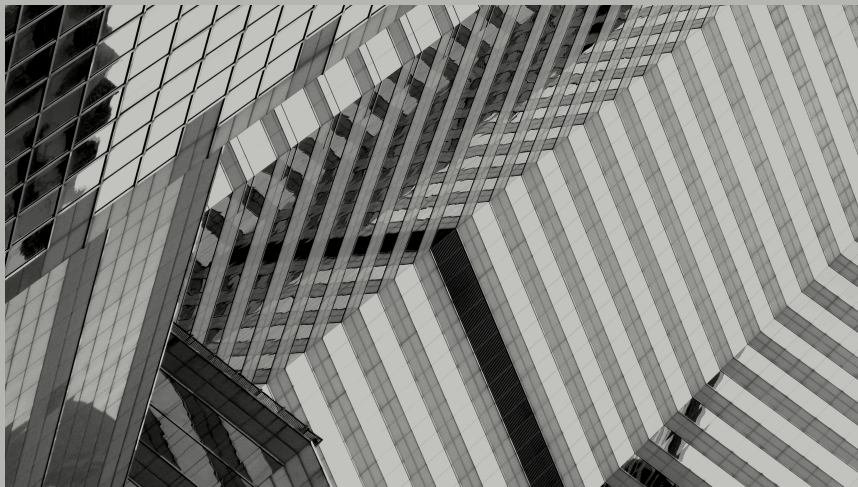


Body Text

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“‘One little room, an everywhere’: Spatial Dynamics and the Divine Potential of Love and Mind in John Donne’s *The Sunne Rising*” by **David Richardson** ’12. “The Cycles of Presidential History: Where Are We Now?” by **Hannah Solomon-Strauss** ’12. “Myth and Its Double: Re-reading, Re-vision, and Repetition in Angela Carter’s *The Sadeian Woman*” by **Karina Puttieva** ’11. “Unpeeling Wallpaper: Women’s Voices Beneath the Pattern of Domesticity, 1860-1935” by **Maggie Goddard** ’11. “The Language of Built Form as a Blueprint for Comedy in Plautus’ *Mostellaria* and *Miles Gloriosus*” by **Mara Miller** ’10. “Beuys and Chardin: On Immortality and Inheritance” by **Kimberly L. Wegel** ’12.

John B. Hurford '60 Center for the Arts and Humanities
Haverford College

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Body Text is published annually by the *Body Text* Editorial Board at Haverford College, 370 Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA 19041. Formerly the *Haverford Journal*, which was founded in the spring of 2004 by Robert Schiff in an effort to showcase some of Haverford's best student work in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the publication was renamed in 2012 but still holds true to this original mission.

Student work appearing in *Body Text* is selected by the Editorial Board, which puts out a call for papers at the end of every semester. Entries are judged on the basis of academic merit, clarity of writing, persuasiveness, and other factors that contribute to the quality of a given work.

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EDITORS' NOTE

⋮ bod•y text

⋮ noun (usu. **the body text**)
⋮ the main part of a printed text; excluding items such as
⋮ headings and footnotes

(New Oxford American Dictionary 2nd edition © 2005 by Oxford University Press, Inc.)

“Body Text” is a structural term. There is no particular content that is “body text,” but rather the name is used for text that is put in a specific place within a document—at its core. The body text is separate from titles, headers, notes, block quotes, and any other printed matter, a distinction that is often emphasized typographically (and one that is especially easy to be aware of when working in a word processor or on the web). It is the central part of a document, and in an essay it is where the bulk of the argument will be found, supplemented with the additional materials. But we’ll come back to that in a moment.

Since the first edition of the *Haverford Journal* in 2005, the publication has been under a constant process of evolution and revolution. Each new group of editors has had new ideas to try out, and we are always excited to find new ways to improve our work. This year, with our biggest Editorial Board ever, we were thrilled to take on what very well may be our most ambitious experiment ever: the reimagining of the *Haverford Journal* as two complimentary publications. The first step in this was quite possibly the hardest: finding a new name.

The Attic, The Bellwether, Cypher, Chee, The Haverford Press, We Publish Papers, even—we struggled to find a name that was evoca-

tive of our purpose without being too old-fashioned, traditional, or obscure.

Our attention then turned to the simple and direct task of writing itself. We started thinking more about the steps required in producing a document and about word processing terminology, about words one might use to describe the process of writing an essay. Suddenly, we caught onto a document structural metaphor, the sound of which we liked as much as the aptness of it to describe the relationship between the two publications we were naming.

Ladies and Gentlemen: meet *Body Text* and *Margin*.

Continuing the mission of the *Haverford Journal*, *Body Text* features the strongest student writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Haverford, presenting exemplary models of student scholarship aligned to spark interdisciplinary conversations at the College. The journal remains the only such forum to bring together the student *body* around *texts* that have been produced within the same community that will read and discuss them.

Meanwhile, each issue of *Margin* focuses a topic *marginalized* in academic discourses, presenting submissions of critical essays, reviews, creative writing, visual media, and any other artifacts that critically or creatively engage the theme. *Margin* publishes the work of students, scholars, artists, musicians, and writers, both from within and outside of the Haverford community. The inaugural issue of *Margin*, released earlier this spring, demonstrated a sampling of the many ways to approach the subject of “Divas.”

Taken together, the two publications engage a wide range of individuals in the discussion of a variety of potential subjects. *Body Text* has a broader topical focus (as will be clear from the essays contained in this very volume), but is produced entirely by Haverford

students; conversely, each issue of *Margin* will be focused on a highly specific topic but reaches out to a diverse assortment of authors and artists.

This first issue of *Body Text* presents six papers written during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years, selected by the *Body Text* Editorial Board after an anonymous review. The essays were chosen primarily on the basis of their academic merit, strength, originality of argument, and clarity of writing. They come from a number of disciplines, utilize a variety of approaches, and deal with vastly different subject matter from ancient times all the way through to the modern day: John Donne, Barack Obama, the Marquis de Sade, wallpaper, Plautus, and Joseph Beuys' performance piece *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. There is no "right" order in which to approach these essays, and they do not require or presuppose any prior knowledge of a subject.

This edition of *Body Text* is hardly a culmination of that evolutionary process begun in 2004—rather, it is just another of our many new beginnings. There will certainly be more to come. We encourage you to reach out to us bodytext.journal@gmail.com with any suggestions, comments, or new ideas, and consider becoming involved—potentially by submitting your own paper for our next review in the fall, or possibly as a member of our Editorial Board.

But, for now, you're reading, and that may be the part that matters most. We hope you enjoy.

Best,

Jacob Horn and Hannah Silverblank
Co-Editors-in-Chief

“ONE LITTLE ROOM, AN EVERYWHERE”¹

Spatial Dynamics and the Divine Potential of Love and Mind in John Donne’s The Sunne Rising

David Richardson ’13

The poetry of John Donne exhibits a flexuous and dramatic sense of space. The smallest, most intimate spaces are found to house an array of universes. This sweeping play of dimension serves to demonstrate the divine potential of love. Insofar as lovers evoke in themselves and each other a sense of the infinite, they can experience moments of the highest spiritual bliss. This dynamic is enacted in Donne’s poem *The Sunne Rising*, in which a lover contains all the world’s greatest treasures and a bedroom is understood to be the center of the universe.

As the poem opens, we find the speaker cursing the indifferent motion of the sun as it ruptures the intimate space of the bedroom he shares with his beloved. The beams beckon the lovers from their reverie “Through windowes, and through curtaines” (Donne 3). This line marks the first spatial gesture in the poem; it begins to give shape to the two main spaces, the lovers’ world inside the bedroom and the greater universe at the door, and presages their mode of interaction. Donne immediately establishes a dialectic of internal versus external space. He opens a discursive site, a liminal, interstitial arena in which the two worlds speak a common language. He also establishes a dynamic of permeability - although the world of the lovers proves to be a resilient space, it is not entirely fortified against the motion of the world outside its walls.

As the sun persists in its circadian rhythm, the speaker calls on it to tend to “Late schoole boyes and sowre prentices” (6). Kings and ants

¹ Line 11 from *The Good-Morrow* by John Donne.

are common pawns, sharing in the impotence imposed by the sun on all living things and institutions. There is a pettiness attributed to this powerlessness and to the goings-on of the societal-everyday. This amounts to a second demarcation of space, if only in the abstract sense of the word—the socio-political realm and the individual/intimate realm are parsed out and pitted against one another. This qualification functions to highlight the other-worldly and transcendent nature of love. This is underscored later in the poem when Donne writes “Princes doe but play us; compar’d to this / All honor’s mimique; All wealth alchimie” (23-24). He intimates that all recognized greatness in the socio-political realm is but an approximation of the greatness of the internal, amorous space shared by the lovers. Princes, in all their regal splendor, are doomed to a mere mimicry, gesturing and grasping at the majesty of love but never actually possessing it.

Donne brings the emergent dynamic between the differing spheres to a head: they are made to interact directly in the present. Mobilizing the majesty of the lover’s world, Donne makes a broad spatial and conceptual stroke when the speaker taunts the sun: “Thy beames, so reverend, and strong / Why shouldst thou thinke? / I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke” (11-13). It is asserted that the haughty intrusion of the sun, that colossal ball of fire, can be not only blocked from the universe of the lovers, but *eclipsed entirely* by a mere wink! But how can this be so? A scientific reading of the text would surely take issue with the notion that an eyelid is capable of blacking out the sun. The disparity in size between a star and an eyelid renders the image fantastic. Donne, in trying to relay the confounding enormity and remarkable strength of the amorous space, employs a series of illustrative “*conceits*—concentrated images which involve an element of dramatic contrast, of strain, or of intellectual difficulty.”² This moment in the poem is just such a conceit; it is an

² Norton Anthology Headnote

instance of highly dramatic spatial strain and distortion in which the play of size serves to elucidate the separation between the universes and the paradoxical power one has over the other. Paradox, in this way, is an integral mode of space-conveyance within *The Sunne Rising*. It initiates the grand play of space orchestrated by Donne throughout the poem and articulates the vivid physical interaction of realms after the abstract world of the lovers is materialized through the bedroom.

This interplay is further qualified by a procession of lines detailing the motion of earthly entities across the membrane of the lovers' universe. The speaker, again deriding the sun, says,

Looke, and to morrow late, tell mee.
Whether both the India's of spice and Myne
Be where thou leftest them, or lie here with mee.
Aske for those Kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt heare, All here in one bed lay. (16-20)

The bed of the lovers is said to contain multitudes. Through this conceit, we come to understand that the lovers are capable of conceptualizing and, in a sense, *containing* the external world. This is the ultimate, overarching spatial paradox, the crux of the poem. A clown car of sorts, it is able to harbor a swarm of external entities within its walls. Insofar as it encompasses these entities, it wields a power over them.

This capacity for the osmotic incorporation of external entities within the infinitesimal fissures of the mattress and the mind speaks to the spiritual potential of humanity and love. Through experiencing another person, one is able to encounter the infinite and access the omniscient, vast Divine. Insofar as the lovers' bed contains a host of universes, insofar as their love "no season knows, nor clyme / Nor houres, dayes, moneths" (9-10), they achieve a deific state (fleet-

ing as it may be). This turn is brought to crescendo in the final lines of the poem:

Thou sunne art halfe as happy'as wee,
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age askes ease, and since thy duties bee
To warme the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art every where;
This bed thy center is, these walls, thy spheare.

Donne, in his final conceptual leap, arrives at the rhetorical destination of the poem: the complete reversal of cosmic order. The poet reiterates the play of containment by noting that the sun's work to warm the (entire) world is accomplished through warming the lovers (as they harbor all things between them). He then ushers the play to completion by deeming the site of the lovers the center of the universe about which the sun circles. The sun no longer holds power over the lovers; their days do not bow to the rising or falling of some star or to any flux of light. This shift in rank and qualification is performed by the structure of the lines themselves—the verses jut out on the page in direct relationship to the importance and primacy of the content. This confluence of form and content fortifies the spatial gesture and solidifies the cosmos as having been denatured and realigned to orbit about the lovers' universe.

This plotting of space and interaction is mimetic of one's experience of love. Donne composes a series of images in an attempt to convey the ineffable sense of blissful distortion the lover feels when intimacy works to rupture one's perception of spaces. A humble bedroom, when occupied by the lover and his beloved, becomes the site of cosmic collisions and earth-shaking vibrations. A tear is made in the space/time continuum and the lovers follow each other into the infinite and timeless beyond. The universe surges through the window and lands in the clasped hands of the lovers, who ball it and

send it spinning in sinuous, backwards traces about the altar of love, the heart of the universe: the lovers' bed.

Donne's play of diverse space speaks to his adept attendance to the variegated and seemingly adverse influences from his own life. In *The Sunne Rising*, he bears equal witness to the divine and the quintessentially human realms, the secular and the spiritual worlds, the universes of science and poetry. The result is a unity saturated with the stuff of real human experience. This poetic confluence is evocative of the most whole and transformative moments in a life. At the heart of this grand matrix resides the lover, keeper of worlds and source of universal energy, who, for Donne, is the most powerful entity in the cosmos. When beside his beloved, he breaks free of his existential condition, of his fixation in time and, if only for a fleeting instant, joins his lover in brilliant, suffusive divinity, making of "one little room, an everywhere."³

³ Line 11 from *The Good-Morrow* by John Donne.

THE CYCLES OF PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY:

Where Are We Now?

Hannah Solomon-Strauss '12

There are presidents whose elections were so momentous for their era and for the future of the United States that their victory is said to have “realigned” politics for a generation or more: Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt. There are “pre-emptive” presidents who had productive terms in office despite being opposed to the dominant party of the era: Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton. Barack Obama’s election seemed to realign politics, but his first two years in office have featured preemptive politics. Did the election of 2008 realign politics? Or have changes in American politics made realignments impossible, or nearly so? The answers to those questions have consequences for the most important theories of the Presidency—and practical implications for both the Obama Administration and the future of American politics.

I. Introduction

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 was an historic election for many reasons. The first African-American president, Obama swept into office with large majorities in both houses of Congress, after setting a record for fund-raising, making unprecedented use of social networking sites, and enjoying a tremendous youth vote. Contributing to his victory were states like North Carolina, Indiana, and Virginia, which no Democratic president had won in a generation or more (Alter 2010, 42).

