inter/tidal. *iii*.

edited by
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Inter/tidal Ink.
a division of the Humanities Student Union
of Simon Fraser University
(nearly impossible without sfss grant funding)

Main entry under title:
inter/tidal. iii.

ISBN 978-0-9809545-2-4

Editors: Carolyn Richard, Kyle Croutch, and Michelle Mackenzie
Co-Formatter: Shannon Higson

Cover, page layout and design: Shannon Higson

Cover image: from "Buffed" by Miles de Courcy and Michael Burnside, 2009

inter/tidal. website: http://www.intertidalsfu.com/

Financial Assistance: The Humanities Student Union of Simon Fraser University gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the Institute for Humanities, and SFSS grant funding.

Special thanks to the Department of Humanities of Simon Fraser University and Samir Gandesha.

Printed and bound in Canada by SFSS Copyright Centre, Burnaby.

Inter/tidal Ink. Publishers
c/o The Humanities Student Union
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada V5A 1S6

The Humanities Student Union of Simon Fraser University
sends their regards to the Department of Humanities

especially the Institute for the Humanities whose financial support
made this edition possible.

"New York," by Miles de Courcy

Content

Content

The Concept of (textual) Performance:
Aphorisms on Kierkegaard's Style
Anonymous
Edited and Introduced by Nihilus Zeitblom

"Dear Reader! Please accept this dedication. It is offered, as it were, blindly, but therefore in all honesty, untroubled by any other consideration. I do not know who you are; I do not know where you are; I do not know your name. Yet you are my hope, my joy, my pride, and covertly my honor."

- Søren Kierkegaard
(*The Point of View*)

Introduction

These aphorisms were originally submitted to me for publication consideration approximately a year ago and then promptly denied and forgotten. It seems I was too hasty in my dismissal and thankfully, due to circulation of the work among my colleagues arising from mysterious circumstances, my poor opinion was rectified. It might be that these reflections on Kierkegaard resound so strongly due to the recent revival he has enjoyed – David Walsh and Pat Bigelow are just two thinkers that have recently placed Kierkegaard as the postmodern *par excellence* – or perhaps it is due entirely to their own merit. Whichever is the case I am here now to atone for my sins and do justice to the budding intellect evidenced by these passages (the author of which I will heretofore refer to as X for clarity's sake).

Despite the kinship I now feel with the anonymous X after retreading this text so many times, I must hold to the shadow of my original apprehension of the work – these aphorisms leave much to be desired in terms of unique style and coherence. X professes to be for Kierkegaard but the style is purely Nietzschean and perhaps lacking the full wit necessary to be so inclined. Still, there is a naïvely careful construction in the aphorisms that grabbed the attention of my colleagues and, in truth, won me over as well. The conflation of Nietzsche with Barthes, the identification of Kierkegaard as pioneering literary figure, the unique repetition of ironic silence in Conrad and even the gesturing back to *Either/Or* through A and B characters in Abraham's dialogue are all endearing and novel, if not correct. What grew to occupy my interest above other strains though is the awkward reliance on Kenneth Burke that X, only briefly, lets slip.

Though one may be inclined to believe that the primary stream of Burke's thought runs through aphorism vii and the related ideas on the intratextual style, the divinity the aphorisms accord to the Author (following Barthes in terming it the Author God) gestures towards a more important application of Burke's thought. The chosen focus of performance makes one wonder

why X did not instead discuss the dramatistic pentad, a more obvious tool in understanding action. The Author's godliness is fixated on in these aphorisms and the silence he must assume can be nothing less than divine. It is the poor reader that does not note that in killing the Author, the Author does not disappear but flies to metaphysical heights, freed from its earthly soul. Thus the death reveals where this concept of the Author can fit in Burke's pentad.

Though the aphorisms make a great deal of the Author's disappearance, one easily intuits that the Author cannot quit the work entirely. The phrase that is of key importance is in the second aphorism where the author calls Barthes' Author the "shackles of intention." This phrase points us towards the traditional placement of the Author in the grammar of motivation; the authorial "shackles", prior to death, bind the relations between the pieces. Interpreting this through the pentad, what X so coyly attempts to demonstrate is that the ratios – the relations between the five pieces – are the body of the Author in the traditional mode of the text. The Author is divine in the sense that he inhabits and directs every action. It is only through dying that the Author can assume true godliness as the ultimate scene and creator of the terms of the pentad rather than the action.

In the same way that Money can be seen as the replacement for God as the ultimate scene in our current reality[i] so too can the author replace a mimetic representation of the world as the ultimate scene in text. However, is this the equivalent motion? Does it narrow the circumference of motive as the Money-God does? Methinks X would not believe so. As we might see in aphorisms v and vi the old writing order was one of a base materialism, motives explained against nature (even if that nature was mimetically representing a society oriented around God). Even in the dialogue of aphorism iii the trajectory of this newer, "performative" writing seems to be the religious implications of all actions rather than an external relation to the religious as just a part of nature. The echoes from B demonstrate that, in Kierkegaard's writing, every action is absolute. Writing is no

longer the puppet show of the Author but the tacit echoes of significance in the Author-God.

It is no surprise that this point aligns with the seemingly Kristevan views espoused in later aphorisms. For Kristeva the abject, and thus the religious, is first the expressed in the self/other divide, then the self/self fracture and finally the repression of the abject into Art. Far from engaging with Derrida, this seems to be the only point of aphorism v, a warning that we cannot relive the truly Christian mode of abjection. Instead these aphorisms say the Author, in death and in divinity, must become only the creator and allow the voices of subjects to play against each other.

I cannot reconcile though why Mr. X included the specific reference to Burke that he did. Keeping in mind the lack of coherence among the aphorisms and that his analysis at points may be found wanting, I can only suppose that it was just youthful folly and a misapprehension of the importance in Burke's system. While the terministic screen does sculpt and is the locus of symbol action, or perhaps better stated symbolic selection, that this constitutes a true performance of any sort is a rather romantic notion of what Burke means when he stresses that man is a symbol using creature. It may not be too generous though to suggest that, in his concept of repetition, X does manage to evoke a sense of the double nature of language in Burke[ii]. As with all aphorisms though this soon leads into idle speculation and I will not do myself the disservice of engaging in that project. I leave you with this one vision of what these aphorisms might have attempted to say and surrender you to the pleasant diversion of reading.

-Dr. Nihilus Zeitblom

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[i] Chapter 10, *On Symbols and Society.*

[ii] This can be seen in genealogy of the negative in "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language" where the word automatically exists in both its image and idea.

Anonymous / of (textual) Performance...

i

The tentative step – If the young genius, at the completion of his degree, says that Plato is to Socrates as John is to Jesus what then does it mean that he signs later works 'Johannes'?

If the young genius sculpts pieces of his work against each other into nihility, what then of the abyss?

ii

On Barthes et al – We all heard the death knell "The Author is dead, and we have killed him" but have we yet considered what it means that the text is freed from the shackles of intention? Without the author the text is lifeless; without the author the text is bodiless; without the author the text has lost its reference point, its order, its religion. For words to truly perform, this death was perhaps necessary, but the smell of decomposition is yet too strong.

iii

A dialogue concerning faith – ABRAHAM: I must be the monster! Else God seem less appealing to the boy.

BREAST: I must be blackened for the child to love the mother.

A: That God would ask of me my son's blood is too cruel to bear. This is no God.

B: I must be covered and the link between mother and child destroyed. It is not the worst way to lose a mother.

A: I cannot understand this task God asks of me. To sacrifice the best I own is the most glorious thing! To forget a father's duty and sacrifice a son the most sinful.

B: The weaning is sorrowful for all. The mother and child may lay together again, but never as close.

A: My body shudders and rebe–

Isaac: I see the pain my father feels in what God has asked of him. If this is what faith is then let me have none of it.

B: The child is provided with solid food to replace breast milk. It is lucky that solid food can sustain.

Silentio: Enough! You are all the same thing yet none of you the truth.

Kierkegaard: [*remains silent*]

iv

Authorship in death – Dostoevsky disappeared into the polyphonic novel to find truth. Melville's whale, and thus the author God of *Moby Dick* remained unpainted to the last in brushstrokes of cetology and masturbation. The authors knew they were dead long before Barthes kindly informed them of this fact. If Kierkegaard killed himself through pseudonyms was he any more the living when he wrote under his own name. It cannot be so! The esthete and the religious author witness Kierkegaard only on the horizon. Kafka's Castle is more easily approached.

v

Old divisions – If we believe the noble theorists then Plato was right – and we may all breathe a sigh of relief that Derrida was wrong. The text is a poison and we must rid ourselves of our inheritance. Long live dualisms! Text/performance; rationality/desire; mind/body; event/document; artist/critic. One wonders: is there enough left of the body to support being opposed to the mind?

vi

A new pharmakon – One voice cries "Writing has grown weary" and another responds "we can no longer find the truth in words". The crowd nods in assent but falters for solutions. "We must push writing further" "What about the body?" "The author is the problem; we must worry only about the words" "Laughter will save us" "Forgetting is our only hope". The young genius in his study smiles and writes to himself: *It is irony! As Socrates and Christ have shown us, we must write ourselves into silence*.

vii

On Style – Heidegger reminds us that the work of art is always created through a process of sculpture, of cutting away, allowing the truth to make itself present alongside the material. Burke, for whom words are the only concern (though words are reality), calls this sculpting force a terministic screen. In the service of irony terministic screens must sculpt away the fabric of the text and of reality so that the shavings on the floor can point only towards the void. Kierkegaard gives us these scraps as a feast while quenching our thirst with the paradox they bleed. Is there any greater ironist?

viii

The Modernists – They were new Platos but where was their Socrates? Conrad was known as an ironist and *The Secret Agent* was perhaps his greatest work in this respect. A narrator so cruel, jovial, disingenuous and entirely unreliable could only have appeared at that moment and the void it leaves is less palatable than even Kurtz's horror. A silence this deafening was the proper herald of Modernism.

ix

Performance – What is performance? Performance is the difference that arises in the repetition of acts. It does not mourn the difference such as with mimetic recollection but revels in it. What is performance? It is the event that can only be documented in part, that defies recollection. What is performance? It is *doing* something – performing.

