Ireland, there was an emphasis placed on the removal of sectarian murals and the depolarization of space. However, these efforts have often had the opposite effect. Belfast has become a city of dualism where there is a "normal" Belfast represented by the city centre and Titanic areas that are a sanitised of the sectarian symbols of the Troubles and the Troubled areas designation by the residential suburbs that still have ethnonational symbolic markers of the conflict. These divisions are also seen in the physical and mental boundaries in Belfast like flags, mural and peace walls. In this discussion of its public art and space, it seems that Belfast is a city that may still be grappling with remnants of the conflict.

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My Persian Carpet: A Family and Cultural Legacy

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Abstract:

Life is full of and driven by symbols of all kinds. There is almost an unlimited number of visual symbols throughout the world used by countless cultures to represent them, their rituals, their beliefs, their connection to the world and to each other. One way that Jews maintained contact with each other over the centuries, without inviting unwanted suspicion, was sending non-verbal messages via common objects laced within the material culture of their adopted homes. It is well known that Jews, since the year 70 CE, have sojourned, to use the Biblical term, in countries where they were considered outsiders, or what today we would call "the other." They were people without a land of their own and dispersed to every country and in almost every region on Earth, either voluntarily or under duress. Jews have always found a subtle "secret" way of communicating with each other even at a distance, perhaps just to say that "you are not alone" or even more specific messages that have yet to be unraveled and revealed. It is my wish to attempt such a revelation here with a single object, a turn-of-the-century Jewish Persian carpet with which I am personally familiar.

Keywords: Persian, carpets, Jewish, decorative arts, iconography, hidden symbols, semiotics

Life is full of and driven by symbols of all kinds. We have also seen cross-cultural use of symbols, changing the meaning completely when used for a purpose removed from their original context. For instance, the swastika, to Buddhists and other non-Western cultures, is an ancient universal symbol that signifies auspiciousness and good fortune, as well as plurality, eternity, abundance, prosperity and long life, whereas in the hands of the Nazi regime, the same symbol came to represent to the world brutality, hatred and evil. Additionally, in Nazi Germany, pink triangles were used as one of the Nazi concentration camp badges to identify male prisoners who were sent there if they were homosexual. Intended as a badge of shame, the pink triangle has since been reclaimed and re-purposed as an international symbol of Gay pride and the Gay Rights Movement.

There is an almost unlimited number of visual symbols used throughout the world by cultures to represent them, their rituals, their beliefs, their connection to the world and to each other; these are generally benign. The study of these symbols can be found in the discipline of semiotics.[1] On occasion, a scholar will examine an apparently mundane object from a new perspective, e.g., a semiotic one, and will enlighten his audience to something completely new and fascinating based on

its visual symbolic elements, as well as the meaning of the number combinations in which those elements appear.

I recently discovered such symbolic content in the design of what I believe is a "Jewish" Persian carpet, i.e., one woven by Jewish weavers in the Persian (Iranian) city of Isfahan. I inherited this carpet from my maternal grandmother several years ago. Rife with images of flowers and Jewish ritual objects, these visual symbols are grouped in numbers ranging from one to thirteen throughout the carpet. This lends mystical meaning to centuries-old Jewish objects that heretofore had been hidden in plain sight. My carpet was probably created in the late 19th or early 20th century in today's Iran.[2]

This sudden revelation is what led me to scrutinize and then research the symbolic program that appers to be present in my carpet. There is an ancient tradition of symbolic imagery woven into Persian carpets, particularly prevalent in the Safavid Era (1502-1736), especially its capital: Isfahan[3] (Noroozy 2011). "During a period in the early Safavid dynasty the pictures and patterns found in carpets often held symbolic connonatiations, conveyed through visual puns. Moreover, it seems that the second meaning carried in these puns usually involved a religious message relating to the spiritual tradition of Muslim mystics" (Cammann 1978, 124). Though I don't believe that the patterns and meaning of the symbols in my carpet are of Muslim derivation, but rather Jewish, the idea of using visual symbolism and specific colors expressing both a quotidian, as well as a certain spiritual content in the creation of Persian carpets, seems to be present. This surely was not lost on the Jewish population, particularly the Jewish carpet weavers of Isfahan.[4]