It is possible that 2008 was an historic election for other reasons, too. Some election scholars propose a theory about “realigning elections”—dramatic elections in which a new dominant coalition

emerges, replacing either a stalemate or a previously dominant coalition. The elections of Thomas Jefferson (1800), Andrew Jackson (1828), Abraham Lincoln (1860), William McKinley (1896), Franklin Roosevelt (1932), and Ronald Reagan (1980) are said to be realigning elections, featuring a new governing coalition, new issues, and new bases of power for each party.

After each realignment, politics and policy are substantially and noticeably changed until the next realignment. Every realignment begins an era of strength for a certain party; this power will then begin to decline during the era, steadily weakening until, ultimately another realignment takes place. For example, the Roosevelt era began in 1932 and lasted until 1980, but the coalition was stronger in Harry Truman's time than it was in Jimmy Carter's. Thus politics is cyclical: a party rises to power in a realigning election with a new coalition and a new motivation for power; the party stays in power for a time, bringing significant policy and institutional change; but eventually that party loses a grip on its coalition, bringing another realigning election that puts in power a new coalition with new policy priorities and new bases of power.

According to some theories, the trajectory a Presidency will follow can be roughly predicted on the basis of the president's position in the cycle. For example, presidents who are elected in realigning elections have similar tenures and can be fairly compared. Presidencies at the end of a cycle—just before a new realigning election—are similar in that they are often deemed failures. This theory can be seen in the parallel presidencies of Roosevelt and Reagan, who faced similar situations and challenges. Presidents at the end of an era (Herbert Hoover and Jimmy Carter, for example) also had analogous Presidencies. By understanding how the electoral and residential cycles fit together, the politics of a particular administration—its possibilities, challenges, and limitations—can be better

understood, both by academic analysts and by the participants in the administration themselves.

The question is: Where are we now? What type of election was 2008, and what kind of president is Obama? The puzzle is that while there are many indications that 2008 was a realigning election, Obama's governing style shows signs that the Reagan era may not be over. That is, Obama appears to have been elected in a realigning election, but he is not governing like a president who was elected in a realignment. What does this mean for the leading theories about the cycles of the American Presidency? What about American politics in and since 2008 has broken or dismantled the cycles? A realignment offers a fresh start; what would it mean for politics if the cycle theories were no longer valid? How should we understand the Obama Presidency if no historical Presidency can offer a fair comparison?

This paper has three goals: first, to present the theory of realignment and presidential cycles; second, to try to fit 2008 and Obama's first two years into the cycle theories; and third, to assess what it means for both theory and practice if the cycle theories no longer apply in American presidential elections. I will argue that although the evidence supports the conclusion that the election of 2008 was a realigning election, Obama has not governed in a manner expected of presidents elected in realignments. Instead, he has acted "preemptively"—that is, as though he were *opposed* to the dominant party of the era, as would be true if the Reagan era had not ended with the 2008 realignment. This mismatch between the electoral and presidential cycles may be a result of the increased polarization in politics since the Civil Rights Era, and it may be exacerbated by the importance of social politics since Reagan. The demise of the cycles—if that is what we are witnessing—not only will require a reassessment of some of the leading theories of the Presidency; as a practical matter, it will mean that future presidents may be limited in what they can achieve and confined to practicing partisan, small-time politics.

Just as important, the fresh start that each realignment offered—the chance to address built-up grievances with new energy—may now be lacking, to the detriment of American politics.

II. Electoral Cycles: The Realignment Theory

Realigning elections are elections in which a new coalition replaces a previously dominant coalition of the other party, or replaces a stalemate. These are often elections that feature above-average intensity, new issues, and a change in the electoral base of the two parties. Realigning elections create lasting policy and institutional change. These elections are roughly periodic and have a tendency to mirror each other even in vastly different eras (Key 1955, 28; Burnham 1970, 1, 6-10; Sundquist 1983, 298-321).

Every election offers the chance for the minority party to construct a new coalition that will bring it to power. Every few elections, however, the change from the status quo is particularly severe: these are the realigning elections. The two most recent realignments are the elections of Roosevelt in 1932 and Reagan in 1980. In 1932, Roosevelt carried 42 states and collected 472 electoral votes, compared to Hoover's 6 and 59, respectively (U.S. Fed. Reg. 2010, 1932). In 1980, Reagan won 489 electoral votes and 44 states while his opponent, Jimmy Carter, won just 49 electoral votes and carried just six states (plus D.C.) (U.S. Fed. Reg. 2010, 1980). In 1980, Republicans won a majority in the Senate for the first time in 28 years (Skowronek 1993, 414).

In each of these elections, the winning party assembled a new coalition, achieving a large majority by enlisting groups that had previously sided with the other party or had not voted in large numbers. Before 1932, the Democratic Party had been “a bastion of localism and states’ rights” (Foner 1998, 195). But in the realigning 1932 election, Roosevelt brought together “a broad coalition of farmers, in-

dustrial workers, the reform-minded urban middle class, liberal intellectuals, and, somewhat incongruously, the white-supremacist South, all committed to federal intervention to reconstruct the economy and provide Americans with social security” (Foner 1998, 195). In 1980, Reagan secured the Southern white vote for the Republican Party. Southern whites had been central to the New Deal coalition, had begun to move away from the Democratic Party in the mid-1960s, and were briefly brought back into the Democratic fold when former Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter was the Democratic candidate in 1976. Then, they realigned in 1980 and have remained in the Republican coalition to this day (Brownstein 2009). Northern white men over 30 who did not hold union jobs, including many members of ethnic groups, had also been part of the New Deal coalition; Reagan won resoundingly in that group. Reagan also mobilized evangelical Christians, a group that previously had not participated in politics in great numbers (Patterson 2005, 149-50).

Every election realigns politics to some degree; strictly speaking, there are no “non-realigning elections.” But elections differ along a spectrum of realignment (Paulson 2007, 12). A series of elections might constitute a gradual or “secular” realignment, often caused by a long-term trend, such as a change in the demographics of the electorate—the aging of the population, for example, or increased urbanization. The truly realigning elections, or “critical realignments,” are elections “characteristically associated with short-lived but very intense disruptions of traditional patterns of voting behavior” (Burnham 1970, 6). In critical realignments, voters are “unusually deeply concerned... the extent of electoral involvement is unusually high, and... the decisive results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate” (Key 1955, 28). In a critical realignment, the coalitions that had constituted the parties break apart, and new coalitions reassemble—often, although not always, with a different party becoming dominant (Key 1955, 28; Skowronek 1993, 9-10). The change created in a critical rea-

lignment “persist[s] for several succeeding elections” (Key 1955, 28). These elections create a new standard that is “both sharp and durable” (Key 1955, 36). The critical realignments in American history—the elections with the most “important long-range consequences for the political system”—are the elections of 1800, 1828, 1860, 1896, 1932, and 1980 (Burnham 1970, 1; Skowronek 1993, 33).

Critical realignments have four main identifying characteristics. First, they are “characterized by abnormally high intensity” (Burnham 1970, 6; Key 1955, 29) and noticeably increased polarization (Sundquist 1983, 300-301). Some of this intensity appears in the party nominating conventions, as “ordinarily accepted ‘rules of the game’ are flouted; the party’s processes, instead of performing their usual integrative functions, themselves contribute to polarization” (Burnham 1970, 7). As polarization within the parties increases, so may polarization between the parties; this increased divergence is both a cause and an effect of the unusual intensity of realigning elections. Second, critical realignments are characterized by “abnormally heavy voter participation for the time” (Burnham 1970, 8), though this increased participation may occur only in segments of the population while others decline markedly (Sundquist 1983, 306). This increased voter involvement can be an important factor in creating the new governing coalition, as a new majority draws from segments of the population that had not been involved in politics.

Third, critical realignments do not occur at random. Though scholars have argued about the number of years in a cycle—that is, between one realignment and the next—it is evident that the political system periodically lends itself to realignments. Part of this periodicity may be built into the political system, in two key ways. First, “American political parties are essentially constituent parties,” and so critical realignments “emerge directly from the dynamics of this constituent-function supremacy” (Burnham 1970, 9). That is, American political parties are built to respond to constituent desires

and so when a broad-based social change or demand garners enough support, the very nature of American politics can cause critical realignments as voters regroup themselves into new coalitions (Sundquist 1983, 41). Second, policymakers work within a system that allows issues to develop and fester beneath the surface. As the pressure builds, voters combine to put a new, unprecedented coalition into the majority and significant policy change occurs. “In other words, realignments... arise from emergent tensions in society which, not adequately controlled by the organization or outputs of party politics as usual, escalate to a flash point” (Burnham 1970, 10).

Fourth, critical realignments have lasting, tangible consequences for policy and for government institutions. “In the aftermath of realignment, not only voting behavior but institutional roles and policy outputs undergo substantial modifications” (Burnham 1970, 2). Critical realignments create “a basic and measurable transformation in the shape of [the] voting universe” (Burnham 1970, 12). But, crucially, “electoral change as it can be counted in votes is simply not the only evidence of realignment” (Paulson 2007, 13). As Burnham and E.E. Schattschneider argue, realignments bring lasting policy and institutional change; a seeming lack of substantial change in the turnout or percentage of voters does not rule out a realignment. Even without a change in the voting numbers, for example, realignments can be marked by a shift of the “voting universe” in one direction. Though the magnitude of the shift will differ, realigning elections often feature a uniform shift toward the winning coalition (Key 1955, 34, 37).

Thus, to summarize, realignment theory asserts that, in a roughly periodic fashion, there are elections in the American political system that differ fundamentally from those preceding or succeeding. These differences may be in the number of new voters, in the size and type of coalitions established, the issues debated, the intensity and polarization of the discourse, or other factors. But every critical

realignment creates a new majority coalition that holds power for a significant time—until the next realignment—and causes measurable and lasting policy and institutional change. Because of these similar characteristics, there is a consensus about the critical realignments in American history.

III. The Presidential Cycle Theory

As elections occur in cycles, the dynamic of the rest of the political system falls in line with those cycles. Specifically, the presidencies that occur at the same place in a cycle should have some similar characteristics, even though they were separated by decades. The clear implication of this theory is that the presidents whose elections were critical realignments—Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, McKinley, Roosevelt, Reagan—should share many characteristics. But in addition, the presidents following realigning presidencies should have much in common. Van Buren, who was Jackson's Vice President, followed him in office; Truman, who was Roosevelt's Vice President, followed him; and George H.W. Bush followed Reagan. One would expect those presidencies to resemble each other in important respects.

Stephen Skowronek is the most prominent proponent of this theory—the presidential cycle theory. Skowronek argues that there are four types of presidencies, that those types repeat themselves through history, and that the type of presidency is determined by its place in the realignment cycle. A president is either one who is elected in a realignment and ushers in a new era; one who brings new meaning to this already-powerful coalition; one who is elected in an era when the opposing party remains the dominant coalition; or one whose once-strong coalition is weakening and who often is, therefore, doomed to having a failed presidency. The presidential cycle theory aims to identify similarities between presidents of different eras and to show that these similarities are attributable to the

presidents' respective places in the electoral cycle (Skowronek 1993, 33-45; Skowronek 2008, 12-13; 83-84).

The puzzle posed by President Obama is that the election of 2008 appears to have been a realigning election, yet Obama seems to be governing as if the Reagan coalition were still dominant. For that reason, two of Skowronek's types— "Presidents of Reconstruction," who are elected in realigning elections, and "Presidents of Preemption," who are elected at a time when the opposing party is still dominant—are especially important in seeking to understand the Obama Administration.

Skowronek notes that the realigning elections that sweep "Presidents of Reconstruction" into office often follow failed presidencies, and that realigning elections often occur in times of serious national crisis. In these elections, "opposition to the old regime [holds] sway... and though the election returns [may] not convey any clear message as to what exactly should be done, they [do] reflect a general political consensus that something fundamental had gone wrong in the high affairs of state" (Skowronek 1993, 37). These realigning presidents often find new, large majorities in Congress. They have such a mandate because the voters see them as saviors in a time of crisis: they will remedy the problems caused by the failed president who preceded them. "Presidents stand preeminent in American politics when government has been most thoroughly discredited, and when political resistance to the presidency is weakest, presidents tend to remake the government wholesale" (Skowronek 1993, 37). This is not to say that these presidents always succeed or that their actions are undeniably beneficial for the country: Andrew Jackson's policies may have contributed to the Panic of 1837, for example (Skowronek 1993, 37). But they are elected by a new coalition of voters, with what appears to be—and is treated as—a mandate to fix what ails the body politic.

Realigning presidents typically move quickly to advance their new programs over a broad front. Roosevelt's "Hundred Days" was legendary: "a masterpiece of presidential leadership unexampled then and unmatched since (unless in the 'second Hundred Days' over which Roosevelt presided in the great reform surge of 1935)" (Kennedy 1999, 139-40). Roosevelt obtained, from Congress, major agricultural legislation; unemployment insurance; a public works program; reform of the banking system; and the National Recovery Act, which authorized extensive self-regulation by business and labor (Kennedy 1999, 140-53).

Somewhat similarly, Reagan, in his first hundred days, persuaded Congress to adopt substantial tax cuts, on a "supply side" theory—that tax cuts would increase revenues—that had been a centerpiece of his campaign. At the same time, he persuaded Congress to enact domestic spending cuts that reflected a repudiation of many Great Society programs (Patterson 2005, 154-57). While Reagan, unlike Roosevelt, did not obtain a flurry of legislation, he effectively turned the central ideas of his campaign into law within a few months of taking office (Patterson 2005, 154).

"Presidents of Preemption," unlike realigning presidents, do not persuade a compliant Congress to enact a sweeping agenda in their first months in office. Instead, because they are at odds with the dominant coalition of the time, they must "try to preempt [the coalition's] agenda by playing upon the political divisions within" it (Skowronek 1993, 43). A preemptive president will adopt some planks of the other party's platform to box the opposition into supporting him.