What is textual performance? It is text that acts. What is textual performance? It is the text that forces itself into impossibility. It is the text where the unity of authorial voice disappears and meaning can be documented or witnessed briefly in the act of reading but does not lie in the text itself. What is textual performance? It is the forced recognition of the inherent instability in language. It does not repeat to contribute to organic unity or an aggregate of facts but repeats to undermine the particular expression and create active paradox.

x

On His legacy – Kierkegaard's writing on his own authorship came, ironically, after he had passed into a fuller death and could join Johannes in the chorus of voices. Even then he could not close bracket his project in any more singular voice than he began it. When Kierkegaard says "Stop, it is over, I will say no more and this is the meaning of my work" his poet continues "See that, it is over, that is the meaning of his work" – unsaid in repetition to the last.

It is a fair legacy that the standard of recent editions is for Kierkegaard to appear roughly sketched and turned away from the reader. It is only a pity that the back of a head is not more marketable.

Notes

[i] The first statement here appears to be a reference to *The Concept of Irony*. "On the other hand, the observation concerning the relationship of Plato to John is also correct if one maintains that John found and immediately saw in Christ all that he, by imposing silence on himself, has depicted with complete objectivity, for his eyes were open to the immediate divinity in Christ" (53).

[ii] This aphorism clearly refers to Roland Barthes "The Death of the Author" but also aligns it with Nietzsche's famous death of God proclamation from *The Gay Science* aphorism 125, popularly known as the "Parable of the Madman."

[iii] The dialogue is directly adapted from *Fear and Trembling*'s "Attunement." It is worth noting the short forms of Abraham and Breast (A and B) are also the names assigned to different pseudonyms in *Either/Or*.

[iv] The concept of Dostoevsky's novels as polyphonic comes from Mikhail Bakhtin but, as Dostoevsky is placed alongside Kierkegaard in David Walsh's *The Modern Philosophical Revolution* (399) in much the same way and Bakhtin is not discussed explicitly where he could easily be of use, the idea seems more directly lifted from Walsh's text. Both Dostoevsky and Kafka also appear on Kristeva's list of possible authors whose works contain the literary abject in *Powers of Horror*. For reader's interest, the reference to masturbation in Moby dick would seem to point to the infamous chapter "A Squeeze of the Hand."

[v] The pair of texts referenced here seems to be made up of Plato's *Phaedrus* and Jacque Derrida's "Plato's Pharmacy." The term "noble theorists" is likely a sarcastic pot shot at those who would seek to denigrate the text or perhaps re-instate the truth of dualism.

[vi] As Derrida points out, *pharmakon* is the word that Plato uses to describe writing in the Phaedrus and it means both poison and cure. Likely it is used primarily as a way to connect the two aphorisms.

[vii] Martin Heidegger's text referenced here is "The Origin of the Work of Art;" the terministic screen appears in Kenneth Burke's *Language as Symbolic Action* and is discussed in much of his other work.

[viii] The provided interpretation of The Secret Agent alongside Kierkegaard's concept of the ironic figure appears to be the author's own, though this vision of the narrator was discussed in Sung Ryol Kim's "Violence, Irony and Laughter: the Narrator in *The Secret Agent*."

[ix] This aphorism could draw on any number of sources but the concept of repetition used here is parroting that which is discussed in Kierkegaard's *Repetition*.

[x] The work referenced here is *The Point of View*, published in 1859 - four years after Kierkegaard's death. The editions discussed are those offered by Princeton University Press where a sketch of Kierkegaard in profile lays within a white oval on the middle of the front cover. This aphorism could well have pushed this further and discussed the two tone format (always black on the bottom and a flat colour on the top) as a further commenting on the dual nature of Kierkegaard's project.

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She (overcoat) *and* When Icicles Hang by the Wall
Tiziana La Melia

La Melia / When Icicles Hang by the Wall

Notes on the Index
Danielle LaFrance

on the desire to die
more violently thus exalting
minimum effort at the
expense of other.

———————————

on the lowest employees
those feet they are
thrilled to lick

on happiness to arrest
certain servility
or perverted diversion
change characters and forms

---

they incite their triangle to submit
facist machine, aesthetic machine
american machine, west coast trail
real estate and public perspective

foundation of money. no money. rich people. poor people. poor, poor, double-you factory. where do we put the poor people. put them with the rich people. rich people are poor people with capital. poor people are rich people without capital. poor people are rich people without real estate. rich people are poor people with squat state. nice café, with a used bookstore. poor people are rich people with money. rich people are poor people without money. rich people are poor people caught in head lights. poor people are rich people caught in flashlights.

on a position to leave home
you must be in a position to live
the degree of sickness
drums closer, closer

---

found in the savor of gonad.
go mad, glutton, gelatin, animalcula
do they obey the King, because he is wise and just?
beat his head with their own frustrations.

suspects the subject is subjected to being a suspect. subjects are abjects without agency. abjects are subjects with agency. subjects. abjects. where do we put the abjects? put them under the beds of the subjects. subjects are abjects with funny faces. abjects are subjects without funny faces. subjects subject themselves. abjects are subjects built out of pus. subjects are abjects without borders.

on performative abject
disgraceful antics, yet
we're wet regardless
jouissance culminates in death

Colgate as a lubricant
knotting us together
who rapes the politician?
he's a real man too, on all fours

a primordial CAT scan given
access to the faintest sniff of sewage
since the system pretended
answers to everything

---

drink it down with a coke
used to clean toilets
and intestinal tracts
burn your subjects throat

obscene imperative.
my seein' is impaired
identified public enemy
if you give blood
there's a cookie in it for you

I savour your tongue like the stump
of an octopus' arm
which attaches itself to you
with all the force of its suckers

perhaps power is not aplomb
to decipher the inner workings of the worker
to leave the streets.
like chains radically transforming selves
shackle glance cough

press (first)
Emily Fedoruk

press (first)

the fog at the end of so many city
blocks, a silver lining meant support
but backing the concave plastic spine
for spineless serials a once
a day blister packed in case

pressed for time that
time when head hits
its quiet low of SSRIs
sighs, not the Vancouver band
but maybe it's my space

PRESS in conversation with Jeff, F. not on
serotonin, nor against the tone deaf, go dj, fall like
abstract expressionists

people at parking meters
a cacophony of cop cars gathers
at the neck of that top that bubble
that slut pop shut down once special
the screens shirted with repose

pressing her hands to her chest
doze a button down drop a lap
top leaning, benevolence and at that
instant an incline seams pulled so
he sees

Maybe monitors; they lean back licentiously. Looking in on equality, At the top of her class? Ask them, ask them, make them laugh.
PRESSing here for answers.

the latest willow on a manufactured island
blown by b&e's and streets that only seem
silent, drags another pen across the expense
of top, writes 'bored' and know it's hard
beneath me stacked ribs like bills in till

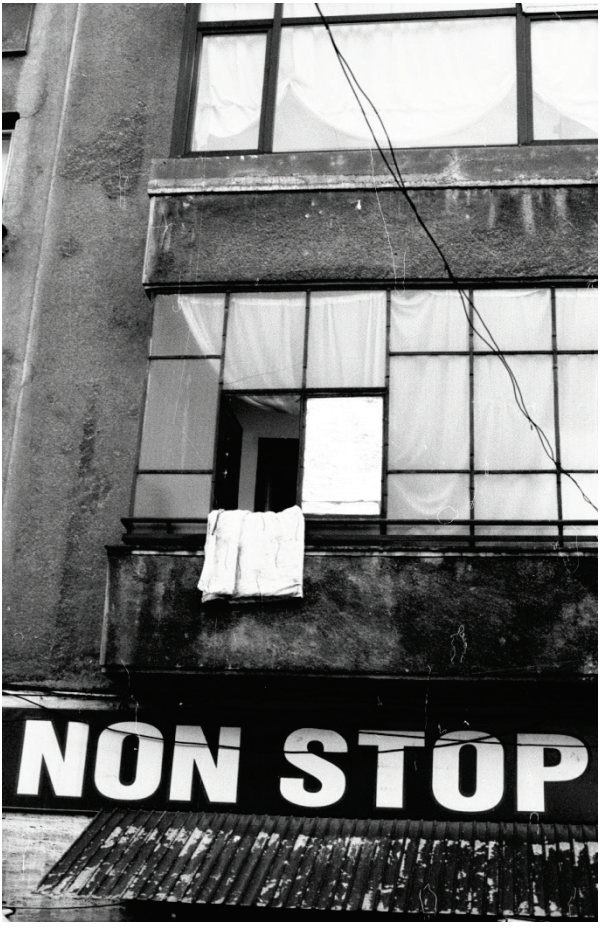
presses with a hand's heel closed
management comments on my posture often
hold both elbows behind back and dull
defeat firmly on the ground I can't bend
over when I'm writing

At the till: I assume their slant is sales connected,
watching windy apathy until I

PRESS: The issue, in conversation with three brunettes.
(The fourth has blamed my body
The fifth, the boss, had buried such blunt, another tissue wraps another anybody, moves sales.)
The issue, its par in the bar.
THE FIRST, CAROLYN: sees a necklace of stains on the top of my apron and knows aunts with that anatomy that have the same—rather, adds “I stain my lap.”
THE SECOND, NATALIE of Dawson City and Oxford universe.
THE THIRD, CRIS, a girl who wants to help and knows Toronto.

PRESS: TO SLOW, stall, sip, stop

***from* Bucharest**
Hannes Bretschneider

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SI
LEGALIZĂRI

INTERVIEW WITH KALIB STARNES

Julian Hou and Michael Loncaric

Kalib Starnes is employed as an entertainer and his main act is fighting. For some fighters, the ring is a place of unclaimed glory, a stage for combat's ultimate narrative potential (the great one, the superhuman among us). The dream of fighting one's way into a mythology of combat is not a dream that Kalib shares. Rather than being written into history, Kalib, as any measure of sobriety will compel us to, wants to understand the world as it relates to history.

Is MMA a sport that returns the human to a more bestial form of himself/herself?