The Jewish presence in Iran is one of the oldest in the diaspora, dating back to the 8th century BCE, but the largest migration of Jews to Persia came at the time of their expulsion from Israel following the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in Jerusalem ca. 586 BCE. Babylonia was subsequently conquered and annexed by Persia's Cyrus the Great, who emancipated the Jews and allowed them to return to their homeland: the Land of Israel. However, many also relocated to Persia. Typical of Jewish exiles adapting to their new "homes" after expulsion, they learned to adopt local traditions and assimilate them, including objects created by skills artisans like carpets, while for instance, dwelling in Persia. Furthermore, the Jews seem to have had an active role in the development of Iranian, or Persian history, society and culture, so it should come as no surprise that the Jewish carpet weavers would incorporate the use of traditional Persian symbolic imagery into their own carpet designs. (Sarshar 2011)

Since 70 CE, the year that the Romans, at the direction of the Emperor Vespasian and under the command of his son Titus, destroyed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem (Josephus 1960, 547-88)—the central focus of all Jews throughout the world even today—and laid waste to much of Israel, the Jews have sojourned, to use the Biblical term, in countries where they were considered outsiders, or what today we would call "the other." They were people without a land of their own and dispersed to every country and to almost every region on Earth, either voluntarily or under duress. Their lives and their security were always precarious. One way of maintaining contact with each other and to

send an expression of solidarity, was to transmit non-verbal messages via common objects masked within the material culture of their adopted countries. This helped to evade unwanted attention and/or suspicion. It allowed Jews to feel a small comfort in the midst of a sea of strangers (non-Jews or Gentiles), but it is also what gave them hope, so that they could continue to live their lives without feeling completely alone or isolated. It allowed them to feel some modicum of peace under often trying conditions, whether it was in the Middle East, Asia, Northern Europe or the New World.

The foremost authority on Jewish carpets and their symbolism, Anton Felton, relates that Jews have been well known fabric weavers for millennia. He based this observation on a wealth of written and visual evidence that he has meticulously gathered. He states that Jews have always found a subtle "secret" way of communicating with each other (Felton 2013). Perhaps it was a way to say that "you are not alone" or possibly, it was a way to send more specific messages that have yet to be unraveled and revealed. It is my purpose to attempt such a revelation here with a single object with which I am personally familiar: my maternal grandmother's Persian carpet.

Before the 15th century, Jews had resided in Spain for centuries, were very well integrated into Spanish society and high Spanish culture with their trades, such as metal working, weaving and other decorative arts (Felton 2013). Beginning as much as a century before and with the ushering in of the Renaissance, there was a growing pressure from the Vatican to "purify" and be rid of undesirables; i.e., almost exclusively, the Jews.[5] This pressure eventually resulted in the institution of the Spanish Inquisition, an institution that often targeted the Jews for persecution, particulary those who converted. A decree was issued by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to expel all of them from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492.[6] Even before this Church-sanctioned persecution, many Jews converted to Christianity as a survival tactic but still practiced Judaism in secret; they were known as "Conversos" or the more perjorative term, "Maranos" (Spanish for swine). The imperative of survival effected the lives of these Converso Jews in that they led precarious parallel lives – parallel because they lived double lives; one being the false public life of a Christian and the other the true private life of a Jew. It was precarious, because if their secret came to the attention of the Inquisition, they would be tortured, publically humiliated and executed.

Celebrated 12th-century Jewish Torah scholar and physician, Maimonides, a.k.a. Rambam, advised, and here Felton paraphrases the Jewish scholar, "that to save life by converting to another faith was permissible so long as one remained faithful in one's heart and, as soon as possible, returned to the full life of a Jew."[7] (Rambam 1995, 208) This was always the intention of the Conversos of Spain.