As a Republican in the Roosevelt Era, President Dwight Eisenhower was a preemptive president. Although "personally sympathetic to conservative Republican ideals," and a member of the party that opposed the Roosevelt era's expansion of the government, he "re-

fused to take on New Deal liberalism... directly, and he carefully held the right wing of his party... at bay” (Skowronek 1993, 46). For him, being “conservative did not mean to be reactionary. Eisenhower was emphatic about the distinction between the two” (Patterson 1996, 271). He described his approach as “New Republicanism,” enabling his party to “break its identification with Hoover and the Depression” and to find a new voice as a party of “moderation, sensibility, and accommodation” (Skowronek 1993, 46). Eisenhower understood that the election of Roosevelt had realigned American politics, and that an attempt to return to the pre-1932 status quo would be self-defeating. He told his conservative brother Edgar that if “any political party attempt[ed] to abolish Social Security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs... you would not hear of that party again in our political history” (Patterson 1996, 272).

Instead, Eisenhower self-consciously pursued a moderate course (Skowronek 1993, 46). For example, “[a]lthough he sought to reduce spending, he was not a mindless slasher” (Patterson 1996, 271). He “was content to prune the radical edge off New Deal liberalism” (Skowronek 1993, 46). Eisenhower did more than avoid mindless slashing; he also created the Interstate Highway System, a major public works program that expanded the size of government; he presided over an expansion of Social Security in 1954; and he signed legislation extending the minimum wage to cover more laborers (Patterson 1996, 272). In these ways, Eisenhower’s Administration was characteristic of a preemptive presidency. He did not directly or aggressively attack the core elements of the New Deal coalition, but he also did not continue on the trajectory established by Roosevelt. Instead, he selectively borrowed elements of the New Deal approach and adopted them as his own.

Another Republican in the era of Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, was also a preemptive president. Nixon, elected in 1968, operated in the

shadow not only of the New Deal but of the Great Society welfare state programs established in the Administration of President Lyndon Johnson (Duffy 2008, 3). Nixon attacked the Great Society during the 1968 election campaign (Patterson 1996, 701, 718). But once he was in office, Nixon signed—and even initiated—important social programs that echoed some of the themes of the New Deal and the Great Society. He signed significant civil rights legislation—an extension of the Voting Rights Act and the provision that became known as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, requiring equality between men and women in institutions of higher education that received federal funds (Patterson 1996, 719). He proposed a Family Assistance Plan (FAP) which, had it been enacted, would have provided for a guaranteed minimum income and would have been a “profound expansion of the depth and extent of the national government’s commitment towards social justice” (Duffy 2008, 9). He even proposed comprehensive national health insurance, something that no president since Truman—not even Kennedy or Johnson—had proposed (Patterson 1996, 719).

Bill Clinton, a Democrat in the Reagan era, was the most recent preemptive president. Like other Democrats, he tried, and sometimes succeeded, in expanding the welfare state. He attempted, unsuccessfully, a large-scale reform of the health care system—although his proposal was in some ways less reliant on the government, and made more use of private markets, than Nixon’s proposal had (Patterson 2005, 328-30). He succeeded in expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income working families with children—a “little discussed but important social benefit” (Patterson 2005, 333).

At the same time, though, Clinton used the classic approach of the preemptive president, borrowing programs and even rhetoric from the dominant Reagan coalition. In his State of the Union Address in 1996, Clinton sounded themes much more closely associated with Reagan and the Reagan era than with Democrats: “We know, and we

have worked to give the American people a smaller, less bureaucratic Government in Washington. And we have to give the American people one that lives within its means. The era of big Government is over” (Clinton 1996, 90). Like Eisenhower, who declared that his was the “New Republican Party,” Clinton called himself a “New Democrat” (Skowronek 2008, 106).

In his first Administration, Clinton secured the adoption of a budget package that substantially reduced the federal deficit—an objective associated with the Republican Party (Duffy 2008, 12-13), although no Republican in the House voted for it (Patterson 2005, 331-33). Shortly before the election of 1996, Clinton successfully championed a welfare reform bill that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children—a New Deal program, adopted in 1935—with a welfare program that imposed more stringent time limits on welfare payments and strict requirements that welfare recipients seek work. Republicans had long attacked welfare (Duffy 2008, 12-13), and Clinton’s new program outraged many members of his own party (Patterson 2005, 375). But his preemptive tactics were successful; Clinton won re-election easily in 1996 (U.S. Fed. Reg. 2010, 1996).

Eisenhower, Nixon, and Clinton sailed successfully against the tide: they governed during an era defined by a realignment in favor of the party they opposed. The more common pattern is for a president to be of the same party that prevailed in the previous realigning election and to be in sympathy with the policies of the governing coalition that was assembled during that election. Skowronek calls these presidents “Presidents of Articulation”: unlike the realigning president (the “President of Reconstruction”), they do not define the new dominant coalition, but rather carry out, or “articulate,” its policies and programs. These presidents are in power “when established commitments of ideology and interest are relatively resilient, providing solutions...to the governing problems of the day” (Skowronek 1993, 41). Presidents of Articulation work with the majority built by

the realignment and give new meaning to the work done by the re-constructing president. Though Presidents of Articulation have large, settled majorities to work with, they also face the challenge of fitting “the existing part of the regime together in a new and more relevant way” (Skowronek 1993, 41). There are more Presidents of Articulation in American history than any other kind, but only the articulators who succeed in bringing a new meaning to the governing regime are particularly remembered. These are the leaders who successfully “galvanize[d] political action with promises to continue the good work of the past... As the font of the political orthodoxy, their office is a sacred trust full of obligations to uphold the gospel” (Skowronek 1993, 41). Presidents James Monroe, James Polk, Theodore Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson were Presidents of Articulation: “each came to power in the wake of a strong reaffirmation of majority party government... [and] relative to the other affiliated leaders of their time, they could take the greatest leaps forward along the path already traced” (Skowronek 1993, 42).

Finally, as the governing majority finds its power weakening, the cycle will turn to a “President of Disjunction.” These are the presidents who take office when the dominant coalition has begun to fray because its central policies are increasingly seen as inadequate or counter-productive. Presidents of Disjunction are “affiliated with a set of established commitments that have in the course of events been called into question as failed or irrelevant responses to the problems of the day” (Skowronek 39). These presidents are “saddled with a suddenly vulnerable regime” and find themselves in an “impossible leadership situation” (Skowronek 1993, 39, 40). Presidents John Quincy Adams, James Buchanan, and, more recently, Herbert Hoover and Jimmy Carter are Presidents of Disjunction: given a dying majority and grave national problems, none of them was able to solidly leave his mark upon national politics. Instead, each grasped in vain at fixing the nation’s problems, only to end so far from the goal that the opposition party won a momentous, realigning victory

in the next election. These presidencies are often regarded as failed presidencies.

Simply put, the presidential cycle theory is that any president's position in the cycle can be identified by taking into account two factors: the president's party, and strength of the dominant coalition of the era in which he governed. The coalition of the era is determined by the party that claimed victory in the most recent realigning election. That coalition will have varying degrees of strength through the era, though it will be fatally weakened during the "Disjunction" presidency; the next election will be a realignment and bring a new coalition to power.

The chart below illustrates the four categories of presidents and the types of politics they can be expected to practice, using Skowronek's terminology (Skowronek 1993, 36). A president in the "right era" is one whose party matches that of the dominant coalition of the era; a president in the "wrong era" is one whose party does not match. A president with a "strong coalition" is one who is governing at a time when the dominant coalition is strong and unified; a weak coalition is marked by a fragmenting and broken-down majority.

	<i>Strong Coalition</i>	<i>Weak Coalition</i>
<i>Right Era</i>	<i>Politics of Articulation</i>	<i>Politics of Disjunction</i>
<i>Wrong Era</i>	<i>Politics of Preemption</i>	<i>Politics of Reconstruction</i>

The period between 1980 and 2008 seems, in many ways, to have been a complete cycle. The election of 1980 had the characteristics of a realigning election (Skowronek 1993, 410). Carter's Presidency ended in an atmosphere of national crisis, at home and abroad: the economy was afflicted with both inflation and unemployment; the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan; Iranian revolutionaries held American embassy employees hostage for over a year; and in gen-

eral Carter's last two years in office "were in many ways grimmer than any in the recent history of the country" (Patterson 2005, 121). Carter's presidency had all the signs of a Presidency of Disjunction. Reagan's election broke apart the New Deal coalition, which had already been fraying. Reagan renounced the New Deal understandings of the role of government: "In the present crisis, government is not the solution to the problem; government is the problem" (Reagan 1981, 1). "This message would be hammered relentlessly over the next eight years, each blow directing the presidential battering ram against the institutions and principal clients of the liberal regime" (Skowronek 1993, 414).

Reagan was succeeded by his Vice President, George H.W. Bush, who took the role of an articulator. He occupied a position parallel to Jackson's Vice President, Martin Van Buren, and to Roosevelt's Vice President, Harry Truman. George H.W. Bush, in fact, consciously emulated Truman (Skowronek 1993, 429-430). Bill Clinton then practiced the politics of preemption; like Eisenhower, he was the first opposite-party president in his era (Skowronek 1993, 446).

With the election of George W. Bush, the cycle of the Reagan Era becomes harder to decipher. During Bush's first term, he was likely an articulator. Like his father, Bush worked not-so-subtly to reclaim the mantle of the Great Reformer of his party. "'There's a general thrust and President Reagan set that,' Bush said. 'We're not coming in to correct the ills of the past. We're coming in to build on a proud record that has already been established'" (Skowronek 2008, 99). Bush's advisers envisioned that Bush might "generat[e] widespread support...from social activists...and economic conservatives on Wall Street" (Brown 2009, 80)—key elements of the realigned coalition that had brought Reagan into power in 1980. Bush's speech at the Republican National Convention in 2000 featured the increased attention to social issues begun under Reagan and "stressed character, hoping 'to make Clinton's moral legacy weigh more heavily than

his economic legacy in voters' minds” (Brown 2009, 80). Though elected narrowly and without a mandate (Brown 2009, 81), Bush did not begin his presidency delicately; he began with a forceful articulation of the Reagan legacy. His “strident partisanship helped him pass conservative policies in his first term” (Brown 2009, 77), including a “large tax cut favored by conservative Republicans” (Brown 2009, 82).

Bush’s second term, however, began to resemble not a Presidency of Articulation but a failed presidency, a Presidency of Disjunction. His coalition began to fragment as moderate suburban voters became uncomfortable with the religiosity of the Republican Party. Bush’s “compassionate conservatism attracted religiously devout individuals (evangelical Christians and Hispanic Catholics) to the Republican Party, but it stoked rather than bridged the ideological polarization already present in the electorate” (Brown 2009, 77). With high profile failures—the Iraq War, Social Security reform, Hurricane Katrina, his nomination of Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court, his support for Donald Rumsfeld even after the discovery of the abuse at Abu Ghraib, and his support for Alberto Gonzalez—Bush was “his own worst enemy. By the end of his presidency, rather than uniting behind him, many independents and moderates had united against him” (Brown 2009, 77-79). Finally, as the economy began to weaken and big banks began to fail, the tensions already present in the Reagan coalition peaked and the majority shattered. With high-stakes failures and the worst economy in a generation, the end of the Bush presidency resembled, in many ways, the end of the Hoover presidency. By the end of his second administration, George W. Bush’s approval ratings were, in some polls, the lowest ever measured (Steinhauser 2008). The stage was set for a realigning election in 2008.

IV. Where Are We Now?

The puzzle of Obama is that although the election of 2008 seems to resemble a realignment in many ways, Obama has practiced the politics of preemption in his first two years in office. Obama has governed as if the Reagan coalition is still dominant; he has advanced a Democratic agenda cautiously and selectively, resorting frequently to Reagan-era rhetoric, Reagan-era programs, and even to praising Reagan (Heilemann and Halperin 2010, 200). The dissonance between Obama's apparent realigning mandate in the 2008 election and his governing style raises at least three questions: whether realignment theory still describes American presidential elections; if it does not, why that is so; and what the consequences of this shift might be.

There seem to be two possible explanations for why the 2008 election did not lead to the kind of presidency that other realigning elections have produced. The first is the increasingly partisan and homogenous nature of political parties in the post-Civil Rights era, which has deprived President Obama of the ability to form the kind of legislative coalitions that realigning presidents have relied upon in the past. The second is the increased importance of social issues—issues on which there is often no possible compromise—in politics. These developments seem to have made it impossible for Obama to govern in the way other Presidents of Reconstruction have governed. And if, in fact, realignments no longer have the same significance they have had throughout the history of the American presidency, that would be a troubling change.

The election of 2008 seems to have all the hallmarks of a realignment. First, critical realignments are “short, intense disruptions” in the normal political order; the intensity carries over to the party convention and is marked by an increase in polarization within and between parties (Burnham 1970, 1-10). The 2008 election was a high

intensity election: the tone of the election was more vicious than previous elections, and the increased partisanship within the country was evidenced, for example, by Senator John McCain's shift to his right, and by off-topic, hateful debates such as the arguments over Obama's birthplace and religion. Even the 2008 Democratic Convention was highly charged. Though Obama was chosen as the nominee eventually, there were times during the primary season when Obama was running even with Senator Hillary Clinton, and it was not certain that the Convention would end without an intra-party battle for the nomination at the Convention (Heileman and Halperin 2010, 343-350).

Second, critical realignments feature unusually heavy voter turnout, though these elections also affect the "voting universe" beyond the simple count of votes. The election of 2008 was clearly different from previous elections, and in ways not just counted by votes. Turnout was higher than in 2000 and kept pace with 2004, even though those were both high-turnout years, judged by historical standards (File and Crissey 2010). In addition, as Key argues, realignments stand out because results differ only in the extent of the movement toward the new coalition, not the direction. A map of the change in the percentage of the vote going Democratic from 2004 to 2008 shows nearly the entire country shifting Democratic, though by different degrees (New York Times 2008). Only a few counties in the Deep South moved more Republican in 2008. Notably, some of the areas that bucked the trend in 2008 and went more Republican are also areas (again, in the Deep South primarily) that Carter won in 1980 even as Reagan swept the rest of the country. This sharp reversal—the most stalwart Democratic areas in 1980 became most determinedly Republican areas in 2008—illustrates the dramatic shift between the coalitions in the realignments of 1980 and 2008 (Leip 2000).