In order to answer that question, I don't suppose it would be fruitful to concern ourselves with what an imagined "bestial form" of a human being might be. Since we have almost no scientific evidence indicating how very ancient human beings actually behaved. We also don't know when the mental faculties associated with modern human behaviour evolved to the point they are at now, and whether a date could actually be assigned to something which most probably happened very gradually in small increments over a long period of time. Perhaps we should turn our attention instead to "beasts," and I don't mean dragonflies or scorpions or cuttlefish either, but closer relatives like chimps and gorillas. In which case I would have to say, most certainly not. "Beasts" are far less cruel and violent than human beings. Physical combat among animals of the same species is most often ritualized and non violent, and it usually fulfills some social function relative to sexual reproduction, leadership, and access to resources. They never willingly fight in cages for money and the amusement of their fellows, and they never drop bombs on residential areas filled with noncombatants. Just asking a question like this indicates some strange perceptions I think, about humans, and animals. "Bestial," as a visit to any war zone or gas chamber will quickly show would be a step upward from where we are right now.

I've been watching some of the videos on BJ Penn's website and have discovered an inordinate number of video clips about food; what do you think of his diet? And is there something unchampion-like in his love for food?

At first glance, questions about B.J.'s dietary choices may seem rather difficult to address effectively. Why does he choose to eat certain foods and, are they ultimately good for him? Who, after all, is equipped with both a knowledge of nutritional science and the psychological insights of a skilled mentalist? Perhaps the answers we seek are to be found in the annals of Hawaiian history

and culture? After an attack on the ancient Hawaiian monarchy by powerful financial interests, most notably the Hawaiian Pineapple Company which was later to become the Dole Food Company, there was enthroned Hawaii's first and only white King, or rather president, Sanford B. Dole. A long string of crimes and intrigues followed, and with the Hawaiian economy now firmly in the hands of American business, it was turned into a large pineapple and sugar plantation and exploited accordingly. What did Hawaiians get in return for these tasty and lucrative export crops you ask? Spam. That's right, Spam. This dubious can of salt and fat laden mystery meat has, since World War II, become a Hawaiian obsession. Hawaiians now consume more Spam per capita than any people on earth. A visit to a Hawaiian Burger King or even a reputable Japanese restaurant can now yield Spam burgers, Spam sushi, or my personal favourite, a crunchy deep fried Spam role! Delicious! You can actually feel it melting into your liver, the result of some poorly understood miracle of human digestion. These often neglected facts may explain not only B.J.'s unusual diet, but his desire for Hawaiian liberation as well. He should be commended for negotiating the minefield of Hawaiian cuisine as successfully as he has, not to mention standing up for his cultural values. Finally, while the tourists pour into the islands looking for a truly authentic Hawaiian experience, like browsing the 290 shops at Ala Moana Center perhaps, the second most profitable mall in America, or attending a luau sponsored by one of the big hotels where they can enjoy that favourite pastime of anglo-europeans, watching the natives dance, all I have to say is, *mahalo*.

With the effects of the recession continuing into the new decade, is it more difficult now to implement alternative economic strategies?

I would have to say no. History has shown that a “crisis” like this is often the catalyst for implementing alternative economic policies. I think that there will be some adjustments made to the economic system, but the crisis is not so great as to produce

dramatic change. “Necessity is the mother of invention," they say, and it seems to me that necessity is the mother of change as well. Change often takes place not because it should, but because it must. One of the reasons that these crises occur so often is that our political and economic organizations are unable to adapt adequately to changing conditions. Instead of being dynamic engines for directing and adapting to change, they are often exposed as major impediments to change, protecting the hegemony of large financial interests, rather than developing and implementing a system that would benefit everyone. I believe that the more pressure put on these large financial interests the more change will occur, and that it will take serious economic hardship to produce serious economic change. No one who has studied economics and economic history should be surprised by the current crises. At one time money represented real tangible things like labor, land, livestock, minerals or other resources, and charging interest (usury) was considered a punishable offense, condemned in the Bible, and the Koran. Today however, there is a tremendous amount of money out there that represents nothing of any value in the real world, and there are many things that have been given a value, which is entirely out of proportion with their actual worth. Now take that money, which represents nothing, and lend it out at interest, or borrow money against something that has no real value, and you’ll be ready to be baptized into the worlds most powerful and all pervasive religion. A religion grounded in the faith that an online gambling website is worth more than ten thousand farms, or that Enron stock was worth $90.00 a share. These problems will continue to produce tremendous difficulties for the foreseeable future, and radical changes in diverse areas such as social, economic and political organization, education, and information dissemination will be required to alleviate these, and I think most social, economic and environmental problems.

Although we are fans of fighting, we have trouble stomaching severe knock out blows. Henderson on Bisping immediately comes to mind, or even Belfort on Lindland. Is the brain damage incurred by concussion simply overlooked or underemphasized by the industry?

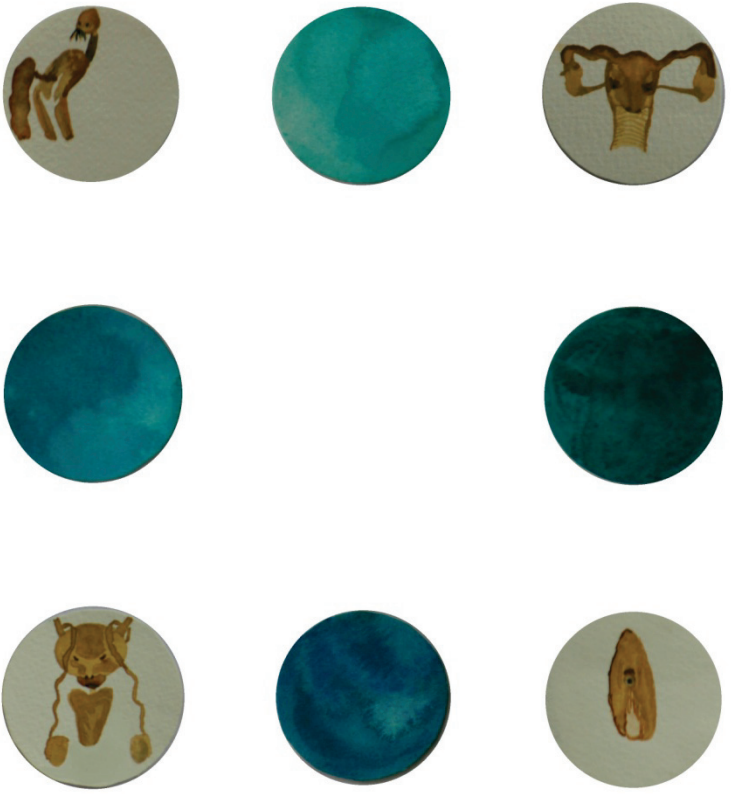
I would have to say yes definitely. Studies have shown that athletes competing in mixed martial arts suffer traumatic head injuries at rates comparable to those competing in other combat sports such as boxing and kickboxing. In spite of the technical options available to the mixed martial artist, with the rules allowing them to employ a wide variety of grappling techniques, many fights are still finished with strikes. Most people who have not witnessed the serious implications of these injuries first hand seem oblivious to them, and I'm afraid that far less money is spent on educating the public and the athletes about brain injuries, than is spent promoting and marketing the fights.

Is there a conflict between the role of honour and the role of entertainment in MMA?

Let me begin by saying that there is no honour in fighting for money and the amusement of the crowd, and there is also no honour in promoting events, which expose the participants to potentially grievous bodily harm in an attempt to line your own pockets. That being said, it is impossible to understand MMA without understanding its history, particularly the last 100 years or so. Mixed martial arts was brought to North America from Brazil by the Gracie family. Learning the traditional Judo and Jiu Jitsu techniques from a famous Japanese master named Mitsuyo Maeda, the Gracie family refined the techniques through actual combat. They looked at fighting as a way to empirically test their ability through real life confrontations with practitioners of other styles. Fights were contested often for free, and away from prying eyes, with the only reward being the validation of their system through victory, or the opportunity to improve their strategy if defeated. The goal was to develop the most effective system of

self-defense possible. They were fighting for something greater than themselves, the truth. It was the style, not the athletes, the promotion, or the crowd that was important. Their style, contrary to popular myth, came to include not only jiu jitsu techniques but techniques from many other arts such as boxing and wrestling. It became a style which embraced all styles, and that's why today, everybody fights essentially the same style, which is a combination of striking, takedowns, and ground-fighting. Athletes differ in their abilities due to emphasis, training and athleticism, but no facet can be entirely ignored by anyone who hopes to be successful. I believe that it is honourable to defend yourself or others from physical violence if necessary. I also believe that the quest to find the best method of self-defense was honourable. Engaging in MMA competition as a way to test your ability is also honourable. Fighting for pride, fame, money and entertainment however, there is no honour in that. There is no honour in many occupations though is there? Renting oneself out by the hour in order to allay poverty, and performing work of no social value, which is of absolutely no interest to you, these are things familiar to most of us. Many fighters, myself included, have fought for money for the same reason most people get up and go to work everyday, to pay the rent. This may sound like a negative position to take, but romanticizing prize fighting is best left to sportswriters, promoters and those who stand to benefit from it, the same way that romanticizing war is best left to politicians, big business and the media.

Portals
Michelle Mackenzie



There's an App for That:
The "Everyday" Cyborg Revisited
Stacy Kirpichova

It has been over 20 years since the first publication of Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto.* Appearing initially as a short piece on media feminisms (Penley and Ross) the work has been cited a countless number of times by writers from all disciplines. Sheryl Hamilton for instance claims that *Cyborg Manifesto* has "shaped the discourse of cybertheory, functioning as a technology of knowledge, in a number of significant ways" (106). Much of the focus, of course, has been to bring into conjunction the metaphor of the cyborg and the gendered politics of technology; Haraway's work, for these writers, engages in a form of liberatory discourse and is thus highly emblematic of post-modernism. Behind it all, and most noted by writers, is a focus on re-inventions: Cranny-Francis et al wonder what it is like to "imagine a world with five sexes, [for example] lesbian, man, hermaphrodite, woman and cyborg. This…[is] a project which would involve reinventing everything which surrounds us, language, architecture, painting, advertising and most of all, ourselves" (7). For these writers, as with the current analysis of the cyborg, emphasis is shifted away from the "shock" factor of the cyborg's postmodern qualities, and towards the cyborg's interaction with the other structures that comprise our everyday lifestyles—beyond genders and technologies. However, much more than a "period piece" (Crew) that is emblematic of the late 1980s, Haraway's essay remains one of the most groundbreaking works in terms of beginning a conversation with technology. Perhaps now more so than ever before, it is impossible to conceptualize a world without daily interactions with technologies. By Haraway's definition then, and along with the plethora of publications that engage with the cyborg, we are and remain more cyborgic than ever. Nonetheless, differences in our current perception of the cyborg must be made prior to continuously engaging with this figure. David Hess, for instance, questions whether the "very word 'cyborg' is already too low-tech

to serve as an appropriate symbol of postmodern technoculture" (cited in Hamilton 117). And while I do not believe that the cyborg as a symbol of our interactions with technology is outdated to such radical extent, Hess's comment is not irrelevant: the cyborg needs to be addressed differently because today's "postmodern technoculture" is, likewise, different from its original beginnings during the birth of the *Manifesto*.