Felton relates that the Jewish artisans of 15th-century Spain ocassionally created items of decorative art for the Spanish elite that on first glance, were beautiful examples of the period's indigenous craftsmanship. At the same time, these works often contained symbolic references to Jewish life. Thus, if a fellow Jew saw them, they would know that the item was created by their compatriot and secretly expressed uniquely Jewish sensibilities. Christians patrons viewing the same item would only recognize its beauty and the traditional Christian symbols included therein. Such

solidarity made Jews feel a measure of comfort in the fact that they were communicating with each other as Jews, even though many of them had "converted" to Christianity to save themselves and their families from torture and death.

Secret catch-phrases, poetry and artefacts all had double meanings. A good example of this is a 15th-century Spanish lamp with a crucifix on top, but eight oil lamps on its base. A Christian would appreciate it as a beautiful work of decorative art with an aesthetic and symbolic connection to Christianity, while the Jewish viewer would recognize the eight lamps as signifying the eight days of Hanukah, otherwise known as the "Festival of Lights," and feel that connection to the Jewish craftsman who had created it, as well as the redemptive character of the holiday (Felton 2013).

My carpet has a similarly "hidden" symbolic design, even the same allusion to Hanukah and the idea of redemption, woven into its seemingly traditional Persian (in the old Safavid tradition) composition and motifs, though in a much more nuanced way and on a much more complex level. Symbols are ways of telling a kind of story in such a subtle manner that only the initiated can read them. Jewish decorative objects, including Persian carpets, are sometimes infused with such iconography. Felton writes that "Symbols sort us out into cohesive groups with shared non-verbal understandings, for words often fail to articulate the deep truths of consciousness and distort and corrupt what we struggle to convey" (Felton 2013). He goes on to say that "Jewish carpets are significant cultural chronicles of the Jewish people, giving insights and understanding which might not otherwise be available" (Felton 2013).



To make a long story very short, one day, I was sitting in my living room where my carpet lies, and glanced down at it just as I had many times before (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1. This is an image of the turn-of the century Persian carpet that lies in my living room.

Its dominant color is a deep blue and the flowers and other motifs are combinations of scarlet, white, blue and yellow. I

discovered that these colors, along with purple, were often associated with the Holy of Holies, the most sacred place located at the center of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the one destroyed by the Titus and the Romans in the year 70 CE. These specific colors are even mentioned by Flavius Josephus, the famous Jewish historian to the Roman Emperors Vespasian and Domitian (Josephus 1960*)* in his 20-volume tome. So, aside from the visual symbols that are peculiar to Jewish culture, even this particular choice of the color scheme can be seen to relate to the carpet's Jewish iconography.[8] I have found that the majority of Persian carpets' general chromatic field is red or green rather than blue, which indicates that it was possibly the blue that was chosen by the Jewish weavers as an easily recognizable Jewish symbolic color scheme without being too blatantly different.

I never thought twice about any iconographic implications inherent in my carpet until that epiphanic moment as I sat there staring down at it. On this particular day, I was nonchalantly glancing at the carpet's outer border, the one closest to where I was sitting, and I noticed for the first time, in a moment of revelation and astonishment, mirror-image dreidels incorporated into the design of one of the border flowers at my feet (Figs. 2 and 2a). I asked myself, "Am I really seeing what I think am seeing?"



Fig. 2. This is one of six "dreidel flowers" on the outer-most border of the carpet.



Fig. 2a. This is a simple, but common example of a contemporary dreidel. It and an almost infinite number of variations, are still used today in a games played by all Jewish children on Hanukah each year.

The answer to myself was, "Absolutely." I scrutinized the other Floral patterns around the entire outer border and saw that this particular double dreidel motif was undeniably repeated three times on each of the two long sides of my 9' x 12' carpet. That led me to start perusing the rest of the carpet. The more I explored, the more I discovered.

I started to examine the carpet's other flowers because much to my fascination and delight, they were clearly arranged in flower types and groups. At first, I didn't really understand the significance, but I came to that realization soon after. As I walked around the carpet's perimeter looking for other Jewish motifs besides the dreidels, I noticed that on one of the short sides there was an isolated "double-flower" motif in the center of the outermost border (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. The "double-flower" motif on one of the outer borders.

I then walked over to the opposite side and noticed that there were two "single-flower" motifs separated from the other flowers that flanked them, in the center of the outermost border and an inner border adjacent to it (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. The "double single-flower" motif on the outer border opposite the the "double-flower" motif on the other side of the carpet."