Third, critical realignments are periodic, as voter will builds and creates “critical flashpoints” which helps to usher in a new governing coalition. Though President Bush’s term may have begun as one of articulation, it seems to have finished as one of disjunction—the kind of Presidency that would normally be followed by a realignment. As the country was mired in two wars and began to suffer the effects of a failing economy, it seemed that voters wanted nothing more than a new beginning. As voter sentiment shifted on the important issues—from social issues to the economy—the country approached the “critical flashpoint” that the disjunctive Bush administration allowed to build. Obama’s campaign rhetoric, which promised hope, change, and a better future, touched on the very heart of the ideal realignment.

Fourth, realignments have profound effects on the “voting universe”. With his base of small donations, Obama was one of the most prolific fundraisers ever. His use of social networks created a grassroots movement widely envied and copied. And his tremendous get-out-the-vote effort on Election Day targeted the elusive youth vote and lengthened his coattails (Alter 2010, 35). All these aspects of Election 2008 created lasting changes in the voting universe.

Finally, of course, Obama and his coalition won a resounding victory in 2008. Obama was the first Democratic president to win a majority of the popular vote since Lyndon Johnson, 44 years earlier—echoing Roosevelt’s achievement in 1932. Obama won states—Indiana, North Carolina, Virginia—that had not gone Democratic in many decades (Alter 2010, 42). He swept into office with large majorities in both Houses of Congress.

Nonetheless, Obama governed as a preemptor, not as president who had won a realigning election—like Eisenhower, Nixon, or Clinton, not like Roosevelt or Reagan. Even Obama’s most dramatic achievements borrowed substantial elements from Republican pro-

grams and did not push Democratic ideas aggressively. The clean energy bill that passed the House of Representatives—but not the Senate—contained measures to begin a system of “capping and trading” the right to emit carbon (Alter 2010, 260). This market-based solution to the country’s energy crisis was initially a Republican idea (Conniff 2009). The health care bill that passed in March 2010 contained a provision for a mandate to require individuals to buy health insurance. It also created exchanges where companies could compete for consumers and consumers could choose among the available plans (Pickert 2009). These provisions that emphasize the market and personal responsibility were also initially Republican ideas, some even offered by the Republicans during Clinton’s fight to reform health care (Rovner 2010). Much to the dismay of many Democrats, Obama’s health care bill did not include a “public option”—a government-run insurance plan that would compete with private plans (Alter 2010, 258-60).

A hallmark of preemptive politics is that the president faces criticism from his own party, not just from his opponents. Eisenhower’s moderation brought the ire of the “Republican Right” which “complained that he did not cut federal expenditures enough when he took over” (Patterson 1996, 271). Nixon was attacked because “conservatives felt that FAP revealed Nixon straying too far from the core principles of the Republican party” (Duffy 2008, 10-11). Clinton’s welfare reform bill was bitterly criticized by the Left as being too tough on welfare recipients (CNN 1996).

Obama, similarly, has been met by a barrage of criticism from both sides. During the arduous process to pass health care reform, some Democrats complained that Obama had taken the most liberal plan—single-payer—off the table immediately and that he kept moving the plan further to the right as he conceded a public option (Alter 2010, 258-59). Similar complaints surrounded the passage of the stimulus package. Republicans asked that a large percentage of

the bill be tax cuts, but still denounced the bill as wasteful government spending that expanded the deficit and largely refused to vote for it. Democrats wanted the money to be allocated for infrastructure and direct government spending, and were angry with Obama for ceding to Republican demands to make the bill smaller. (Alter 2010, 116-17; 128-29).

Why does Obama govern so much like a preemptor, when he was elected in what appeared to be a realigning election? There seem to be two explanations. The first is that Obama confronted an ideologically homogeneous opposing party; past realigning presidents did not. The second is the increased importance of social issues like abortion and same-sex marriage.

Franklin Roosevelt's Democratic Party included both Northern and Western liberals and conservative Southern segregationists (Foner 1998, 195). By the same token, the Republican Party included progressives who were significantly more liberal than the more conservative Democrats (Kennedy 1999, 219-20). But beginning in the mid-1960s, the parties became increasingly homogeneous. When Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, he famously said that with his signature he had lost the South for the Democrats for a generation (Economist 2010). Johnson's prediction did not come true immediately, but eventually Southern whites moved into the Republican Party, making the Democratic Party more liberal, and fewer liberals found a home in the Republican Party (Patterson 2005, 78-79). "Voters have sorted themselves out so that their party affiliation and their ideology are far more aligned now than 30 years ago: thus, most self-identified conservatives are now Republicans, while liberals are Democrats" (Pildes 2010, 3).

Public opinion polls show the dramatic change. In the Eisenhower Administration, the gap between support for the president from voters of his own party and support from voters of other party

ranged from 22-39 points (Pildes 2010, 4). By contrast, “[t]he partisan gap in approval ratings for President Obama [after his first year in office] is larger than it has eve[r] been for a President at this stage... only 18% of Republicans, but 82% of Democrats, approve of Obama’s performance—a gap of 64 points” (Pildes 2010, 6). This was the culmination of a trend. “From the Eisenhower through the Carter years, this gap in one-year approval ratings never exceeded 34 points; since then, it has averaged 48 points... Before Reagan, no President had averaged more than a 40 point gap in approval rating during his term; starting then, only the elder George Bush has averaged *less* than a 50 point gap” (Pildes 2010, 6). Obama’s second year had an approval gap of 68 points and was even more polarized than his first, already an historically polarized year (Jones 2011).

The ideological polarization of the parties limits a president’s ability to accomplish his objectives, even if he has won a realigning election. Realigning presidents before Obama could appeal to their own party, on the basis of party loyalty—as Obama can—but they could also appeal to ideologically sympathetic members of the other party. Roosevelt secured votes from some Southern conservatives because they were Democrats; he secured votes from some Northern Republicans, because they were liberals. Although the polarization was well under way by 1980, Reagan, also, appealed very successfully to conservative Democrats (Patterson 2005, 155). But few or no Republicans supported Obama’s major domestic initiatives—the stimulus bill and health care reform—even though both incorporated important features that Republicans had previously advocated. A disciplined, homogenous opposition party of the kind Obama faces is new in modern American politics (Judis 2011). When that party is willing to take full advantage of rules that require supermajority votes to enact legislation—such as the Senate rules that permit a filibuster unless sixty Senators vote for cloture—the effect is to make far-reaching innovation, of a kind characteristic of previous realignments, much more difficult to accomplish.

The increased importance of social issues has the same effect. These issues came to the fore when the Reagan realignment of 1980 brought religious conservatives into politics in previously unprecedented numbers (Patterson 2005, 34-46). Issues like abortion and gay marriage mobilize single-issue voters—voters whose support is determined entirely by a candidate’s position on that one issue—and they are difficult to compromise. Constituents who might be inclined to agree with a realigning president on, for example, economic or environmental issues, will refuse to support him if they disagree with his position on a social issue. As the number of “uncompromisable” issues increases, the chance for bipartisanship decreases; the chances for a realigning victory to produce agreement across the aisle diminishes sharply.

V. Conclusion: The End of Realignment?

Realigning elections come at a time in the nation’s history when a change is needed. During the years of a disjunctive presidency, problems build up and tempers rise. Realigning elections present a chance for a fresh start: a president who promises change and offers a new chance is elected. He brings with him large majorities and a mandate to take a new approach to the problems facing the nation. The election of 2008 had all the hallmarks of a realigning election. But what emerged was a preemptive presidency. If the first two years of the Obama Administration establish a new pattern, then some of the most important theories of the American presidency must be rethought.

More important as a practical matter, if the Obama presidency means that realigning elections will no longer have the same effect, then presidents will know that, no matter how sweeping their electoral mandate seems to be, they must govern cautiously. Even presidents who have been elected as a Roosevelt or a Reagan will have to govern like an Eisenhower or a Clinton: using the ideas and

rhetoric of their opponents when possible and advancing their own solutions tentatively and, often, in diluted form, instead of pursuing an agenda to which their party was committed—and on which it may have run in the previous election. Importantly, presidents may have to resort more to unilateral action, taking advantage of the powers of the presidency to accomplish their objectives without the assent of Congress (Pildes 2010, 65). The kind of sweeping reorientation that is typical of realignments is likely to be out of reach.

The incremental politics of a preemptive president may work well when a governing coalition's central ideas still seem adequate for the problems facing the nation, and only some mid-course adjustments are needed. But after a disjunction—an apparently failed presidency, in which significant problems have accumulated and are not being addressed—something more fundamental may be required. If, in fact, realigning elections no longer function in the way they have in the past, American politics may be denied the opportunity for the periodic renewals—the influx of new approaches, new ideas, and new groups in power—that have characterized our politics for two centuries. This loss of innovation would be the most troubling consequence of the end of realignment.

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MYTH AND ITS DOUBLE:

Re-reading, Re-vision, and Repetition in Angela Carter's The Sadeian Woman

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The works of Angela Carter are notorious for being provocative in their nature. Carter has famously dubbed her occupation “the demythologizing business” (*Notes from the Front Line* 40)—a statement that sheds light on the importance of the notion of myth in Carter’s work. Both the foundation myths and Carter’s (re)vision of them are planted firmly in the macabre realm of fairy tales and magical realism. In characterizing Carter’s works, Merja Makinen contends that “far from being gentle,” they are marked especially by “the excessiveness of their violence and, latterly, the almost violent exuberance of their excess” (Makinen 20). That element of violence—as well as excess—quite frequently operates in tandem with eroticism: Carter’s fixation on performative femininity and her spectacularization of the female body are so potent and prevalent that Christina Britzolakis declares her “an unabashed female fetishist” (Britzolakis 177).

Nevertheless, despite Carter’s flagrant eroticization of violence, the ethos of her writing is unambiguously feminist. “Carter’s work,” writes Makinen, “has consistently dealt with representations of the physical abuse of women in phallogentric cultures, of women alienated from themselves within the male gaze, and conversely of women who grab their sexuality and fight back, of women troubled by and even empowered by their own violence” (Makinen 21). If Carter’s play between violence and the erotic amounts to the fetishization of the body, then the feminist ethos behind it taints that fetishization with unmistakable irony.

One work of Carter's stands out and, in many ways, apart from the rest of her repertoire: *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography*, written in 1978. To begin with, the book is non-fiction; it is essentially a one-hundred-and-fifty-page long essay, in which Carter reads and analyzes Marquis de Sade's four seminal works: *Justine*, *Juliette*, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, and *The Hundred and Twenty Days at Sodom*—all obscene, extremely violent, and often redundant and monotonous pornographies, some of which are upwards of a thousand pages long. Carter does not simply produce a close reading, but rather uses Sade's writing to expound on the state of female sexuality, (hetero)sexual relations, and the ways in which the two are framed by an economy of pleasure grounded in the patriarchal conception of power and agency. Upon publication, *The Sadeian Woman* received considerable criticism from the feminist movement with which Carter identified. According to Sally Keenan, a number of "radical feminist critics" accused her of "reinforcing patriarchal representations of women that degraded them" and of implying that "women can liberate themselves through exercising violence, that they should behave just as men do" (Keenan 45). For these critics, the overtly misogynist character of Sade's work cast too large of a shadow over Carter's attempt to read female sexual agency into it.

Even so, Carter's choice of subject itself is not that unusual, as she addresses Sade and the Sadeian/sadistic scenario elsewhere in her work (for instance, in "The Bloody Chamber" and *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*). What is remarkable, however, is the revisionary strategy that she applies to the subject in *The Sadeian Woman*. Carter's general approach to revision can be described as taking a myth, a fairy tale, or a traditional text and *re-writing* it; she preserves some key elements of the narrative but alters its meaning by placing the material under a feminist lens and infusing it with irony. While Carter's engagement with *The Sadeian Woman* is clearly meant to be deconstructive and revisionary—she is still,

after all, in “the demythologizing business”—she deliberately chooses *not* to re-write them. Instead, Carter *re-reads* them for her audience, isolates the archetypes she sees at play, and recontextualizes them within the broader cultural history of sexuality, including (but not limited to) the feminist discourse of her time.

This means that the plot of the original narrative remains wholly intact. Rather than using her pen to penetrate and reconfigure the novels in question, she seems to use it to preserve them: a sizable chunk of *The Sadeian Woman* is devoted entirely to detailed summaries of *Justine* and *Juliette*. Naturally, re-reading as revision situates Carter-the-reader both alongside and in tension with Carter-the-writer. Since her demythologization is now focused on the value of the original myth, the value of the revision process might seem unclear. Nevertheless, while it is true that structure and content remain the same, Carter’s re-reading is not simply iterative. For instance, in the midst of recapping *Justine*, Carter falls suddenly into the first person plural and reflective analysis: “The girls have no personal property. There is no privacy except in the lavatory. For *us* there is no hope at all... It is oddly like a British public school” (Carter 43, emphasis added). Even the plot summaries—which one would consider especially close to mere repetition—include such incongruities as unanticipated and disorienting interludes of commentary, analysis, and shifts in tone and mode of address. In this case, not only do these incongruities disrupt simple repetition, they also focus her re-readings on their implications for the present.

Carter’s insistence on *repeating* the myth as a part of this particular demythologization process becomes a platform to feel the full effect of those incongruities and deviations. Why does Carter ultimately choose to *re-read*, rather than *re-write*, the works of Sade? What is made visible and what kind of critique is made possible with such an approach? More than that, what is at stake for Carter and what is

at stake for the reader, with regard to literature, feminism, and our cultural and textual understanding of sexual relations?

Before we begin to dissect the kind of demythologization that takes place in *The Sadeian Woman*, we must first identify what falls under Carter's definition of myth. Unlike folklore, fairy tales, and other traditional texts that Carter is known to revise in her fiction, Sade's works are not myths in the conventional sense; they are not myths simply because they possess elements of the fantastic. Carter seems to conceive myth more along the lines of a cultural and ideological artifact, as in the Barthesian myth. Roland Barthes defines myth as "a type of speech chosen by history," which "cannot possibly evolve from the 'nature' of things" (*Mythologies* 110) and is therefore complicit in the creation of ideology. The speech in question is "by no means confined to oral speech" (110) and is more of a "system of communication" and a "mode of signification," than anything else (109). More important than the content is the message it conveys.