Following that, I argue that while Haraway encourages a revolutionary attention to cyberfeminist discourse, the important work remains to be done on a smaller scale that is the critical re-examination of the everyday; these quotidian interactions are just as political as those grander scale ones examined in *Manifesto.* Moreover, given recent expediency of technological production, the choice of engaging in cyborgic discourse, or staying out of it, is no longer an option. Rather, our relationship with technology as already-cyborgs must be re-thought of in terms of the everyday and in terms of boundaries. Haraway's cyborg then, must be viewed as a figure of alliances based on "difference" not commonality: it is no longer sufficient to view our relationship with technology solely in terms of ethics (whether a technology is good or bad for our definitions of what it means to be human). Thus, with the help of a cyborgic alliance, we must work in the direction of individual boundary-building—an action that requires not only engagement with technology, but a responsibility for this engagement that is fluid and enabling. This essay will examine a few critiques of the cyborg, emphasizing the importance of re-working the groundwork of definitions, move into applications of cyborgism (kiosk cultures, for example), and explore our current conceptions of the cyborg ontology (i.e.: what we need the cyborg to mean/be).

It is impossible not to examine critiques of Haraway's work due to the polemic nature of the *Manifesto,* whose narrative does not strive towards cohesion, but rather towards difference. Interestingly enough, one of the key converging points in cyborg criticism is, along its utopic desires towards the creation of a genderless world of "difference," that the cyborg is rarely "located, problematized or discussed critically" (Hamilton 107).

According to Sunden, Haraway's "'imagining a world without gender' sounds almost too good to be true" (217) despite the poetic and hopeful rhetoric characteristic of the work, which is full of political potency to inspire feminist engagement. Sunden argues that the "potency" of language is often not enough, as such utopic language lacks the potential for praxis and if left unexamined, lingers behind in the political militaristic or even the patriarchal realms. Hamilton similarly cautions that much of the writing that followed the cyborg metaphor "could benefit from [further] problematizing" along with "more critically evaluating the implications of the gendered nature of technology, and… bodily implications of cyborg rhetoric informed by theoretical writing on race and gender" (107). The technofeminist notions often remain unchallenged while the language of coalition is conflated with visions of a unified, genderless world, despite the fact that, as Hamilton states, "the cyborg is located at the intersection of, overlap between, or multiple sites of, technological and textual practice" (108). Highlighting these multiple sites of the production of meaning would involve problematizing what the cyborg's limitations are and locating (more importantly, re-locating) the cyborg in sites that differ from its existing technofeminist positioning.

Sunden likewise explains that Haraway "points to the empowering of feminist textuality, of having access to the signifying practices that mark the world," but wonders appropriately, "to who are these textual tools of a cyborg feminist discourse accessible outside the inner circle of white, Western, middle-class cyborg feminists?" (217). Sunden undeniably posits a question of flexibility: the current conception of the cyborg needs to be fluid enough to accommodate multiple positions and identities, not just that of the academic circles of "white, Western, middle-class feminists."

Another way of problematizing the cyborg's position is by invoking the following question: "what about the professional cyborgs of today—the people like us who need computers, Internet access, and mobile phones in order to fit into their workplace?" (Czarniawska and Gustavsson 680). The idea of

empowerment through information is ultimately tied with the political, but also with need: access after all, is not granted to everyone, and Haraway's repeated usage of "we" within the *Manifesto* is certainly problematic. In an interview with Penley and Ross, Haraway concedes to a similar point regarding the oft-cited expression "we are all cyborgs." There she explains:

> If I were rewriting those sections of the Cyborg Manifesto I'd be much more careful about describing who counts as a "we," in the statement, "we are all cyborgs." I would also be much more careful to point out that those are subject-positions for people in certain regions of transnational systems of production that do not easily figure the situations of other people in the system. (16)

In hindsight, Haraway discusses that even within cyborg theory, subject-positions are always tricky areas where much of the trouble regarding questions of development and participation occur. In other words, "we are all cyborgs" is not a statement that translates equally to all people. But arguably, nor should it translate the same way to everyone: Sunden, for example suggests that the "politics of cyborgs are not to be found in the collective, social movements, but are inextricably linked to their constantly moving borderland bodies" (219). One could also approach this by highlighting the differences between "professional cyborgs" and occasional internet-user cyborgs. One could analyze the amount of information flow occurring within each sphere of exchange, as the everyday realities of cyborgs are not all equal: we are all cyborgs, but in different ways, personalities and user-identities.

To expand more on this point, much of what is yet to be examined should focus in on the realm of "professional cyborgs," and the technological requirements behind their occupations. These are employees whose jobs define employee success by their amount of technoprowess and information savvy: positions such as advertising, design and others that depend on not only the possession of the newest version of techno-gadgets, but on the careful knowledge of these tools at hand, as well as the everyday realities (loss of connection, paper jams and lack of battery power that are obstructions to the proper flow of information). The result of this type of criticism is the notion that individuals must be able

to re-think of themselves as cyborgs in a way that fits them most; moreover, a single definition does not have to fit all areas of one's life, as some may be more densely-packed with information exchange than others.

Let us examine the differences between the "professional cyborg" and the occasional technology user. On the non-"professional" side of everyday activity, one must also wonder what implications arise during interactions with ATMs, do-it-yourself check-outs in grocery stores, as well as automated recordings on help phone lines. Are we cyborgs to a lesser degree, simply because these interactions do not (ideally) dominate the majority of our day? Thomas B. Cavanagh wonders if "self-service technology enabled a new type of posthuman consumer identity, where each transaction is completed by a cyborg being constructed of the human on one side and the electronic mechanism on the other—each dependent upon the other to complete the task" (460). He explains that these transactions within the "kiosk-culture" (a term to denote the kiosk-like format of the machine stands and their increasing numbers in consumer society) cannot be seen solely as "all-human," or "all-machine." For that reason these interactions are cyborgic—with the human on one side and the machine on the other. Furthermore, "because the kiosk culture cuts across *all segments of society*, it is not immune from the larger social and political debates. In this regard it is an actor in a larger network, with its actions dictated by a diverse array of directors, each with its own agency" (Cavanagh 465, emphasis added). Thus, what is essentially outlined in the interaction between humans and "kiosks" is a "relationship" with humans and kiosk machines becoming cyborgs through any given transaction (474-575). However, Cavanagh is careful to caution that the cyborgic selves that emerge out of this relationship are not separate from the ideological trajectories of politics: the effect of the kiosk culture is also an "aesthetic of [cyborgic] efficiency [that] dictates that we fill every waking hour with maximum productivity" (471). These types of concerns, filled with questions of labour and capital are not outdated: it is always important to

consider who is left out of the majoritarian "we" that may not get to be a participant in the "kiosk-culture."

Moreover, one cyborg identity does not have to remain static—individuals interact with different amounts of information flow, and can adjust the degree of their involvement as necessary. Sherry Turkle explores how today's technology allows and "encourages rethinking [of] identity in terms of multiplicity and flexibility" (1093). She notes, that the

> many manifestations of multiplicity in our culture, including the adoption of multiple on-line personae, are contributing to a general reconsideration of traditional, unitary notions of identity. Online experiences with "parallel lives" are part of the cultural context that supports new theorizations about multiple selves. (1104)

In Turkle's research, users of MUDs (multi user dungeons) often created online personas that were quite different from how the users normally saw themselves in reality. This became a positive experience for many, as users found that this allowed them the freedom to explore everyday interactions through behaviours and character traits they were previously too afraid to try. Turkle's notion of "parallel lives" of these MUD users does not imply that their online characters dominate reality, or somehow over-take the character's world, rather they allow a safe space to explore and be "flexible" with identities, finding one or sometimes many identities that presented the best fit. Turkle's argument relates this desire to explore multiplicity to the "many manifestations" of this multiplicity within our culture—numerous e-mail accounts, user-names, profile pages constructed to reflect various angles of our professional and personal lives. It is undeniable that one's Facebook profile page, and one's website detailing a curriculum vitae can represent two very diverse sides of one's identity; at the same time, it is not true to state that one version is more "true" than the other. Rather, both of these pages serve a specific purpose. In a way then, being the "everyday" cyborg would be the mediation between these different profiles.

That is, of course, not to say that Haraway's original "cyborg" metaphor is completely devoid of meaning relevant to our contemporary culture. Rather, current understanding(s) of the

"everyday" cyborg must ask different questions (or even ask the same questions that Haraway is concerned with differently). Hayles believes that Haraway's project "remains vitally important, perhaps even more so than in 1985, the original publication date. The issues have morphed in significant ways, but the ethical drive and social commitment that galvanized readers then were never more necessary" (159). Hayles's main criticism of the cyborg is that in the face of current

> new technologies [that] have sprung up from the same nexus of forces that gave birth to the cyborg, most notably the internet and the world-wide web, along with a host of networked information devices, including cell phones, sensor networks… yielding real-time date flows, Radio Frequency Identification tags, GPS networks and nanotechnology, the cyborg is [quite] simply not networked enough. (159)

Hayles implies that perhaps because most of the technological emphasis is now placed on connecting in real-time on a global-scale, the 1985 cyborg continuously runs into the risk of examining the politics of domination from the privileged side that ignores everyday potential. "Networking" the cyborg, so to speak, would involve a more fluid and multiple understanding—as seen with Turkle, the cyborg today should and can mean different things to different people, allowing them to fit the definition to their lifestyles, career paths and personalities.