Upon researching the motif, I discovered that my carpet was most probably manufactured in Isfahan, Persia (modern-day Iran), because of these four flowers. They are not found in such an isolated configuration in all Persian carpets, but most commonly those manufactured in the central Iranian cities of Isfahan and Kashan.

Next, I began to count the flowers as they appeared in bunches on the carpet, symmetrically arranged and "pointing" toward the center (Fig. 1). I had already established that the numbers 1 and 2 were clearly present. Eventually, I counted flowers bunched in groups that went all the way up to the number thirteen.

Apparently, the clever Jewish designer did not want to arouse any suspicion, so within the symmetricval arrangement of the flowers, typical of Persian design, the numbered order appears as mirror images all around the carpet's central array. Interestingly, the weaver and/or designer of this carpet also wanted it to look like a standard Persian Isfahanian carpet, so he/she arranged all motifs in a symmetrical pattern, disguising the use of Jewish symbols within the traditional patterns in this way. If these groups of flowers are looked at in the correct fashion, there are different combinations that "add up" to traditional Jewish mystical numbers. I thought to myself that this was most likely not coincidental. Then it occurred to me that there is a song that Jews sing at the end of the Passover seder every year (it is called *Echad Me Yo-day-ah* or Who *Knows One?*) that lists various Jewish mystical concepts according to the number associated with them, such as God is one, the Tablets of the Law are two, the forefathers are three, etc., all the way to thirteen, which, consistent with mystical

Jewish thought, signifies the thirteen attributes of God or the thirteen articles of faith formulated by Maimonides in his *Mishneh Torah*. (Rambam 1994, 151-58.) Only Jews would recognize such a significant though apparently esoteric connection.

I was beginning to get excited. But then I asked myself, why are there dreidels (only in the borders), objects related to the festival of Hanukah, and simultaneously, flowers numbered in a way that relate to Passover, in the main, central field of the same carpet? As I stated earlier, the more I explored, the more I discovered, and the more compelled I was to try and unravel the mystery contained within the seemingly random array of symbolic floral images. I continued to scrutinize the patterns and the motifs and discovered that in the center of the carpet was a blue, scarlet and white flower composed of several small flowers that made up the whole (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. This is the flower at the center of the carpet toward which every other group of flowers seems to point in a symmetrical pattern. This flower seems to be related to the six "dreidel flowers" on the outer borders as it relates to the Festival of Lights or Hanukah but also to the same Passover song mentioned above.

It has eight red flowers on the perimeter plus one red central flower (all relating to the eight days of Hanukah, and the Hanukah menorah which contains nine candle holders), as well as four white flowers on the inside. If you take eight red flowers on the perimeter, the four inner white flowers and add the single, central flower, it adds up to thirteen, thus relating this motif to both the Festival of Hanukah and to the Holiday of Passover.

The number nine is clearly alluding to the nine candle holders on the *Hanukiah* or the traditional Hanukah candelabra or menorah, as well as to nine months of preganancy (one of the mystical numbers in the Passsover song mentioned above). I was ruminating over the connection

between the two holidays and their symbols and why they appeared together on my carpet. Perhaps this object of Jewish decorative art was some sort of message, but what could that message possibly be?[9]

Although it might seem very complex visually, the message could be simple; perhaps a family or family member in Isfahan was informing the family that had emigrated to North America, of their itinerary (the carpet was purchased by my grandmother at auction in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 1936, and by then it was already quite old). Perhaps, the Persian branch of the family or a relative would be leaving Isfahan, around or after the festival of Hanukah which occurs in December, on their way to the New World, and hoped to join the family at the other end of the journey by Passover, which generally occurs in April. Perhaps the carpet was shipped from Persia to Canada ahead of their departure as a silent message indicating their impending arrival. (Yerushalmi 2009, 43-44).[10]