So, how does Sade's writing fit into Carter's (and Barthes') definition of a myth? In *Sade Fourier Loyola*, Barthes addresses that question himself by pointing to the construction of the Sadeian erotic scene and linking it to that of myth. He contends that, for Sade, to create an erotic scene is "to subject the crime (a generic term for all the Sadeian passions) to a system of articulated language...to combine according to precise rules the specific actions of vice, so as to make from these series and groups of actions a new 'language,' no longer spoken but acted" (*Sade* 27). Barthes further describes Sade's erotic *praxis* as a "code of meaning," which can be analyzed by its "units and regulations" (26). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Barthes notes that "Sade always chooses the discourse over the referent; [...] what he represents is constantly being deformed by the meaning, and it is on the level of meaning, not of the referent, that we should read him" (37). In other words, orchestration and performance—that is, signification—are far more important when it

comes to understanding Sade, than are the individual signs themselves. It is not the idea of sexual perversion that is at stake, but the extreme manner in which it is carried out; it is not personalities of the characters that matter, but their class and their socially-defined relations to one another. Since Barthes also expressly places myth in “the province of... *semiology*” (*Mythologies* 111) it is clear that the works of Sade are, indeed, a mythology.

Like any mythology, the Sadeian one contains an ideological aspect. Here, the ideology is deceptively self-evident: Sade’s tales of torture and erotic encounters stand in direct opposition to the era of Enlightenment and present us with a vision of a very real hell on earth as he sees it, one in which, writes Carter, “the freedom of one class, or sex, or individual necessitates the unfreedom of others” (Carter 24). Thus, upon an initial reading, the ideology implicit in Sade’s myths appears to be a darkly reactionary one. If Sade offers an “absolutely sexualized view of the world” (27), the sight is decidedly not pretty: the erotic scene becomes an occasion for an unfiltered display of the ugliness of human nature and its atrocious capacity for inflicting tyranny and physical pain.

Carter, however, proceeds to dig deeper in her (re)reading and unearths a far more fascinating, if also conflicted, ideological scenario. She observes that while Sade is a “terrorist of the imagination,” whose fiction is a nothing short of a “cruel festival, at which women are the prime sacrificial victims, when they are not the ritual murderesses themselves” (22), he is also a satirist, who, without a doubt, “treats all sexuality as a political reality” (27) and uses the perverse erotic encounter as a platform for parody. “His work as a pornographer,” Carter concludes, “is more descriptive and diagnostic than proscriptive and prophetic... He describes sexual relations in the context of an unfree society as the expression of pure tyranny, usually by men upon women...” (24). As exorbitantly indulgent as Sade may seem—or, in fact, *be*—in scenes of extraordinary sexual vio-

lence (specifically against women) Carter maintains that “the pornographer as terrorist... will always be our [that is, women’s] unconscious ally because he begins to approach some kind of emblematic truth” (22). Sade’s extremism has the ability (and desire) to expose the constructed nature of the dominant/patriarchal ideology.

Carter also delves into the rather crucial observation (made by many before her) about the lack of actual erotic appeal in Sade’s writing. She holds Sade to be truly “uncommon among the pornographers” precisely because he “rarely, if ever, makes sexual activity seem immediately appealing as such” (24). Carter sees Sade’s evident lack of glamorization as a viable means of shedding light on the tyrannical power dynamic in (hetero)sexual relations, even as they are being satirized to excess. His “curious ability to render every aspect of sexuality suspect” in order to show that “every disinterested caress is only quantitatively different from a disinterested flogging” (24-25) and that “the freest of unions may contain the seeds of the worst exploitation” (22) constitutes a kind of re-visionary work and Carter identifies it as such. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, Carter states plainly at the end of the first chapter (aptly titled “Polemical Preface”) that, “he was unusual in his period for claiming rights of free sexuality for women, and in installing women as beings of power in his imaginary worlds. This sets him apart from all other pornographers at all times and most other writers of his period” (36). Without a doubt, she sees a certain anti-patriarchal ethos in his works.

From this perspective, Sade’s novels are certainly doing a fair share of demythologization and can be legitimately seen as working hand-in-hand with the feminist agenda against the myth of passive, sacred, and ultimately disempowered model of female sexuality in popular culture. Nevertheless, if Sade’s writing is engaged in demythologizing work, how is it that Carter still envisions it as source material for her own process of demythologization? In other words,

why is it that Sade's works still remain a mythology, even as they work to deconstruct another myth? The answer to that quandary will take us back to the parameters of mythic construction as well as the composition of the Sadeian scene.

In *Sade Fourier Loyola*, Barthes exposes the levels of artifice and orchestration that go into the make-up of the erotic scene. "Sadeian practice," he writes, "is ruled by a great notion of order"—there is an overwhelming sense of "scrupulosity" and "performance" (28). Though the permutations are seemingly endless, they are made of the same ultimately exhaustible set of units, rearranged and repeated *ad nauseum*; it is with good reason that Sade's works have often been pronounced "*monotonous*" (36). All of Sade's creations are, ultimately, meticulously assembled closed systems and any "irregularities" are strenuously regulated" (27).

In her analysis, Carter highlights one such instance of a forcibly regulated—that is, artificially smoothed out—incongruity in Sade's *Philosophy in the Bedroom*. She zooms in on a climactic moment in which the newly-minted Sadeian libertine commits the ultimate act of transgression—and aggression—against her mother in order to demonstrate her autonomy: Eugénie rapes her mother with a dildo. The kink, the disruptive "irregularity" that suddenly arises in this carefully orchestrated scenario, is the possibility of the mother, Madame de Mistival, experiencing pleasure in the midst of that transgression. And yet, though she is almost brought to an orgasm, she faints before it happens. This is a palpable aberration in the overall pattern. Hardly ever is a Sadeian scene of crime orchestrated without the orgasmic payoff; its evasion seems forced: a quick and *unfitting* fix to a situation Sade suddenly cannot handle. "Were Madame de Mistival to have come," Carter argues, "pleasure would have asserted itself triumphantly over pain and the necessity for the existence of repression as a sexual stimulant would have ceased to exist. There would arise a possibility of a world in which the concept of

taboo is meaningless and pornography itself would cease to exist” (131-2). It would seem, Carter continues, that Sade simply cannot conceptualize freedom that is not also defined by the existence of tyranny. “So,” she concludes disappointedly, “he *makes* her faint” (132, emphasis added). Even though he is “on the very edge of an extraordinary discovery,” and “of constructing a machine for liberation,” in a single move Sade “reverts... to being a simple pornographer” (132). Even as Sade’s text performs revolutionary, demythologizing work, it stops short, bound by something below the surface.

This regressive “strenuous regulation” of a potentially valuable “irregularity,” sounds exactly like the “unevenly resolved conflict” (Balibar 87) that Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey identify as a telltale sign of ideology at work. Louis Althusser defines ideology as a system that “represents the *imaginary* relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser, emphasis added). Although ideology works to make those imaginary relations appear organic, traces of the naturalization process can be seen in certain moments of contradiction or incongruence that are glossed over by a false unity of the text. Carter reveals such a moment in Sade with good reason: it proves that his work is still a myth that exposes *and reproduces* the ideology responsible for the sexual and political disempowerment of women.

In focusing on the highly contrived and repetitive nature of Sade’s scenarios, Carter also highlights the absence of erotics as a key aspect of the Sadeian myth. His preoccupation with order and precision in orgiastic orchestrations, leaves room for only “clinical pleasure” (Carter 138), at best. Such pleasure is precariously premeditated, arranged, and even narrated as it is being carried out with exactitude, not unlike the work of a surgeon in an operating room. Sade’s treatment of flesh, according to Carter, is thus far more akin to that of meat. “Sade is a great puritan,” she concludes, “and will disinfect of sensuality anything he can lay his hands on” (138). Car-

ter's observation resonates with Barthes, who notes: "Sade is not erotic: it has been remarked that in his case there is never any kind of striptease, that apologue essential to modern eroticism." (*Sade Fourier Loyola* 26). Even worse, if we divorce "the crimes [sexual acts] being reported" from the structure through which they are delivered, "Sade is boring" (36).

Given its far-reaching effects, there seems something especially significant about the element of repetition that dominates the Sadeian myth. Since, categorically, myth is bound to use material that already exists and has been put to different use, the structure of a myth is always already borrowed; therefore, every production of a myth is an inevitable re-production. The Sadeian scene *recycles* the same units of formation and its complicity with the patriarchal ideology lies in the fact that the scene *reproduces* it despite its efforts to deconstruct it. This gravitation towards the reproduction of the same is a kind of fetishization of the repetition.

Here, the term "fetishism" does not entail repetition characterized by sexual desire. In fact, in this case repetition causes the aforementioned *lack of eroticism*, which is an unusual—and, therefore, significant—trait for work that, on the level of plot, deals almost exclusively with sex. Repetition in the Sadeian scenario is compulsive: since the myth at hand cannot go beyond its operating ideological construct, it is more or less forced to repeat itself. The deferral of the erotic aspect through repetition becomes a kind of denial of pleasure; in that sense it is fittingly Sadistic. Furthermore, the deferral of the erotic exposes the contours of ideology. In showing that production is only limited to the reproduction of the same, repetition makes visible the presence of ideology itself.

As we have seen, although Carter readily points to the incongruities in Sade's work that are symptomatic of its penchant for repetition, her overall treatment of Sade's works is more ambiguous. She goes

back and forth between praise and criticism, between highlighting their demythologizing capabilities and their myth-status alongside their complicity with patriarchal ideology. Carter condemns Justine's blind, self-destructive obedience, but calls her "refusal to treat herself as a thing" a "triumph" (Carter 77); she marvels at Juliette's "overreaching will to absolute power" (103), but finds her "single-mindedly destructive" (103), and notes: "I do not think I want Juliette to renew my world" (111). In Carter's eyes, Sade is as much a revolutionary as he is a part of the ideological system he tries to fight. She deliberately avoids, even refuses, to take a definite stance one way or another.

Naturally, as Sally Keenan notes, any expectation of "a clear conclusion that could be slotted into a feminist agenda" would miss the fact that Carter is notorious for "engag[ing] with contradictions without seeking necessarily to resolve them" (Keenan 40). Still, the fact that *The Sadeian Woman's* "complex parodies, its theoretical seriousness, and its complete refusal to settle in one fixed place" amount to an "almost heretical disagreement with certain aspects of feminist thinking current in the 1970s" (39) is not merely an incidental byproduct of Carter's challenging nature. If the work's refusal to "assimilate... into some feminist orthodoxy" is indicative of its "attempts to extend the limit of feminist thought" (54), it is because in *The Sadeian Woman* Carter treats the feminist discourse as a myth in its own right.

Going back to Barthes' definition of myth, one can see how the 1970s' feminist discourse is also a historically, rather than organically, produced "type of speech:" it is a response to particular social conditions at a particular moment in time. Not surprisingly, this feminist discourse constitutes an ideology of its own. Diametrically opposed as it may be to patriarchal ideology, feminism *also* "represents the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence," insofar that the socio-political and economic

reality does not support the notion of women's empowerment that lay at the heart of second-wave of feminism; nor does this reality recognize the structures of feeling, desires, and sexual pleasure as part of the female experience. What is more remarkable, however, is that like Sade's writing, the feminist discourse is also characterized by repetition. Despite (second-wave) feminism's contraposition to patriarchal ideology in terms of content, there is a significant amount of structural reproduction.

Self-evidently, as someone who writes from a feminist stance, Carter does not reject the entirety of feminism. Rather, she seems to treat it as myth due to the divisive predominance and popularity of two particular lines of thinking in the movement: staunch anti-pornographic sentiment and gynocentric essentialism. Arguably, on a very basic level, the near-puritanical, anti-sex attitude with which feminists like Robin Morgan, Susan Kapeller, and Andrea Dworkin decried the value of all pornography is an iteration of the manner in which patriarchal ideology denies female sexual pleasure. In other words: rather than allow for possibilities of female agency and empowerment, both the patriarchal *and* the (radical) feminist ideologies advise women to "abstain" altogether. If Carter likens the anti-pornography feminist figures to "'good girls'—sentimental, naïve, and sexually repressed" (Sheets 98)—it is because to her they represent the "kind of self-regarding female masochism" (Carter 57) that ultimately serves the patriarchy. In both cases, "good girls" are expected not to play a part in the experience of (hetero)sexual pleasure. In this way, anti-porn feminism retraces and recycles patriarchal ideology.

Feminist essentialism engages with repetition in a similar way. Its heavy focus on the determinism of the female body, the innate differences between the sexes, and the separatist sanctification of women over men resound with the same unbalanced, biased mode of thinking operating in patriarchal ideology. Gynocentrism is an

inversion of phallocentrism, but not of the overall essentialist framework, which is simply repeated. Since feminist essentialism recycles the same tactic employed by the system of oppression it is trying to dismantle, it only reiterates the problem. She who buys into such essentialist notions of “the sacred woman,” according to Carter, “denies her value in this world...” (57). In a reality in which (hetero)sexual relations are subject to the politics and power dynamics of the marketplace, a woman’s body becomes “by far the most valuable thing she has to sell” (57). A feminist essentialist’s poetic fixation on the (female) body ignores all the operating social constructs of reality: “she does not realize her flesh is sacred, because it is as good as money” (66), writes Carter.