Moreover, Hayles explains that the "shock value" of the cyborg that came from Haraway's explaining cyborg as a combination of human parts with cybernetic components: modification of the body was meant in grand, revolutionary and less "subtle" ways (160). On the other hand, Hayles admits that

> shifts in reading practices suggest a movement from deep attention to hyperattention; incorporation of intelligent machines into everyday practices creates distributed cognitive systems that include human and non-human actors…. It is clear that humans, animals and intelligent machines are more tightly bound together than ever in their cultural, social, biological and technological evolutions. (162)

It is no longer a question, in other words, of choosing to make the cyborg less shocking (which is not to say make it irrelevant). Rather the metaphor of the cyborg must make sense in "everyday practices," and this metaphor does not have to have a single meaning. Hamilton appropriately wonders if it is "the same thing to have a prosthesis as it is to send electronic mail, have phone sex, fight in the Gulf War, or watch *Robocop"* (108). What these statements imply is that we must continuously re-position where the cyborgs are situated: they are no longer to be found solely as the "illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism" (2271), but they are found within daily interactions between common household technologies, signals and networks. The shock value diminishes when one begins to re-ontologize their consistent engagement as cyborgs, with things that are neither simply properties of top-secret military intelligence nor carefully hidden away conspiracies circa the ending of the Cold War Era. The cyborg should be positioned in multiple locations, that at times present conflicting and uneven distributions of information: undeniably, being a part of the Gulf War presents the participant with quite a different image of the cyborgic metaphor than that of the person engaging in phone sex. Both of their ontologies are conditioned by the amount of interaction that goes on; what they have in common is that this interaction does occur and will continue to occur despite the shifting forms and developments of information technology.

Bruno Latour suggests a similar dynamic: "without technologies human beings would not be as they are, since they would be *contemporaneous with their actions,* limited solely to proximal interactions" (cited in Introna 33, emphasis added). The conception that human beings are inextricable from their technologies constitutes Latour's Actor Network Theory: rather than viewing humans as the sole possessors of agency, it is more appropriate to view humans *and* technologies in a network of interactions simultaneously. This is similar to Cavanagh's idea of cyborg kiosk culture relationship, and does not imply that any one side possesses more agency than the other. To return to Hayles, we must then "network" the cyborg in a similar way, by not

assigning or taking away agency, but seeing ourselves as inextricable from such interactions. Nor is it the case that by ceasing to analyze the cyborg in strictly ethical terms would welcome subversive understandings of what it means to be "human" for the sake of highlighting and privileging the "cyborgic." For example, Lucy Suchman suggests that it is rather the opposite, that "given an ontology of separate things that need to be joined together, machines must in some sense *be granted agency* to be brought into relationship with us" (257, emphasis added). Granting machines agency, however, is only possible by taking responsibility for drawing up new boundaries as necessary—to Suchman, human-artifact relations are not "fixed," but rather artifacts are "produced, reproduced and transformed through ongoing 'labors of division' in Law's phrase… that involve continuous work across particular occasions and multiple sites of use" (268-269). These transformations of boundaries can occur only if responsibility is taken for producing "protocols, standards, instructions, and the like necessary to the successful production and reliable reproduction of human-artifact interactions" (269). These would ideally result in smooth operations of machines/artifacts, but also provide some form of practical understanding of the human as cyborg throughout the interaction.

Questions of agency through boundary formation would need to be fleshed out and reworked continuously, and for very straightforward reasons: we no longer have a choice in the matter of whether or not to engage as cyborgs with technologies at hand. Luciano Floridi states that "in information societies, the threshold between online and offline will soon disappear" (59). One effect of this disappearance between the online and the offline boundary is that humans will transition to become "iforgs" on top of being cyborgs—that is connected informational organisms (59). While this is still a process, Floridi claims that we have "no right to ignore" the rapid changes within the information sphere: as a result, "in an increasingly porous society, it will become progressively less credible to claim ignorance when confronted by easily predictable events…and hardly ignorable facts" (60). Going

along with the fact that information will be so easily accessible, for Floridi, there is no choice but to engage in its knowledge and simultaneously its construction. He explains this through the epistemic term "vast common knowledge," that is situated in the case "in which everyone not only knows that *p,* [random variable of information] but also knows that everybody knows that everybody knows that *p"* (60). Floridi terms this "overabundance" of "metainformation" and explains that especially for newer generations it will be difficult to comprehend what the world was like in "predigital" times, as for instance "to someone who was born in 2000 the world will always have been wireless" (60-61). Thus, we must bear in mind that individuals not only have different levels of access to information, but that their epistemic understanding is likewise ultimately conditioned by their environment as well as the degree of informational "abundance" that surrounds them.

Introna explains that "it would not be incorrect to say that our existence has now become so entangled with the things surrounding us…that it is not longer possible to say…where we end and they begin, and vice versa. We are in a very profound way, each other's *co-constructive* condition for our ongoing becoming of what we are" (26, emphasis added). Introna's language shifts away from binaries of "us (humans)" vs. "them (machines)" and towards "co-construction," which signals a mutual re-conceptualization of networks and changes. Most importantly, the idea of co-construction emphasizes the necessity of recognizing the relationship between humans, machines and their joint interactions. The notion of co-construction also allows for a responsible creation of boundaries through what Suchman terms "instructions," which aim to make this relationship legible. After all, having surface debates regarding whether or not ATMs and self-serve grocery check-outs position consumers as laborers/objects (as Cavanagh proposes) is different from concrete discussions on the specifics of these kiosks: are they functional? Do they allow for services to be expedited? Do users feel comfortable engaging in interactions with these artifacts? These questions are ongoing.

The desire to create boundaries is indeed found in Haraway, however, these boundaries remain deeply ethical: "the cyborg appears in myth precisely where the boundary between human and animal is transgressed" (2272). The problem for many of Haraway's readers remains that this view of the cyborg is defensive and "mythical"—out of touch with the practical:

> From one perspective, a cyborg world is about the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet, about the final abstraction embodied in a Star War apocalypse waged in the name of defense, about the final appropriation of women's bodies in a masculinist orgy of war. From another perspective, a cyborg *might* be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. (Haraway 2275, emphasis added)

In this passage, it is the latter sentence I wish to focus on, rather than the apocalyptic vision of patriarchal machine-like dominion of humans and free will. "Lived social and bodily realities" in this sense are formulated on kinships that are not based on similar identities. Rather, this point should be emphasized and read in terms of "co-construction" of existence: it is not one group that gets to determine the boundaries—not the singular dominant "we". Haraway too, cautions, "single vision produces worse illusions than double vision or many-headed monsters" (2278). In this sense, creating a "single vision" approach towards classifying cyborgic relationships hints at the danger of ending in a totality, and avoids the everyday with its non-singular kinships. Thus the cyborg *should* "be about lived social and bodily realities" rather than "might".

Bringing the cyborg language into the everyday ensures that responsibility is taken for the construction of these negotiated boundaries: "in such an environment [connected information environment] the moral status and accountability of artificial agents will become an ever more challenging issue" (Floridi 62). Floridi's conception of "agency" links in to what I imagine cyborgs to be in today's culture: for example, a woman on her cell

phone who is able to download music, and send out an e-mail from the same device is a cyborg because she is always connected to endless possibilities through that piece of technology in the palm of her hand. While this is not the same as having a prosthetic limb (which yields a different version of cyborgism) Floridi suggests, "we are all becoming *connected*... not through some fanciful transformation in our body, but, more seriously and realistically, through the reontologization of our environment and ourselves" (62). And this is precisely what the cyborg metaphor needs as a "networking" update of sorts: linking the real and the technological, and co-constructing it on a daily basis. It is worthy to end on a quotation from Haraway's later work, taken from *The Companion Species Manifesto*, where Haraway's goal is to expand the cyborg family to welcome companion species (pets) to explore the process of co-construction more closely. She states that "telling… stor[ies] of co-habitation, co-evolution, and embodied cross-species socially, the present manifesto asks which of two cobbled together figures—cyborgs and companion species—might more fruitfully inform livable politics and ontologies in current life works" (4). The answer is both, as both are present in the everyday "livable" environments of our cyborgic selves.

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Acting the Clown

Dylan Godwin

10 Theses

1-The Clown is a parasite on Death—has intuited the omnipresence of the end and secured immortality with tactical amnesia, a trick of hollowest self-invocation.

2-The Clown is without inner resources. His 'endurance' would be striking except that the resumption of his war on fate has always been written in advance. Do not cry foul—his fraudulence is ecstatic.

3-The Clown makes a joke of The Future. He suffers it unawares—he could not name it as such. History? Maybe when friends go missing.

4-The Clown is a lobotomized hero. An actor of persistence proper. He unwittingly signs his name 'Dead'.

5-The Clown, by the fixity and obscurity of his affect, refutes the legitimacy of the very throb he occasions. His suffering is markedly absent from the pupils. Our species hurts for and hates him with equal reason.

6-The Clown, if he spoke more resoundingly, would be overheard exhorting himself to keep on doing whatever he was doing. Not because of any motivational deficiency, but merely in consequence of his always divulged scriptedness.

7-The Clown is painted with a smile or with a frown. These do not constitute the first layers of compassionate ironies ('but oh how we all weep on the inside!'), but rather the terminal and impenetrable winces of a will held to account.

8-The Clown and The Dare Devil diverge as follows: The Dare Devil defies Death by stated intention, gathering massive audiences to witness the slight, while The Clown cheats Death by Death's own intention...succeeds in the failure of his stunts. Evel Knieval vs. Super Dave Osborne. Super Dave, who speaks from Death—who promises to try harder (to die again) next time. The Dare Devil costume has become The Clown's suit of choice.

9-Groups of four or more Clowns, their interior vacuums at dangerous proximity, are prone to collective implosion—hence, The Clown Car. A club or league of Clowns would effectively vanish about this central vacuum—would pop into visibility only at the draw of emergency, the whiff of smoke.

10-Emergency is the state to which The Clown cannot fail to contribute.