As Felton noted, to a Jew, the holidays of Hanukah and Passover represent very important ideas associated with Jewish history and Jewish culture. (Felton 2013, 1) Hanukah represents perseverance in challenging times and enduring harsh conditions, i.e. persecution and isolation, as well as standing up for what is right, and never forsaking faith in the Almighty's redemption of righteous people because of fear, i.e. rule under the Seleucid Syrian Greeks. Passover has come to represent the liberation and spiritual redemption of the Jewish people from the oppression and religious suppression of Egyptian Pharaonic rule. This subtly symbolic program could similary be associated with the contemporary oppression of the Jews of Persia in the late 19th century and their quest for freedom and redemption, wishing to join their liberated and spiritually redeemed relatives in the New World, where such instituional and widespread persecution was relatively unknown (Yerushalmi 2009, 43-44). The iconography found in the carepet's design could be seen by non-Jews as simply a beautiful traditional Persian/Isfahani design, while it would instantly be recognized by Jews as specially symbolic of Jewish solidarity, ritual and the celebration of something uniquely Jewish.

The carpet also contains more universal and less festival- or holiday-oriented Jewish motifs, thus reiterating the "Jewishness" of it. For instance, on either side of the central flower described above, there are two pairs of the Hebrew letter "shin" accompanying two sets of three flowers.[11] (Fig. 6, 6a and 6b)



Fig. 6. This image shows the two pairs of three-flower motifs with their accompanying "mystical" Hebrew letter "shin," reiterating the significance of the number three.



Fig. 6a. Detail of one of the set of three flowers with their accompanying Hebrew letter "shin."



Fig. 6b. A typical Hebrew letter shin.

They are incorporated into the arrangement of three symmetrically placed flowers, further emphasizing and enforcing the significance of the number and the sign. This letter, to Jews, has very special mystical meaning, because it is the first letter of one of God's several biblical names: Shaddai. Still in practice today, when Jewish men put on Tefilin (a.k.a. phylacteries) each day before saying the morning prayers, they wrap one of their arms in a leather strap and at the end, weave the piece of leather between their fingers in the shape of the letter "shin," symbolic of this iteration of God's name. The number three in Judaism, like in Christianity, is significant. It is the number of the forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who represent the very birth of Judaism. The shin is basically a three-pronged form, and it was reinforced by the symbolic nature of the three flowers adjacent to which they are placed.

Another signifcant symbol that is pervasively present on the carpet is the eternal flame (or "ner tamid") (Fig. 7, 7a and 7b).



Fig. 7. The "bookend" ner tamids.



Fig. 7a. Detail of one of the "bookend" ner tamids.



Fig. 7b. A pair of ner tamids situated on the carpet independent of the main array of flowers of which many are present.



Fig. 8. An Image of one of two flower arrangements facing the central flower motif that if looked at properly, shows an arrangement of the the mystical number 18

It is found throughout the carpet. The "ner tamid" clearly resembles a stylized flame with a blue center, a white outer bloom and a red or scarlet perimeter consistently throughout the carpet. Though it is subtly woven into and adjoined to many flowers, it is usually a separate flower "part" and not included in the specific number of blossoms in each group. This motif represents Jews' eternal faith in God and their timelessness as a people. The meaning of the eternal flame, according to Jewish sages is that it is a symbol of God's never-ending presence in the community and in their lives. Almost every synagogue, no matter what denomination, has an eternal flame near the ark that holds the sacred Torah scrolls, reminding the congregation of God's enduring presence.

And finally, I could argue that the special arrangement of certain flowers on the carpet could also add up to another important Jewish symbol as expressed through a number: the number eighteen. The Hebrew word for life is "chai," and its letters "add" up to eighteen, a number pervasive

in Jewish culture and practice from mystical numbers to everyday ornaments, such as necklaces and other forms of decorative art.[12] If a Jew wants to give an ancient and humble though peculiarly Jewish monetary gift for a milestone in a person's life, such as a bar mitzvah or a wedding, or just as a charitable donation, the symbol or the monetary amount minimally given is almost always, without exception, eighteen dollars and increments of eighteen (Fig. 8).