In addition to engaging in repetition, the myth of feminism is also marked by a lack of erotics. In Carter’s view, anti-pornography feminism remains blind to the possibility of the “moral pornographer” who could “put pornography in the service of women” (37) and open up “a spyhole into the territory that has been forbidden to them” (36)—that is, the territory of pleasure. Feminist essentialism does, on the other hand, distinctly address the subject of female sexual pleasure. Luce Irigaray, for instance, talks extensively about the erotic capabilities of the female body made possible by its unique genitalia. “For example,” she writes, “woman’s autoeroticism is very different from man’s... Woman ‘touches herself’ all the time... for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact” (Irigaray 24). At the same time, however, she views heterosexual sex as “a violent break-in: the brutal separation of the two lips by a violating penis” (24). Irigaray rejects the notion of female pleasure in heterosexual relations much in the same way that the patriarchal ideology rejects the notion of female pleasure outside of them. The essentialist conception of erotics is ultimately no less limited and restrictive than the one espoused by the patriarchy.

Although *The Sadeian Woman* focuses first and foremost on the myth of Sade's writing, its engagement with the myth of feminism is rather significant. It is in the process of deconstructing the former, that Carter is able to uncover (or, perhaps, recover) the latter and draw our attention to the fact that the two are inextricably bound. A revision of Sade, it seems, cannot happen properly without a concurrent revision of the feminist discourse. Carter's process of demythologization appears to target fetishism and the lack of erotics precisely because they characterize both the Sadeian and the feminist myth.

The first aspect Carter addresses in her demythologization process is fetishism. Since we have identified Sadeian fetishism as a kind of fixed, close-circuited repetition and a compulsive reproduction of *the same*, logically it would follow that the most effective means of working against it would be to disrupt that cycle of repetition and introduce some kind of *difference*. It is important to keep in mind, however, that Carter's demythologization is a *deconstructive* process that aims to expose myth so that the reader will learn to recognize it as such; it is not merely a *destructive* process that does away with myth without letting the reader examine its cracks and take apart its operations. Therefore, it seems vital that the difference introduced arises from the existing structure—a detail that could also serve to explain Carter's decision to re-read rather than rewrite her source material.

Demythologization, then, does not only entail the rejection of myth, but also its acceptance and even partial validation in order to fully expose (and expound) its artificial nature. It is in this regard that Carter's repetition with a difference becomes significant. Naomi Schor defines irony as precisely the strategy that would allow one "to both reject and to reappropriate the discourse of reference" (Schor 98) in such a way. Carter's use of irony lies in the fact that the

introduction of difference—that disruption of fixed repetition—still acknowledges the worth of sameness and repetition.

Carter's irony is repetition with a difference, in which the seemingly dubious act of repetition is just as crucial to the demythologization process as the difference that crowns it: her participation in the ritual of repetition grants her access to the myth, her introduction of difference allows her to crack the myth open. Rather than rewrite Sade's narratives altogether, Carter restates them in their original capacities in order to proceed with her analysis and critique: the crucial difference is introduced as a natural extension of the reproduction of the same. In a similar fashion, she begins with and reproduces the feminist lens in the "Polemical Preface" (in her defense of a "free sexuality for women" [Carter 36]), even as she proceeds to reject parts of the feminist discourse.

In the context of re-reading, repetition with a difference largely consists of revisiting the plot and reframing the logic of the story, so as to shed light on an entirely different set of conclusions about the intratextual reality (which, in turn, bears a relation to the extratextual reality). For example, having first recapped the plot of *Justine*, Carter goes on to condemn the innocent, powerless, and much-abused heroine as "a monster of the fear of sexuality" (49), who is complicit in her own oppression. Carter reads against the grain and repositions the tragic heroine as a petty villain. "She is a child," writes Carter, "who knows only how to be good to daddy, her god, the abstract virtue to which she constantly refers, prevents her from acting for herself" (55). Though she does not approve of the punishment Justine receives at Sade's hands, she certainly offers a justification of it, dismissing the victim of vicious, undeserved male violence as "foolish and ignorant" (55).

Of course, even as Carter (re)uses the same plot to tell a different story, she does not specify which myth, Sadeian or feminist, she is

deconstructing at a given moment in her re-reading: that is, which falls under the category of “repetition” and which creates “the difference.” At first glance, it may be tempting to conclude that Carter simply alternates; that there are times when she uses Sade’s work to deconstruct the feminist discourse and other times when she uses the feminist discourse to deconstruct Sade’s work. After all, Carter deviates from her alliance with (and reiteration of) Sade as often as she does from her alliance with (and reiteration of) the feminist discourse.

When Carter does align herself with Sade, she does so for reasons entirely unrelated to Sade’s own philosophy. When she decries Justine’s passivity, she really decries her refusal to see that the misogynistic system in which she is trapped is socially constructed, rather than divinely ordained. It is from a *feminist* stance that Carter resents her docility and her complicity with the patriarchy. It is also from that same stance that Carter approves of Juliette’s ability to grasp that “to be a woman is to be automatically at a disadvantage in a man’s world” (78) and put all of her efforts—immoral as they may be—into empowering herself.

On the other hand, in a similarly contradictory fashion, Carter’s implicit categorization of Sade’s characters as feminist or non-feminist is tied largely to their respective relationships to *power*: she frowns upon Justine’s (self-imposed) weakness and admires Juliette’s ruthless strength. Given that Juliette is empowered by the fact that “she rids herself of some of the more crippling aspects of femininity” (79), we can see that while Carter praises her status as a “New Woman in the mode of irony” (79), she does so through a Sadeian lens, rather than a feminist one. In asking “if we admire the campaigns of a great general, is it hypocrisy to refuse to admire Juliette’s?” (80) and evoking Tamburlaine the Great, Carter effectively ties Juliette’s appeal to militarism and despotic rule. While these

have no place in the feminist discourse, they fit rather naturally into the Sadeian one.

There are two things that become apparent in Carter's re-reading. The first is the discovery of the feminist myth. The second is that its introduction into the process of demythologizing the Sadeian myth leads to a complicated relationship between the two; ultimately, however, it opens the floor to conflicting and contradictory assessments as well as undecidability. Carter's revision of Sade's writing through feminism is *always already concurrent* with her revision of feminism through Sade: Sade becomes the added difference in her reproduction of the feminist discourse at the same time as the feminist stance becomes the difference in her retelling of Sade's tales. The act of repetition, in this case, serves to highlight the differentiation that occurs. The result is a continuous tension, a sustained undecidability between the rejection and validation of the two myths; she never makes a conclusive choice one way or the other. The differentiation leaves rifts and split ends: her self-contradictory utterances become moments of undecidability.

It is worth noting that Carter anchors this technique by mirroring the repetition with a difference taking place on the level of plot. Phrases such as "though she [Justine] is virtuous, she does not know how to do good" (55), "Sade must censor Delbène, as he creates her" (82), "the more earnestly he strives, the further the goal recedes from him" (149), etc. appear frequently throughout the book. While it is not an *exact* repetition and reversal—the overall sentiment of self-refutation is certainly there. In effect, the presence of repetition with a difference on both a large *and* small scale (both plot and rhetoric) in *The Sadeian Woman*, underscores the importance of undecidability in Carter's re-reading.

Carter's process of demythologization entails the purposeful creation of holes and openings for the reader to occupy—another aspect

of Sade's/pornographic writing that is reproduced; the difference, however, is that unlike Sade, who keeps his texts fastidiously closed, she leaves hers open and open-ended. For instance, though in the "Polemical Preface" Carter positions herself in the defense of Sade, by the end of "Speculative Finale" she effectively abandons him, pronouncing him "the lamb led to slaughter as well as the butcher with the insensible knife" (144). For her, every "transgression" that could open up the possibility for sexual freedom "becomes [a] regression" in the end (147), because Sade "is still in complicity with the authority he hates" (136). Furthermore, "the Sadeian woman," writes Carter, "subverts only her own socially conditioned role in the world of god, the king and the law. She does not subvert her society, except incidentally, as a storm trooper of the individual consciousness" (133); she is the anachronistic feminist trailblazer no more. As a result, whereas in the Sadeian text the reader is positioned in a limited and circumscribed relation to the erotic scene, Carter's reader is simultaneously drawn into and disoriented by the text.

It becomes clear that in the process of re-reading, Carter ends her book in a place markedly different from the one in which she started it. More than that, although there is a "preface" that offers a sort of introduction to the subsequent chapters, there is no epilogue-like chapter at the end. The book is only framed from the one side, with the "preface"; it literally remains open-ended. "The School of Love" tries to position itself as the climax and it would be easy to mistake it for a conclusive turning point in the book, at which she rejects the thesis she had posited in the "Polemical Preface." Nevertheless, the "Speculative Finale" that follows ironically offers no final conclusion. First she infantilizes and defangs Sade's monstrous characters, comparing them to "little children who are easily cruel" (148), then she paints them as demons in a hell-game; she likens the tragedy of the libertine to "a fall like Lucifer's, from Heaven to Hell" (150), but points to the possibility of redemption "in the Holy terror of love

that we find, in both men and women” (150). Sade and this world are left in ambiguous terms: horrific, but pitiable; tragic, but possibly redeemable. The postscript consists of an unframed, single block quotation without any sort of explanation. In the final moment, Carter substitutes another voice for her own and leaves us in a confusing (or perhaps confused) silence. She robs the reader of a final, conclusive statement and brings us back to undecidability. Carter is able to crack open the myth and counteract its aforementioned fetishism through repetition with a difference, because, as we can see, the text remains open. It is an open-(ended)ness that resists both structural and ideological closure.

The other aspect that Carter addresses in her demythologization is the lack of erotics in Sadeian (as well as feminist) discourse. Her method entails the introduction of two kinds of pleasure into the process of revision: textual and transgressive. Part of Carter’s ironic engagement of Sade is to consciously adopt the pornographic mode, “that is, writing that can ‘pull’ a reader just as a woman ‘pulls’ a man or a man ‘pulls’ a woman” (17). Ultimately, her most effective means of “pulling” the reader is with the first person plural: “...*we* will assure her *we* have her husband’s, *our* father’s, full approval of the infamies *we* have committed and drive her from *our* bedroom” (122, emphasis added). Eliding the author-reader divide altogether, makes the reader her automatic accomplice. At the same time, by playing up the reader-character identification to the point of absurdity, Carter’s intermittent disruption of the pleasure of identification enables the reader to experience the pleasure of voyeurism in addition to that of participation.

Carter effectively disrupts the text while granting it a certain sense of unity, insofar that the disruptions are constant. Overall, they play a vital part in her erotic code. Carter also punctuates her confidence in the reader by adopting an informal tone and regularly using words like “fuck” and “cunt” in place of the more appropriate

euphemistic expressions one typically expects from an essay. More than that, she makes the reader privy to explicit summaries of the sexual adventures of various Sadeian characters, which is arguably watered-down pornography in its own right, one that beckons the reader much in the same way as does any pornographic text. Thus, she creates the kind of intimacy that always holds the possibility of breaking down the separation between what lies within and what lies outside of the text; between intra-and extra-textual realities. In that dangerous closeness lie the erotics.

Carter's erotics of textual play arise from what Heta Pyrhönen identifies as the “semantic incongruities among textual layers, intra- and intertextual experimentation, and repetition creating dissimilar similarity” cultivated in her mode of writing (Pyrhönen 109). These three elements relate back to the moments of nonsense, undecidability, and excess in the text. At times, Carter shouts from the pages, in apparent, if nonsensical, response to the Sadeian scene she has just recapped: “Vengeance. Transgression. Glory!” (Carter 124). Other times, she makes it purposely unclear whom she is addressing (the reader or the Sadeian characters): “Home again, home again, fast as you can” (130). Other times yet, she exceeds the parameters of authorship, speaking directly for the Sadeian character, in a reverie of theatricality: “Home again, home again, fast as you can my lovely Mama, to the husband who has prepared this instructive afternoon for you” (131). Such instances tamper with the boundary between the realm of the author and that of the reader. Carter creates confusion and irregularities; her authorial stance continuously moves within and between texts (as well as outside of them); she pronounces the aforementioned repetition with a difference, which unsettles the reader’s expectations.

Furthermore, since Carter’s text is quasi-pornographic at the same time as it is scholarly and analytical, the reader is both interpellated by and removed from it, respectively. In other words, the reader

must navigate between identifying with and inserting himself into the text due to its pornographic undertones, and engaging with it from a distance due to its academic overtones. The bliss of readerly engagement with such a text lies in the fact that it is blatantly and deliberately irresolvable. Here, the reader's task is not "the *comfortable* practice of reading" (14) that "fills" and "contents," but rather embracing the ecstatic tension in which "nothing is reconstituted, nothing recuperated" (52). In deferring closure indefinitely through its state of loss and openness, the text is able to *sustain* the erotics of yearning for completion and finality. The work is infused with the potential for ecstasy, or rather, textacy.

Alongside textual pleasure, Carter also deploys the pleasure of transgression. She does so by means of transgressive readership and transgressive (authorial) utterance. In the first place, Carter's decision to read Sade's works is already doubly transgressive. She, as a woman, and as a feminist, would categorically *not* have been Sade's intended audience. For Carter, to read the works of Sade (particularly with the aim of redeploying them in the service of feminism) is to violate the parameters of his intended readership; it is a transgression against Sade. Likewise, as we had already mentioned, from many feminists' point of view, the fact that Carter indulges in Sade's notoriously misogynist writing and attempts to validate it is equally an act of transgression against feminism. There is an innate element of pleasure in crossing into a doubly forbidden territory.

Secondly, in line with Carter's transgression against feminism, there is the undeniable possibility of some kind of perverse, transgressive pleasure in her pointedly explicit recitation of the Sadeian scenario, as well as her own occasional imitation of it. Habitually, and with little warning, she conjures up and inserts her own crass visions of extravagant erotic violence: "The public executioner ejaculates as the neck of his victim snaps" (17); "she is raped by a thousand eyes nightly" (67); "the libertines turn the Blessed Virgin over on her

belly and sodomize her” (76); “Eugénie will fuck her with a cunt-cracking dildo” (121); etc. Indeed, Carter “*revels* in what she finds there [in Sade], blood, scars, perversion” (Crunelle-Vanrigh 142, emphasis added); the act of recitation, imitation, and production of her own transgressive scenes augments the pleasure of reading the forbidden.