Stone Rose Soaring
Bonnie Roy

I can't think in capering
The light in the room leaves a slant to the doorway
Which thought whether round or capsizing
In summer a sudden umbrella tipped pink sun suffused
The airplane fluff and happenstance
I think like a long lost capering
The skirts folded shut and open in triangles pinched to the hips
I had a stone, I had been hefting there
What a perfect enclosure wouldn't commend to the palm
A swift ice planet strummer
All news of gem-drop lampshades faceting a dance floor
A stone a rose a soaring
A grip detention a dark

***from* Buffed**
Miles de Courcy and Michael Burnside


QS SUPERMARKET

Every Revolutionary is Robespierre:
Sourcing Moral Claims in Post-Structuralist Notions of History

Iain Laidley

The death of God is not simply a metaphysical head-scratcher. Perhaps its key implications have to do with the loss of an objective basis for moral decisions. In a similar way, the rejection of actual underlying patterns and structures in history by scholars such as Deleuze and Guattari seem to destabilize any ability to make arguments involving ethical imperatives sourced in history. However, if 'Nietzsche's death of God' and the end of structuralist history are examined together, a possible solution to the problem of the source for moral claims presents itself. Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, which he uses to solve the absence of God, seems to have a cognate in the practices of post-structuralist history. As such, that style of history which seems to eliminate the possibility of making moral claims may very well have internal to its system a source for them.

Coming to terms with the death of God in Nietzsche is key to understanding the function of eternal return in history. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche's madman proclaims "*We have killed [God]* – you and I" (181). This is more than a simple attack on Christianity, or on the notion of an almighty God; by removing God, Nietzsche removes the primary source of the force of 'should'. That is, there is no longer any force for a sentence resembling one of the Ten Commandments: "you *should* not kill." He claims that we should "beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, nobody who trespasses" (168); there is no objective, transcendent moral force or arbiter. There seems to be no laws that exist above the arbitrary ones of humanity, and thus nothing metaphysical in which those human laws can be logically based. However, it is possible that this function can be performed by a traditional, structuralist notion of history.

Consider as an example the study of Augustan Rome. The use of republican and democratic propaganda to justify a totalitarian centralization of power, as well as that centralization of power itself, can be interpreted as a 'lesson'. That is, to question literature released by the government or by people in some way connected to it, and to avoid the centralization of power. The logic of this argument operates on the assumption that what happens once in history will likely happen again. That is, that history is inherently predictable and patterned, and thus we can use past events to make statements about the present and future. Perhaps a somewhat facetious example of this is the matter of invading Russia in the winter: it did not go well for Napoleon, the joke goes, so Hitler must have ignored the lessons of history to think it would work for him.

The ethical function of this patterned history seems to be somewhat similar to that of God; it is a seemingly objective point from which one can make 'should' statements. Consider the oft-misquoted Santayana maxim: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (184). This seems to make clear the deterministic nature of history in this view. However, there are two points to be extracted from the saying. First, the clear one: that a person who forgets the past (in the above example, Hitler forgetting Napoleon's invasion of Russia) is doomed to make the same mistake (invading Russia in the winter). There is a second, complimentary reading: that one should not make the same apparent mistakes made by people of the past. It is by combining the two that the force of 'should' in structuralist history becomes clear; the first formulation makes it clear that one should read history, while the second makes it clear that one should avoid repeating the negatives aspects of it. Thus, in a world where God no longer can act as the source of 'should', structuralist history can at least partially step in and fill the ethical void.

To make this clearer, consider the Santayana maxim on a more personal scale. A man should not commit murder because in the past, murderers have been harshly punished; this is the logic operating behind the death penalty, and any other penal system that seeks to punish as opposed to reform. Thus, it seems that

locating the force of 'should' in history does not just hold for events on a global scale, it can take the place of God for personal ethical decisions as well. Patterned history may be a useful ethical device. However, this solution to the problem of the source of 'should' is problematized in a notion of history that is post-structuralist.

Consider Deleuze and Guattari on history in *Anti-Œdipus*. They claim that in modern capitalist society it is "right to understand retrospectively all of history in the light of capitalism" (cited in Lampert 119). That is, the capitalist society understands all of history in the context of capitalism. Rome in this view then would be a developing capitalist state, only developed to the extent it has 'evolved' aspects of the capitalist system. According to Lampert, a "capitalist regime does 'universal history' by assimilation," and "the state invents historiography to organize progress" (128). Thus, the capitalist state writes patterns into history that may not have already been there. It has a fundamentally anachronistic view of the passage of time that understands all previous civilizations as something 'genetically' related to itself, either as an aberration and a step away from capitalism, or an apparent development towards it. It does this by "devaluing the question of whether societies are historically the same or different, as long as they generate working capital" (Lampert 131).

A possible cognate to this notion of history is the notion of "fictive history" as developed by Foucault. Consider the introduction to *Madness and Civilization* by the psychoanalyst Barchilon. He claims that Foucault "has tried to re-create the negative part of [mental illness], that which has disappeared under the retroactive influence of present-day ideas and the passage of time" (Foucault v). There are two points worth emphasizing in Barchilon's passage. First, it acknowledges that the retroactive reinterpretation of history *happens*, without implying that it is intentional. The negative connotations of madness have simply slowly faded, and as such modern readings of madness incline towards a more apparently neutral outlook. However, though unintentionally, he has painted Foucault's 'history' as very much

the same thing; it is quite literally a re-creation. Thus, though it is quite possible that Barchilon means to imply a kind of objective, academic history, he actually nods to the fact that Foucault's history is necessarily one among many *reinterpretations*. It is for this reason that Foucault's texts are not simply 'histories'; though they may recount moments in time that actually occurred, they orchestrate these moments in order to make a specific point. Thus, a "fictive history" uses an interpretation of the past as a philosophical argument.[i]

By Deleuze and Guattari's theory, then, capitalist history is necessarily creative. This historical view would claim, that "the capitalists arise by turns in a series that founds a sort of creativity of history" (cited in Lampert 132). This is distinct from the Santayana quote. While Santayana claims that there exist patterns in history independent of interpretation, and that they are *discovered* by human beings, Deleuze and Guattari claim that these patterns are *written in by the historian himself*. The patterns and structure of history, those things that function as a partial replacement for God as a source of 'should', thus do not transcend humanity at all. If the moral imperative is located inside human interpretation, history cannot be used as a basis for objective, non-relative ethics, as interpretation is intrinsically tied up with the subject.

Perhaps the best example of this type of history at work is Kundera's notion of 'kitsch' in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. In describing "leftist intellectuals" (261) that depart for a march to save lives in Vietnam, he notes that "what makes a leftist a leftist is not this or that theory but his ability to integrate any theory into the kitsch called the Grand March" (257). In the face of the reality of "the crimes of the country called the Soviet Union… a leftist [has] two choices: either to spit on his former life and stop marching or… to reclassify the Soviet Union as an obstacle to the Grand March" (261). That is, Kundera's leftist can retrospectively modify history; the Soviet Union, traditionally the domain of the left, can be recreated as an enemy to the left. Thus, it is possible that an aspect of what Kundera refers to as kitsch is the perspective from which one can retrospectively reinterpret

history to suit the present. However, this operates as more than simply an example of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of history; it shares the processes, but has a different perspective.

Recall that Deleuze and Guattari claim that the reinterpretation of history is necessarily capitalist. That is, only the capitalist regime can rewrite history from its own perspective. However, the kitsch outlined by Kundera and the fictive histories of Foucault are not limited to capitalist re-readings, nor even one that is necessarily politically ideological; Foucault writes from a perspective that is rooted less in political attitudes than in notions of mental health. It seems possible that the perspective from which one reads oneself into history is not necessarily that of the capitalist. Instead, it may simply be the perspective chosen by the reader.

Thus, the moral problem of post-structuralist history is aggravated: if it is not only from one perspective that history is reread, and there are a multiplicity of possible interpretive lenses, the force of 'should' is further diluted if sourced in historical events. The 'patterns' in history that could otherwise be used to help inform moral decisions, if identified as products of human imagination, act as nothing but creative literary text, which hardly acts as an uncontroversial, universal source for the force of 'should'. It seems then, that if post-structuralist history of the Deleuze and Guattari school is accepted, that the same nihilistic problem of the death of God appears: there is nothing in which one can objectively base ethical claims.

Kaufmann, in his translation of *The Gay Science,* suggests that nihilism is a "terrifying sense of weightlessness" that can be overcome by "the greatest weight" (Nietzsche 17): eternal recurrence. Nietzsche performs a thought experiment with a demon that comes to a man one night and tells him that "this life as you now live and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence… The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and

again" (273). Importantly, this is not a suggestion that a demon *will* in fact come to every man and have him live his life over again. Instead, it seems to be a matter of, if this demon were to appear, whether this would be a tragic event or a blessing. If a demon were to come to a man, Nietzsche claims, the question "do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" (274) would inform every decision he makes. It is in this way that Nietzsche, according to Kaufmann, seeks to fill the nihilistic void he creates; eternal recurrence is a "self-overcoming of nihilism" (18). That is, by lending such weight to every decision, each moment would no longer be meaningless: a man should not do something because he would not want to do it for the rest of eternity.

Kundera comes to a similar conclusion about eternal recurrence. Consider his discussion of the French Revolution. "If the French Revolution were to recur eternally, French historians would be less proud of Robespierre. But because they deal with something that will not return, the bloody years of the Revolution have turned into mere words, theories, and discussion, have become lighter than feathers, frightening no one. There is an infinite difference between a Robespierre who occurs only once in history and a Robespierre who eternally returns, chopping off French heads" (4). Kundera's claim seems to be that a Robespierre that is not a one-time event, that has all of the weight of eternity, can be morally condemned; one should not behead people as Robespierre did for the rest of time. He continues to argue that "in the sunset of dissolution, everything is illuminated by the aura of nostalgia, even the guillotine" (4). An event that occurs only once seems to inherently have novelty value, and as such is shielded from moral judgment. It seems that "in the world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy on every move" (5), and that thus the thought experiment of eternal recurrence can operate as a force of 'should'.