Furthermore, another aspect to the symbolic character of the carpet to explore and interpret, is the specific varieties of flowers included in the design, each of which has a symbolic meaning of its own, but this requires further research. I will reserve that for a subsequent article. Suffice it to say that Jewish carpets, i.e., carpets woven by Jewish craftsmen in this particular case, in the Iranian city of Isfahan during an ongoing period of persecution, as well as a time of cultural vitality, but also with the hope that they could find freedom in the New World, were made to look like traditional Persian carpets; they contained all of the same kinds of motifs and general symmetry, so as not to arouse unwanted attention or suspicion. At the same time, there is an ancient tradition of lacing Jewish symbols into Jewish crafts, coins, wall paintings, lamps, etc., from all over the world, created in countries where Jews had the emotional and psychological need to "stick together." These were used to express the idea that they were not alone. (Felton 2013, 1) Despite the harsh treatment they received from their reluctant and pathologically suspicious hosts, these symbolic objects say that Jews must endure and, they have endured. The Jewish People have always believed that there is strength in solidarity and this notion has sustained them through thick and thin for more than 3,000 years. This Perisan carpet is one elegant and eloquent example of such a notion.

Endnotes:

1. The word Semiotics, which later became an academic discipline, first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1850. It was defined as a cross-disciplinary field that focuses on the use of symbols to convey ideas.
2. The patterns and colors used and other specific motifs on my carpet, point to the fact that it was likely made in Isfahan, Persia. There were two cities whose unique fingerprint regarding patterns in carpet design, link my carpet to them. They were Isfahan and Kashan. Friends of mine who are Persian Jewish immigrants came to America with just about only the shirts on their backs, so to speak, but they also brought two family heirlooms, both hand-woven, woolen Persian carpets. One of them actually had the word Kashan, written in Farsi, woven into one of its borders. It shares certain characteristic elements with my carpet, but is also different in many other aspects.
3. The Persian carpet as we know it was born during the Safavid Dynasty—the ones with intricate floral patterns having central medallions and sprays of flowers scattered across a plain field. The Safavid kings took what was then a purely tribal craft and elevated it to an art form by building carpet workshops in Isfahan, Kashan, and Kerman (which remain major carpet weaving centers today). My carpet possess this same array in its design.
4. Isfahan was the capital of the Safavid Dynasty until the Afghanis invaded and ended that period of Safavid rule over Persia. Isfahani carpets are thought to be among the most beautiful and of the highest quality Persian carpets to this day.
5. During the reign of Henry III of Castile and Leon (1390–1406), Jews faced increased persecution and were pressured to convert to Christianity.
6. The King of Portugal issued a similar expulsion edict in 1493.

7. The actual source is Rambam, trans. by Eliyahu Touger, *Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah*, Chapter 5, 1. The entire house of Israel are commanded regarding the sanctification of [God's] great name, as [Leviticus 22:32] states: "And I shall be sanctified amidst the children of Israel." Also, they are warned against desecrating [His holy name], as [the above verse] states: "And they shall not desecrate My holy name." What is implied? Should a gentile arise and force a Jew to violate one of the Torah's commandments at the pain of death, he should violate the commandment rather than be killed, because [Leviticus 18:5] states concerning the mitzvot: "which a man will perform and live by them." [They were given so that] one may live by them and not die because of them. If a person dies rather than transgress, he is held accountable for his life."
8. Red symbolizes beauty, wealth, courage, luck, joy and faith; Blue symbolizes power or force and solitude (an allusion to the coming of the Messiah and the After Life); White stands for purity and cleanliness; and yellow stands for the sun, and the joy of life.
9. One day, my wife saw me struggling over the possible meaning of these symbols, and offered a possible solution. She suggested that perhaps this carpet was a message from one family to another, or from one family member to the family that dwelled in a faraway place, perhaps across the world; Canada, for instance.
10. Yerushalmi writes, "Centuries of persecution have not failed to stamp their effect in deep, broad characters upon the Persian Jews. Despised and persecuted, they are unable to command respect, or to arouse feelings of humanity in the breasts of their oppressors." It should be no surprise that the Jews of Persia began to seek safe havens in other parts of the world including the United States and Cananda at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century.
11. Pointed out by a friend of mine with whom I was studying the carpet.
12. According to Jewish mystical thought, every Hebrew letter, first appearing in the Torah, has a numerical value and a mystical value.

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