The trick of performance allows her the double pleasure of embodying Sade, the taboo in all of its abject glory, and of mocking and exposing the artifice and absurdity of Sade’s over-the-top scenes of sex and violence. It is with good reason that Robert Clark calls Carter’s writing “feminism in male chauvinist drag” (Clark 158). Furthermore, on an epistemological level, Carter is performing intellectual drag. Because she re-reads as a feminist playing a male chauvinist, she enables her reader to do the same and be exposed to the mutual dependence of feminist and patriarchal ideologies. She confronts the reader with the points of contact between the two ideologies and, again, causes him/her to feel the tension in being simultaneously attached to and repelled from the power of their respective arguments. Part of the pleasure of transgression, it seems, also comes from precisely that moment of “crossing;” from finding oneself at the threshold separating the two ways of thinking and from the pleasurable pain (or, perhaps, the painful pleasure) of being torn between them.

These instances of transgression decidedly break with the formality of an essay. Rebecca Munford rightly assesses that Carter’s writing—and this is particularly true of *The Sadeian Woman*—“disman- tles the boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultural forms and unsettles the workings of power, legitimacy, and the sacred” (Munford 2). *The Sadeian Woman* continuously traverses the line between academia and obscenity, structured argument and nonsensical outbursts, objectivity and subjectivity. Therein lays the final element of transgressive pleasure of this text: its repeated violation of genre.

Having analyzed how Carter counteracts myth's fetishism with irony and its lack of erotics with the introduction of pleasure, we can take a closer look at where her particular approach to demythologization stands in the larger context of revision. As we already know, Carter chooses to re-read rather than rewrite the myths of Sade and the feminist discourse; the question that follows, is, of course, what is made possible by that choice? Roland Barthes contends that re-reading has the potential to be radical, as it is "an operation contrary to the commercial and ideological habits of our society, which would have us 'throw away' the story once it had been consumed" (S/Z 15-16). In fact, he maintains that, because rereading creates a plurality, an openness of possibility insofar that "the signifier is being provided with an additional feature: shifting" (15), it actually "saves the text from repetition" (16). "Rereading," Barthes concludes, "is no longer consumption," a comfortable reading of a closed, packaged text, "but play" (16), an act instrumental to creating texts of bliss.

The practice of re-reading as revision has perhaps most notably been addressed by J. Hilles Miller. He states, "Reading is subject not to the text as its law, but to the law to which the text is subject. This law forces the reader to betray the text or deviate from it in the act of reading it, in the name of a higher demand that can yet be reached only by way of the text. This response creates yet another text, which is a new act" (Miller 120). He believes that every textual utterance is a version, a specific translation of that law to which the text is subject, that is simultaneously conveyed and obscured by the text. Accordingly, every reading and rereading is a different attempt at approximating that which can never be expressed with exactitude. In such a way, re-reading becomes a practice of creating difference, rather than sameness, because it is an attempt at replicating that which is always already an imperfect copy tainted by difference.

The advantage of re-reading as an approach to revision, then, is the fact that it is a relatively organic or authentic production of difference, insofar that the difference comes from the process of re-reading alone, as a natural byproduct. It allows for more ambiguity; it is a production of difference that does not displace and invalidate but rather unsettles the text being revised, unlocking a multiplicity of meaning and leaving it open. It does not seal it back up, and as such avoids the closed-circuit construction that is ultimately characteristic of myth. Rewriting, on the other hand, is a more artificial process: the text under revision is far more removed from the new, resultant text. It is also in greater danger of falling into the trap of producing yet another closed text, that is, a myth: without emphatic recapitulation of the source text, the element of difference may simply get absorbed into the new structure; without the context of repetition (sameness), the added difference may get lost.

What a re-reading effectively enables Carter to do is turn her attention to *herself as a reader* (as well as a writer) and to cross-examine the feminist stance from which she deconstructs the Sadeian myth. Rather than only demythologize the works of Sade, she is able to tease out the myth clouding in her own critical lens—that of the feminist discourse—and demythologize it as well. Sarah Henstra suggests that “rather than aligning herself with predator or prey, Carter adopts a stance as onlooker, from which she ‘thinks through’ both experiences and allows them to cast each other into *relief*” and that her reading is contrapuntal, “actively participating in the construction of meaning as the story unfolds and supplementing its version of narrative reality with another” (Henstra 109-10, emphasis added). Such an interpretation, however, insists that Carter’s re-reading is a means of easing the tensions she locates in the source text, resolving its conflicts, and bringing it towards closure. This is problematic because, again, closure is a key feature of myth. To position Carter as a mediator (“onlooker”) between the inter- and

extra-textual realities is to imply that she manages the revision process from some external stance.

I would argue against both those notions. Although Carter does not align herself “with predator or prey,” she also does not ever actually cast either side—be it limited to Sade’s Justine vs. Juliette, or within the larger context of feminist vs. Sadeian discourse—as either predator or prey. The fact that she does not align herself with either of the myths points to certain recognition on her part that they themselves are also already revisions of other existing myths. Sade’s work, with all of its humanly impossible extremes and perversions, nonetheless stands on its own as a revision of the puritanical conception of (hetero)sexual relations of endorsed by the patriarchal ideology in the 18th century. Even without Carter’s analysis, one can see how his pornography at the very least sheds light on unconventional sexual acts and contributes to a more inclusive repertoire of sex and gender practices. Likewise, the feminist discourse is, self-evidently, a conscious revision of the preexisting patriarchal ideology.

In this gesture of recognition, the ambiguous nature of Carter’s own revisions comes into focus. Their openness and undecidability serve to remind her as well as us that every act of revision can still be susceptible to mythologization precisely because closure and resolution are such tempting points of arrival. Carter’s method seems to be the deferral rather than the definite “construction of meaning.” The fact that she ends *The Sadeian Woman* in a very different place from the one in which she started it, signals that she herself might have undergone a process of *self-revision* in order to avoid (re)producing myth in her revision of other myths. Thus, Carter is by no means an “onlooker;” rather, her discourse becomes both the outcome and the subject of the revision process.

What the act of re-reading ultimately makes possible, then, is three things. First, it enables the discovery of a plurality in a text, which encourages play and textual erotics, thereby counteracting their initial lack in myth. Secondly, it allows for the difference—that unnamable discrepancy between the first and second reading—to emerge more organically than it would in a rewriting; since re-reading does not decidedly privilege the new text over the old it is less vulnerable to becoming unambiguous and closed in its construction, and thereby less vulnerable to becoming a myth. Lastly, re-reading enables the revisionist to deconstruct more than just the source material at hand, but also the lens through which s/he is viewing it. Carter is able to tease out and identify a myth that influences her own conception of Sade's work precisely because the kind of labor in which she is engaged allows her to examine her own readership.

In sum, what seems to be finally at stake in choosing to re-read rather than rewrite as a revision strategy is the possibility of uncovering more myths that may lie beneath the guise of a means of demythologization. Re-reading isolates the text and the act of reading itself. It allows for the critical eye to devote its attention to the realm of the reader as well as of that which is being read. Ultimately, re-reading ensures that the work of demythologization does not get compromised by its own methods and that the process as a whole leaves enough room for that element of undecidability that makes demythologizing possible in the first place.

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UNPEELING WALLPAPER:

Women's Voices Beneath the Pattern of Domesticity, 1860-1935

Maggie Goddard '11

In her 1892 short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper," Charlotte Perkins Gilman challenges the patriarchal imposition of man's prescriptive discourse, which categorically contradicts women's lived experiences. Through a series of diary entries, Gilman portrays a woman whose physician husband confines her to a bedroom to recover from her diagnosed temporary nervous depression. The narrative chronicles the detrimental effects of confinement on the woman's mental health, thus demonstrating the necessity for agency and authorship. Without a creative outlet, the woman becomes obsessed with the room's wallpaper and projects her experience onto the yellow print. At the end, she imagines women creeping beneath the print, identifies as the women, smothered by paternalism, and tears off the paper as a symbolic act. By unpeeling the wallpaper, the narrator frees herself from the suffocating pattern of domesticity and passivity that characterized white, middle-class women's experience at the turn of the century.

Still, this is not a moment of emancipation; the narrator can find liberation only through madness and just imagines her freed self, creeping beneath the print of the yellow wallpaper. As an expression of exasperation, unpeeling the wallpaper is a demand for society to recognize the unjust, patriarchal conceptions of gender that attempt to regulate and define women's experiences. Patterned to decorate the domestic sphere, wallpaper delineates gendered space. As a decorative art, wallpaper is not often classified as true or real art, yet these aesthetic judgments only delegitimize its cultural meaning and social significance, thereby overlooking the ways wallpaper functions as a political technology, a method or technique which

regulates human bodies. Men manufactured, produced, and sold papers patterned with floral prints and themes from other, more exotic lands, motifs representing femininity as submissive, easily manipulated, and possessing a fragile beauty.

By constructing and controlling representations of the feminine and foreign other on such surfaces, male manufacturers, producers, and sellers projected patriarchal conceptions of women as dominated and domestic, descriptions that contradicted feminist claims to women's self-determination. Through these false images, masculine representations defined gender roles while devaluing women's experiences. In Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," wallpaper assumes a central role as the physical representation of confinement, middle-class women's suppression in marriage, and an emblem of mental illness. Through the rhetorical relationship between nature and women, the yellow floral print is produced by a patriarchal culture to imprison the woman beneath the paper. Pasted onto the walls of the home, wallpaper embodies masculine definitions of gender that constrain women to passive and strictly domestic roles—positions which contradict feminist responses at the turn of the century; thus, by unpeeling the wallpaper, such women reject these masculine conceptions of femininity and reinscribe significance to their own voices.

Wallpaper physically frames the walls of the home, thus demarcating women's space within the domestic sphere and transforming the home into a decorated prison of sorts. By visually confronting the viewer through a "sense of enveloping space" (Rees 131), wallpaper shapes the boundaries of the house, thereby physically tracing the lines of women's confinement. Epitomized in the recurring block printed patterns and mechanical process of wallpaper manufacture, the unrelenting sameness of domestic life takes on a new meaning in the realm of this technology. The tasks and chores of the housewife assume the same repetitious monotony as the feminine floral

prints, and women's lives, dictated by a patriarchal culture that shapes their gender role, appear pictorially represented on wallpaper's surfaces in the way men imagined them—graceful, beautiful, with elegant curves, fading softly into the background. The feminine floral pattern thus “ultimately capitulates to the conditions of containment and cultivation of the domestic interior” (Kulper 175)—the gendered forms succumb to domination and confinement. Tracing the rise of industrialization—the shift from production to consumption—alongside the wallpaper's pattern of domesticity throws into sharp relief the changes in American women's lives.

The popularity of wallpaper rose with the transformation of the home through industrialization and a greater devaluation of women's work. During the nineteenth century, the United States developed into a highly industrialized nation, but this change had severe effects on American married women. A sharper distinction emerged between masculinized wage labor and domestic work, thus resulting in the devaluation of work within the home that generated new consumptive patterns both alienating and invisible. In a letter from 1888, Mary Hallock Foote wrote, “I am daily dropped in little pieces and passed around and devoured and expected to be whole again next day and all days and I am never *alone* for a single minute” (Cowan 43). Other white, middle-class women echoed such desperate sentiments. As Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote to her husband in 1844, “The arranging of the whole house...the cleaning...the children's clothes and the baby have seemed to press on my mind all at once. Sometimes it seems as if anxious thought has become a disease with me from which I could not be free” (Cowan 43). With men leaving the home and finding work in factories and other industrial centers, the increased demands on women in the domestic sphere resulted in such exasperation, which was only furthered by the assumptions of domestic labor as leisure associated with the turn-of-the-century shift from production to consumption.

As the twentieth century approached, changes in the food, clothing, and health-care systems signaled a movement from production to consumption as mass-produced commodities replaced cottage industry wares, but to assume that women's labor suddenly decreased is deeply misguided. According to Ruth Schwartz Cowan, author of *More Work for Mother*, "Before industrialization, women fed, clothed, and nursed their families by preparing (with the help of their husbands and children) food, clothing, and medication. In the post-industrial age, women feed, clothe, and nurse their families (without much direct assistance from anyone else) by cooking, cleaning, driving, shopping, and waiting" (Cowan 101). Indeed, despite the shift from production to consumption, women still managed a great amount of time-consuming labor. Their lives thus regulated by the repetitious monotony of domestic labor and the simultaneous devaluation of their work, women were confined to the private sphere, demarcated by paper prints on the walls of the home.

By the late nineteenth century, mechanized production established the American wallpaper industry in the international market, thus signaling its dominance in shaping the feminine home. The greatest advantage to the American companies was their low prices due to advances in machine-printing (Warner 171). American consumers were also eager for prints: "Americans bought a lot of wallpaper during the 1870s and 1880s. One of the largest manufacturers, Howell & Brothers of Philadelphia, was producing 6,000,000 rolls per year in 1874" (Warner 171). By 1905, Potter Wall Paper Mills boasted of manufacturing 36,000,000 rolls of wallpaper yearly. According to the *Furniture Gazette* in 1879, "The people of the United States spend \$8,000,000 per annum for wallpaper, their requirements being about 57,142,860 rolls, or 457,142,400 yards [418,011,000 m]—which would be sufficient to girdle the earth at the equator and leave several hundred yards to spare" (Warner 171). This level of consumption indicates both the accessibility of wallpaper (and thus

its devaluation as an art form) and its widespread visibility within the home, thereby cementing its association with women's space.

In the process of production, the rise of mechanization played a crucial role in propagating the use of wallpaper in the home, thus constructing its spatially gendered identity. The use of mechanical printing also provoked critiques of its artistic value. As a decorative art, wallpaper is not considered true or real art; such devaluation is based on its mass production, function as a common commodity, and the way it assumes a background role. Following England's invention of steam-powered multi-color printing by roller in 1839, "American attempts lagged a little behind, and the first mechanically printed wallpapers are generally said to have been produced in 1844 by Howell & Brothers in Philadelphia, on an English steam-powered machine" (Nylander 129). Still, reports as early as 1835 claimed, "Josiah Bumstead & Son are credited with inventing a [hand-cranked] machine to print wallpaper in one colour, which, though crude, was a vast improvement on the hand process for rapid work" (Nylander 130). Through such innovations, manufacturers produced a vast amount of wallpaper to cover and conceal the walls of the American public.