Recall the thesis of post-structuralist history: that the historian reads himself into the history he studies as if it were a text. He *creates* patterns and repetitions that are not necessarily there. It is because these predictive structures are artificial and

located internal to human interpretation that this was condemned as a notion that cannot provide a moral imperative. However, consider it in context with eternal return. The claim is not that all lives echo for eternity, instead, it is a suggestion of a thought experiment that would allow one to live as if each life did recur forever. In this way, 'should' can again be sourced. This is an artificial, man-made construct; it is just as creative a process as the act of reading and writing history. It may share similarities beyond that point as well.

Consider the earlier 'historian' reading Augustan Rome and suggesting that, due to patterns that he claims are inherent in history, one should not cede too much power to a single person in the name of anything. The objection earlier was that that pattern is not, in fact, inherent, and thus cannot act as a point for the force of 'should'. However, if the pattern *can coherently* be read into history, then it may function much like eternal return. By reading modern political issues into the past, the question of eternal recurrence is asked: do we want to do this for the rest of time? If not, then it *should* not be done. Thus, it seems possible that history in the manner of Deleuze and Guattari can be used as a source for moral exhortation in much the same way eternal return fills the nihilistic space left by the death of God.

If every revolutionary is read as Robespierre, and every revolution as the French Revolution, then Kundera's worry about lightness is addressed. For, it seems that in post-structuralist history we can coherently talk about "a Robespierre who eternally returns, chopping off French heads" (4) because that pattern can be read into the text of the past. It may not represent a transcendent, objective force of 'should'—indeed, it is still tied up with human interpretation—but it does allow for rational arguments to be made about moral decisions from the basis of history. Though eternal recurrence is not as valuable as God when it comes to the basis of moral exhortations, it seems as if it can serve a part of the function.

[i] Here I refer to the possibility of interpreting *Discipline and Punish* as an anti-Republic. However, this is hardly the place to make that argument.

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My Healing Light
Michael Loncaric

Then came Norman Mailer's "Machismo is the last American sport," which meant no more real events; it followed that to be a good promoter I would have to arrange fights that never happened. I was confident in the change because I knew that nothing drummed up machismo like a non-event.

If I say that reading Mailer marked the birth of a new agony, I don't mean the struggle to become uncommonly good where many already excel. I don't mean picking the best worm from the well-read dozens, or catching three knuckles when your head was only made for two. I mean an unlikely tension between history's strangers, the agony of a match untethered to a moment in time.

In this new style of combat, the fighter grows.
Her *REACH* is still the swinging fist's, but now it is also the fighter's descriptive shadow, her extension across time, and her contest with the people who would say that the rules have changed since she expired.

On the contested turf of New York City, two writers square off.
Real toughs who understand only that someone is trying to say it better. One holds an essay *(New York Revisited*, first published in 1906), the other sings a song ("Empire State of Mind," released 2010).

Why them? Because of how they match up over their common muse, NYC. And because Henry James was never, for his own tastes, tall enough, while Jay-Z is still so sure of himself.

begin

In the vested corner, wearing a wing-tipped collar and a black bowtie topped with an elaborate scowl, holding more personal titles than your personal library, ladies and gentlemen, Henry "the Fathomless" James! And in the opposite corner, with shades and Yankee hat, the blueprinting and positively adorned, ladies and gentlemen, most incredibly, Jay-Z!

ROUND 1
a kind of conquest

Jay
In a nursery, the boy is looking to check out.
He has an attitude that includes destiny.
So we wait on those first words…

Henry
"One story is good only till another is told, and sky-scrapers are the last word of economic ingenuity only till another word be written."
James is beset by the skyline's impermanence, but his ability to say as much is a last word on the next word, the name of the eraser. So he gets there first to mark his grave with a bag of small potatoes.

The Agony
James' outside lament Vs. Jay's in-egg load

Jay: "I read your shit James. You'll notice that the first blips of drum in 'Empire' got that hint of sonar. That's my submarine James. Said you had some trouble with New York's great Bay. Said you couldn't make out 'the reason of the great beauty.' Ain't no mystery about the reason. It's you James. Cause I'm underwater and you don't know. Forget about it James. Just try to enjoy yourself."

James: "Zang! That's some dangerous history. You used to what, "cop in Harlem"? All those "Dominicanoes (Hey yo)" really know you? Okay. But you're saying nothing that you don't already believe. Reminds me of what I call the "regenerate filial mind." That's a sucker's condition Jay. You get a birthday every morning but you wanna stay young forever. I dwell in confusion because the city is against us. Ha!"

ROUND 2

Jay
"Empire State of Mind":
The title is a headline and a drug
The heady line *of a drug*.
One of Jay's native emissions, it is part of the same surety that frees him to deliver his own champed up sensation in the agile grammar of "Yeah I'm out that Brooklyn." The sensation is what? It is a grand piano, but mostly, it is a garnet avenue running his ascent from Brooklyn to Tribeca. And only a member of the knowing-bored would resent him for coming on swagger-strong, though the song has no populist sentiments to anneal our humanity with his. That, it seems, is the first drop of Jay's machismo: NYC can light up a private trail.

Henry
NYC does not appreciate James. There are moments when his being-there is ignored, when nothing talks back to him. And he is too fluid a writer to have his language stopped up without panicking (cannot suffer the dry interval), which is why it is so terrifying that Wall Street is "felt from the inside." About this unspeakable contact with the city:
"'Felt'—I use that word, I dare say, all presumptuously, for a relation to matters of magnitude and mystery that I could begin neither to measure nor to penetrate… material for the artist, the painter of life, as we say, who shouldn't have begun so early and so fatally to fall away from possible initiations." (40)
The sensation will remain sensational.
This New York wen will not be transcribed.
But it would be if Jay were there.
While James makes self-conscious speech out of his muted inspiration,
Jay is pure affirmation.
The rapper is more interested in the work ethic of "fully mastered" than in
James' blushing Dictaphone.

The Agony
James' tourism VS. Jay's protagonist shtick

James: The city doesn't need us.
Jay: It needs me.
James: That impunity of yours…
Jay: No style in humility.
James: You gamble?
Jay: 3 dice cee-lo…
James: You win?
Jay: Always.
James: Always? Well then you'll remember that when I visited City Hall, I remarked that the 'portraits of past worthies…Mayors, Bosses, Presidents, Governors,…' created the impression that in New York 'nothing could have happened otherwise.'
Jay: Story of my life.
James: Your life in story.
Jay: I get paid to ignore that difference.

ROUND 3

Henry
He conquered New York with contempt.
Said "Crowned not only with no history, but with no credible possibility of time for history."
In 1904, Henry James finds that New York City's erasable skyline makes room for the more ruthless durability of an adaptable consciousness. This would be an unremarkable statement if people like James could learn to live un-historically. But the city James comes back to radiates a "consciousness of the finite, the menaced, the essentially invented state" (35), and this wounds him.

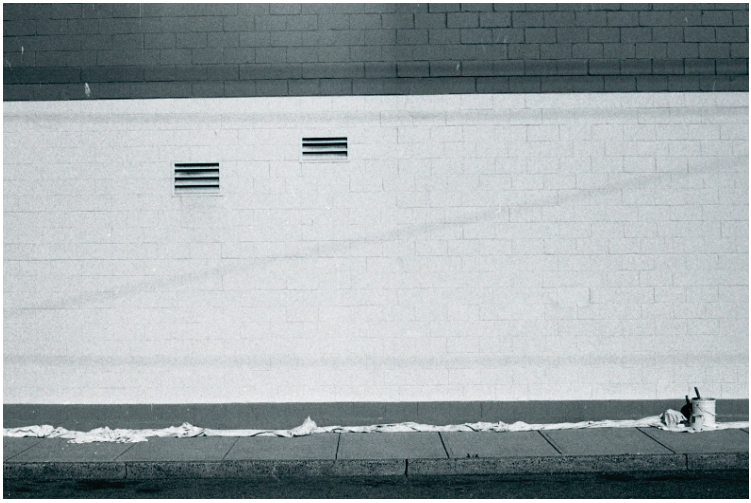
Z
Jay thinks James misleads us as much as New York's little people mislead themselves.
This "essentially invented state" is the overcoming of disappointment, potentiated as illusion when the little people decide to live large.
Jay is accused of hyping the drug's return, but his words are truth to James' "invention":
"MDMA got you feeling like a champion."
Jay knows that MDMA has the doubt-receptors of a tattoo.
You've never felt better, and that's a day in Jay's life that James never had.

The Agony
Up or Down?

James: Going to the pain of your art, I want to ask when you plan on becoming human?
Jay: You heard my sacred Alicia knockin' off with "New York, the streets will make you feel brand new"?
James: Can't miss the chorus.
Jay: Right. Well I'm not here to suffer. First time she sang that I knew. We were back to real Disney optimism, the shit that promised to make a home out of colour. Empire, James. You can be loved at the foot of a statue.
James: I call that 'personal antiquity'.
Jay: And I call it New York history.

***from* Six Photographs**
David Nykyforuk


GUN CLUB
NO
TRESPASSING
WEDDI



from Elegy Venues *and* Poem

Michael Clearwater

Prologues:

> The day we came to the house all decisions on burials were deferred. We read ourselves into each thing written and fell asleep that first night on my chest: each dream sprawls as scrimshaw sprawls across our teeth and our skeletons and ever since each waking is foretold. These oracular bones are hours—they don't ache alone. And some times they don't ache at all. Since that day we came to the house, the rivers rise in our etchings and the wind is filling the canyons that take us always back. The earth has laid itself down in epochs. Already we can see ourselves in it. We are small and together. A fossil makes each thought if you look hard enough to feel. Dearest, when I say I love you I mean I lay myself down in epochs. I mean I look hard enough to

Acheology

the millennium narrative:

We spent that year fortifying ourselves
against absurdities of every sort. We slept in
the desert in the city of abandoned planes.
The universe revealed itself, under all that
fancy garb, a collection of Rube Goldberg jalopies.

Fig. 2.a: the corresponding fragments:

:we were between someone else's thoughts:
:the rustling of papers held us in place:
:at night the moon made each thing show a bit white:
:everything white is the mind knowing snow:

Fig.2.b: the civilization:

We had special contraptions for reading at night.

We named them Los Angeles and New York
and Chicago.

We spent all our time between them.

When we imagine them beautiful we are floating above them.
We are strange to each other.

Fig.2.c: the domestic artifacts:

Among the nighttimes and away from here,
our apartments are empty above the streets.
The future is a return to the hurried words and where we left
our lives among things on the kitchen table.

Still Life: Domestic Romance as Sentence Diagram Exercise

There are two kinds of sentences in this world:
/ \
the ones that break our hearts and the ones our hearts break inside of.
/ \
Snow is best and worst alone. That's how I knew I loved you so much.
/ \
You and I slide together. The snow insists.
/ \
The streets are the same as lines carved into wrists
/ \
except the flower lined one we keep coming home on.

Poem:

Make these words a gaze with which you keep them.
Make these so they hold you.
Be held in the us-shaped hallows we've made the air.

There is a quiet to be come upon,
these will be its parts: a grey
sky and a field and its shrubs

and the birds that might split
the sky any minute now:
this was built from the hallows

we moved out of and back into
or that moved around us always.
These words:

our only way of looking.
I don't know what I'm doing.
Tell me if I'm wrong.

Reclined and Working
Tiziana La Melia

Of Alexandria and Babel:
Alberto Manguel's *The Library at Night*
Graham Mackenzie

"There was also hope that the fundamental mysteries of mankind—the origin of the library and of time—might be revealed. In all likelihood those profound mysteries can indeed be explained in words; if the language of the philosophers is not sufficient, then the multiform Library must surely have produced the extraordinary language that is required, together with the words and grammar of that language."

- Jorge Luis Borges
(*The Library of Babel*)

From the unanimous night of human existence emerges the startling, unexpected, and ultimately creative project of the library. According to Alberto Manguel, "outside theology and fantastic literature, few can doubt that the main features of our universe are its dearth of meaning and lack of discernible purpose" (3). In *The Library at Night* Manguel gives an account of his astonishment, astonishment born of the bewildering human optimism evident in our attempts to lend the world "a semblance of sense and order, while knowing perfectly well that, however much we'd like to believe the contrary, our pursuits are sadly doomed to failure" (3). We, readers of *this* story of libraries, are invited to celebrate with Manguel the repeated failures of all human pretensions toward a completion of the library as object, toward a final construction of the library as one kind of human object into which all other (dis)similar endeavours absorb—or else languish in the margins of public purview.

Where we have cause to celebrate, it is because we fail to complete, or make (*poiēsis*), the library-as-object. In this failure we succeed in maintaining the library as a possible space for appearance,[i] a space whose story retains an infinite potential for active inclusiveness in inverse proportion to its actual closed completeness. *The Library at Night* is an act of telling the story of the multiform library next to and against the story of the uniform library (referred to as the "Total Library" by Jorge Luis Borges, an important touchstone for Manguel). It is, therefore, an act of tracing the influence of ideas and ambitions associated with the great Library of Alexandria, and the legendary Tower of Babel by paying attention to their various historical manifestations and permutations.

In order to tell this tale authentically, Manguel encourages his readers to participate with him in thinking about the larger human history of the library by way of his personal library, thereby making what was private, in a sense, public. Though his library is one among thousands, perhaps millions in existence, it is no mere simulacrum of some ideal type. Rather, Manguel recounts the manifold ways that his library attempts to bring the world within its borders to a kind of order. None of those

orderings need to correspond with established rules by which others order their libraries. Yet, the story of his library is an access point to the broader human experience of the library as public metaphor.

Manguel's personal library is one *particular* route to beginning to think about the library in a more public way—a more political way. This manner of beginning to think our way into the story of the multiform library rests upon an axiom: we come to the public realm through and with our personal experiences. This is practically analogous to what Canadian public intellectual George Grant articulated in theory: "Love of the good is man's [sic] highest end, but it is the nature of things that we come to know and to love what is good by first meeting it in that which is our own" (73). Thus, in *The Library at Night*, Manguel's private library is made, in part, public, thereby imbuing it with a relevance for Manguel's readers that it would not have otherwise had; at the same time publicising his personal library lends further definition to a public understanding of the nature, import, and meaning of the library as a human project. In other words, by thinking through a specific library, we access a way of thinking about the plural multiform library that in turn, reflexively, brings the original specific library into clearer focus.

The multiform library then, is an effort in *praxis* (action): it is a variegated attempt—through remembering, archiving, reasoning, ordering, differentiating, sharing, effacing, imagining and a great many other laborious acts—to reveal, discover and engender pockets of meaning and purpose in a world that often seems unanimously opposed to any and all projects of the sort. In contrast, the uniform library, as an effort in *poiēsis*, announces human ambitions of godhood and the drive toward the will to power in the realms of language, writing, epistemology, art, politics, and ultimately the human condition. The uniform library is an impulse to make shape of the unanimous night through construction of a universal human meaning and purpose, a 'grand narrative' if you will.

Manguel's mythic avatars for the multiform and uniform libraries are, respectively, the ancient Library of Alexandria and

the storied Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel, "erected to reach the unreachable heavens, rose from our desire to conquer space, a desire punished by the plurality of tongues that even today lays daily obstacles against our attempts at making ourselves known to one another" (19). The Library of Alexandria, "built to assemble, from all over the world, what those tongues had tried to record, sprang from our hope to vanquish time" (19). Babel then, arises of the will to omnipresence while Alexandria gives rise to the study of history. According to Manguel, "the first reflected our intuition of a single, continuous, monolingual divinity whose words were spoken by all from heaven and earth; the second, the belief that each of the books made up of these words was its own complex cosmos, each presuming in its singularity to address the whole of creation" (24). Babel, in its aspiration to omnipresence has its counterpart in modern thought, namely in teleological dialectics—the idea that human history is the progression of the human condition from a state of plurality and conflict toward a final ethical consensus. Phrased in the language of politics rather than metaphor we would say 'empire' in place of Babel. In contrast, Alexandria is the attempt to create a public place for the richness and diversity of the world's variety and the variety of worlds; here the analogous word is democracy.[ii]

The idea of the Alexandrian Library has existed in tension with the dream of Babel's fallen Tower for much of human history. That tension has at times been characterized by open conflict, at others by mere muted hostility. However, the historical ubiquity of the impulse toward modeling our libraries and politics on a single, continuous, monolingual divinity—the dominance of the uniform library—is beyond question and manifests itself most strikingly when one considers the willful destruction and silencing of other peoples and their libraries. For Manguel, "the libraries that have vanished or have never been allowed to exist greatly surpass in number those we can visit, and form the links of a circular chain that accuses and condemns us all" (124). One of the most dramatic recent illustrations of disappeared libraries came at the complicit hands of Western invaders in Iraq. In 2003, after the British-U.S. invasion and

amidst the resultant social chaos, the Anglo-American conquerors stood by and watched as "the National Archives, the Archaeological Museum and the National Library of Baghdad were ransacked and looted. In a few hours, much of the earliest recorded history of humankind was lost to oblivion" (262). But contra these disheartening cases are stories of the ways in which the multiform library manages to thrive and survive under the most crushingly difficult conditions.[iii] While much of what was stolen in Baghdad remains lost, much of it was returned in the months following the looting, lending a little credence to the idea that the public project of sharing artefacts of knowledge calls louder for many than self-interest, or the pursuit of totality.

To date, numerous of our multiform libraries have merely come under threat and been partly destroyed in conflict with the idea of Babel. However, for Manguel, we are now at a stage in history where the future of the multiform library's survival is again in question due to the potential re-emergence of the reconstituted impulse to uniformity latent in our technologies themselves. The emergence of information networks and archival technologies re-present the dream of the total, omnipresent library. Manguel, himself, is moderately sceptical about the potential for computer network technologies to stand in for the idea of Alexandria both in form and as metaphor. For Manguel, "Alexandria modestly saw itself as the centre of a circle bound by the knowable world; the Web, like the definition of God first imagined in the twelfth century, sees itself as a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere" (322). Thus, Alexandria stands as a metaphor for a public realm in which human beings retain some defined scope in which to act in the world. In contrast, our new technologies at once increase our ability to act instantaneously across vast tracts of space while threatening our ability to define and enter a public space in which to come to knowledge of ourselves. "The fancy or the imagination or the utopia of the Total Library has certain characteristics that are easily confused with virtues" (Borges 214).

In sum, what Manguel has given us with this book is further shape, contrast, and clarity for our image of the human

condition. His is only one of many human attempts to do so, and yet it is significant for illustrating a clearer picture of the role of the library in our history, our present, our possible futures and ourselves. At the same time, it has clearly articulated some of the ways that we might try to organize our future, depending on our goals. Finally, *The Library at Night* is both a work of art itself and a study of an artwork—of "that self-portrait we call a library" (Manguel 324).

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[i] See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)., p. 199 for her discussion of 'the space of appearance' in "Power and the Space of Appearance."

[ii] As a philosophical metaphor, the library of Alexandria bears close affinity to Hannah Arendt's theories of the public realm.

[iii] See Manguel's recounting of the story of Block 31 at Birkenau for a more appropriately full description of what happened there. Somehow, against all odds, a library of a mere 8 books managed to be maintained in the camp despite heavy surveillance of the prisoners. Ibid., p. 240.

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untitled
Michelle Mackenzie

Preface Revisited
Carolyn Richard

strange cadavers, you'll hear a whistling from up above you'll get an eyeful. if you've got to be both blind and deaf well what would you have me do with this? a collection divided and did i mention the other things discarded? i guess there's nothing to hold now but your silence.

you'll say: the insolence!

but it's too uncomfortable. what's talking to you is practically a disembodied soul. and a soul isn't responsible for what it says. tending to a history that stalks before and behind. i rent the air and still leave some spaces v a c a n t.

i'll say: press the spine and mind its shifting.

i'll say your clothes coughed for want of you so i wore them. i'll say i mourned you. i'll say i wanted to give your name back into the general clutter. i'll say i was trying to say but the shapes began to stop and i just tried to get out.

i'll say: (caught in the wake what speaks back?).

i'll say i meant to mourn you. i'll say i brought bells to the wake. but i heard they were putting this back on the rails again, and committing crimes of self-reference i said i wanted in. in my puppetry/ mummery dress under duress and a few good works to cut my throat with. i'll press your absence into place.

headless i lean out to mirror/ mire you