By designing, producing, manufacturing, and selling wallpaper, men claimed control of the way wallpaper functions as a political technology—the way wallpaper regulates the female form and normalizes this reification. As the aforementioned names of wallpaper designers Josiah Bumstead & Son and Howell & Brothers suggest, these actors were universally men. In the Potter Wall Paper Mills trade catalog, the intended audience is men as well. When describing the paperhanger, the catalog relies on masculine pronouns: "In 1895 we began to develop the idea of selling wall paper direct to the paperhanger by means of sample books, thereby furnishing *him* goods direct from the manufacturer, and saving *him* the jobber's and retailer's profit" (Potter Wall Paper Mills, emphasis added). The

items sold are described for use by men as well; under Fuller's "Cold Water" Wall Paper and Fresco Cleaner reads, "One *man* can clean from three to eight rooms a day, making big money and do[ing] perfect work" (Potter Wall Paper Mills, emphasis added). Also shown are men using the Columbian Window Platform and installing blue plaster board. While women may have been an audience of such catalogues, men not only created these texts but were the primary actors in them as well. Although women could choose their prints, men designed their selection. At all levels, men fulfilled a central role in the production and installation of wallpaper, physically embedded in women's space through men's imposition.

When first introduced to colonial homes, wallpaper offered a certain level of festive gaiety, a kind of romance and licentiousness, thus demonstrating the projection of male desire onto the walls. "Imported wallpapers were found in America as early as 1700, and by 1735 a considerable commerce in wallpaper existed with France and England" (Katzenbach). In the middle of the eighteenth century, the wood block process became popular, and prints produced in France and England decorated American homes. According to historian Nancy McClelland, wallpaper "filled the rooms with movement, with romance, and with light... [giving] the exact note of abandon needed to redeem the asperity and bareness of these colonial interiors" (Rees 133). By decorating the whitewashed walls with such color, wallpaper functioned much like women's clothes, which construct their wearer as beautiful, feminine, and desirous. This comparison demonstrates the correlation between the home and women's bodies. As both assumed the role of clotheshorse, the decorated house and woman displayed the desires of the male designers, producers, and manufacturers.

The surface of wallpaper displays gendered prints while wallpaper itself simultaneously genders space, demarcating the women's sphere within the home. For example, the decoration of the nursery

or playroom often constructs gender identity. While boys' rooms are plastered with prints of soldiers, airplanes, cars, and space, girls' rooms are often decorated with ballerinas or princesses. This contrast, often built even before birth, underlines the gendered and gendering dynamics of wallpaper. As a gendered surface itself, wallpaper displays images rhetorically related to the feminine, including floral prints and the exotic natural contained within domestic interiors. These patterns are associated with the feminine, as flowers exemplify female beauty and grace and native landscapes illustrate fertile lands easily manipulated by the paternal touch of imperialism. Thus, the history, pattern, and technique of wallpaper physically shape gendered domestic space while reinscribing these feminine ideals of passivity and elegance onto its very surface.

Understanding the rhetorical relationship between women and nature is paramount to recognizing the way men projected their idealizations of femininity onto wallpaper's surface—conceptualizations of a woman's innate capacity to nourish and exaggerations of her fertile body that contradict feminist demands for equality. In *Nature's Body*, Londa Schiebinger explores how ideological renderings of relations between the sexes implicate the association of women with nature. According to Schiebinger, the author of *Systema naturae* and the father of zoological nomenclature, Carolus Linnaeus, "followed well-established Western conceptions when he suggested that women belong to nature in ways that men do not" (Schiebinger 56). Across Western intellectual traditions and artistic renditions, nature is continually conceived as female, the earth as a nourishing mother. As Schiebinger notes, "The identity of woman with the fecund and nurturing qualities of nature was highlighted in the influential eighteenth-century artists and engravers Hubert-François Gravelot and Charles Cochin's personification of Nature as a virgin, her breasts dripping with milk" (Schiebinger 56-57). This relationship between nature and women is perpetuated through the gendered wallpaper prints, appearing inside the domestic sphere

and illustrated through delicate floral patterns and elegant curves, accentuating women's supple bodies.

Through manufactured patterns of domestic plants and gardens, wallpaper orders the perceived irrational and projects images of contained nature rhetorically linked to women; thus, in addition to physically framing women's space, wallpaper metaphorically displays the confining of women in a patriarchal society. The trade catalogs and scrapbooks of wallpaper samples at Winterthur, the premier museum of American decorative arts, illustrate the gendered dynamics of wallpaper. Included in an assortment of wallpaper from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, several examples in particular exhibit these dimensions. A print from Robert Graves Co. depicts an aesthetically pleasing array of yellow flowers on a white background accented by shimmers of silver and gold, suggestively feminine floral designs systematically structured in a pattern pleasing to Robert Graves Co. This rigid ordering is an effort to contain nature, imagined as female. Another sample by Cresswell & Washburn shows palm trees and stylized pineapples of various green and yellow hues highlighted with gold glitter. In his work *Pineapple Culture*, Gary Okihiro effectively establishes how the pineapple, an exotic object of desire, was feminized and sexualized as "the princess of all fruits," a symbol of "the tropics, the Orient in opulence, leisure, a terrestrial paradise" (Okihiro 88). By appropriating the pineapple onto the printed surface, Cresswell & Washburn portray the imagined exotic and feminine, again reifying and reducing women to soft, supple bodies, rich fruit for the imperialist pursuit. This print simultaneously rejects what many feminists claim to be women's authentic experience—the exhausting tedium of domestic labor and the confining, papered walls of the home.

Additional prints in the Winterthur collection evidence efforts to visually domesticate nature, whose construction as female thus shows attempts to control women as well. A pattern by Howell &

Brothers shows bold red flowers across a pale yellow background repeated throughout the print. These floral patterns evoke a safe and sanitized picturesque garden described by Amy Catania Kulper in "From Will to Wallpaper: Imaging and Imagining the Natural in the Domestic Interior of the Art Nouveau." In this essay, Kulper differentiates natural images into the pictorial and taxonomic, or the picturesque and botanical garden, respectively. Both options allow the viewer to contain and construct their own conceptions of nature, whether privatized or classified as "reified, and minutely differentiated, objects" (Kulper 164). Both the pictorial and taxonomic incorporate the taming of the feminine natural through domestication and manicuring. Another sample from Cresswell & Washburn of Philadelphia offers an ostentatious print of shimmering hot pink and gold flowers against a light background, thus aesthetically domesticating feminized nature, manipulated into a uniquely man-made image.

Through its installation in the home, wallpaper offers the privatization of nature, confined and contained within the domestic interior, much like turn-of-the-century women. In another sample within Winterthur's collection, the American Wall Paper Manufacturers Association provides a representation of a tropical jungle, ordered through the wallpaper's print. This exotic image of the primitive native land becomes a commodity—individually owned nature. Indeed, through the attempts to control and own, the male designers, manufacturers, and producers of wallpaper are "visually manicuring, domesticating, and taming this generative immanent nature until it succumbs to the demands of ongoing confinement and interiority" (Kulper 177). Through wallpaper's repetitive block printed patterns, associatively feminized nature becomes reified and rational. By pictorializing the natural as landscapes or scenery, nature becomes the backdrop for action. This passive role is certainly gendered, as many men assumed that American married women performed no time-consuming labor in the post-industrial age. Rather

than displaying a lush landscape replete with a vast array of flora, shown from many points of view, wallpaper renders nature into a limited and repetitious pattern that exclusively asserts a single perspective. This reduction signals the select affirmations of men's conceptualizations of women, emphasizing their inferiority and childlike naivety, imprinted on wallpaper's surface.

In a collection of Williamsburg wallpapers from the eighteenth century, several samples exemplify the simultaneous ordering of native and feminine forms (Katzenbach and Warren, Inc.). The "Chinese" print illustrates two foreign figures, an exotic peacock, and a simple structure in the background repeated through the wood block process. In the "Fox Grape" and "Diagonal Floral" designs, the symmetrical patterns structure natural floral forms. During the design process, men created romanticized visions of exotic lands and their products, along with images of femininity contained by formalized prints and structured patterns, thereby signifying male control of the female body, confined to the home. Through the popularization of panoramas in the late eighteenth century, wallpaper companies sought to depict pictorial recreations of historic events, major battles, famed landscapes, city views, and voyeuristic looks into native lands and their primitive people (Rees 130). The viewer could thus elicit a vicarious experience of the foreign and historic via wallpaper while simultaneously "owning" these cityscapes and conquered territories, rhetorically aligned with female bodies as perceived through the male gaze.

The 1887 M.H. Birge and Sons trade catalog collapses the feminized with the foreign other through its Indian patterns. As the catalog notes, "The Taj, at Agra, the most exquisite piece of architecture in the world, erected by Shah Jehan, in memory of beautiful Nour-Mahal, has furnished us with many suggestions for Indian ornament. These we have carefully adapted and arranged for both hangings and borders, preserving, as far as possible, the wonderful

beauty of color in the original.” Through their design and manufactured product, M.H. Birge and Sons thus offer the consumer ownership of not only this exotic architectural marvel but also claim over the “beautiful Nour-Mahal,” who remains intricately connected to the Taj Mahal. By designing, producing, and hanging such prints, male manufacturers did more than visually display their exotic fantasies of the native other and the female image; they claimed ownership of these reified constructs by manipulating their representational forms.

The masculine restructuring of the female form is included in a wider method of restructuring reality to fit aesthetic needs. As previously described, wallpaper designers and manufacturers appropriated images of landscapes and city views to project onto walls their pictorialized geographic conquests. And yet, perhaps unsurprisingly, these lands were manipulated by their producers and depicted in more generalized forms, thus denying them their individuality: “Except for battle scenes, where topographical accuracy mattered, the papers presented typical rather than actual landscapes. Typical landscapes were composites, made of the features thought to be characteristic of particular places or environments” (Rees 135). The designers did not show reality as it was but as their aesthetic ideal imagined. In cityscapes, the papers depicted real places but restructured them to fit their needs, thus losing the locations’ identity: “City as well as country landscapes were generalized. In city scenes the designers used actual buildings and monuments, but to fit them into the available space, they were forced to make neighbors of buildings that were miles apart” (Rees 135). Both landscapes and city views offer valuable comparisons to the designers’ treatment of the female form. By projecting their desires visually re-rendered to satisfy their aesthetic needs, wallpaper designers and manufacturers portrayed their idealized views of landscapes and cityscapes, and representations of the feminine, rather than conforming to architectural reality and women’s own experiences.

In response to the patriarchal manipulation of women's identity and the transformative effect of an industrial society on gender roles, some of the first feminists in the United States began to speak out against the economic exploitation of women's domestic labor by men. According to Dolores Hayden, author of *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, "Between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the Great Depression, three generations of material feminists raised fundamental questions about what was called 'woman's sphere' and 'woman's work'" (Hayden 3). By challenging such terms, they focused on two central components of industrial capitalism: "the physical separation of household space from public space, and the economic separation of the domestic economy from the political economy" (Hayden 3). Both the physical separation and the economic separation are physically demarcated by wallpaper—the very subject of material feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman's seminal short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper." In her first book, *Women and Economics*, published in 1898, Gilman eloquently "prophesied a world where women enjoyed the economic independence of work outside the home for wages and savored the social benefits of life with their families in private kitchenless houses or apartments connected to central kitchens, dining rooms, and day care centers" (Hayden 183). Gilman illustrates the confining effects of patriarchal society, embodied through the oppressive text of a yellow wallpaper, in contrast to this vision of equality.

In "The Yellow Wallpaper," Charlotte Perkins Gilman demonstrates the detrimental effects of men's prescriptive discourse, ascribed to wallpaper. By confining the narrator to a single bedroom and forbidding her from any stimulating activity—including writing—the physician husband John attempts to cure his wife's nervous condition. As both a source and tool through which to illuminate the ways in which wallpaper operates as a political technology, the narrative demonstrates that women must have the agency to share their own voices, thus underlining the importance of self-expression. Written

in 1890 and first published in 1892, the story illustrates the gendered and gendering dimensions of wallpaper—the way it demarcates women’s space within the home and projects the patriarchal society’s conceptions of female gender roles, which contradict the narrator’s need to write, imagine, and engage. Although reprinted in 1920, the text remained out of print for years, only receiving scholarly acclaim fifty years later.

A visionary material feminist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman lectured for social reform and advocated for women’s economic independence. Throughout her life, from 1860 to 1935, Charlotte Perkins Gilman also suffered from chronic depression. “The Yellow Wallpaper” acts as a semi-autobiographical text to illustrate the flaws of her own doctor’s resting cure for neurasthenia, the “nervous condition” Dr. S. Weir Mitchell diagnosed in Gilman after she gave birth to her daughter. Gilman’s experience in Mitchell’s sanitarium outside Philadelphia exacerbated her mental illness, but through the narrative of “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Gilman voices her own experience and rejects Mitchell’s prescriptive imposition. Like Gilman’s own biography, “The Yellow Wallpaper” charts a woman’s mental deterioration after giving birth. The narrator is confined to a room patterned with a haunting yellow print, a paper and text that gains significance and meaning as the narrative unfolds. The story is told in a series of twelve diary entries written in secret and against the will of the narrator’s husband and caretaker, who urges her only to rest and recover from her “nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency” (Gilman 29-30). Within the text, wallpaper operates as the paradigmatic symbol of women’s subordination and the material embodiment of men’s prescriptive discourse for women. However, by asserting herself as author, the narrator imaginatively rereads and revises the wallpaper as text, thus demonstrating the ultimate importance of self-expression through liberation from wallpaper’s pattern of domesticity.

The narrator develops an increasingly intimate relationship with the wallpaper—or what lurks beneath it—over time. She initially expresses disgust with the yellow print yet then shifts to recognizing a pattern and sub-pattern. She eventually sees a form creeping beneath its surface and finally identifies *as* this form—an imaginative and creative act that develops throughout the narrative. When she first arrives at the ancestral hall, the narrator reacts strongly to the wallpaper, which she critiques as dull, confusing, irritating, and contradicting (Gilman 32). She describes it as aesthetically distasteful; as she writes, “I never saw a worse paper in my life. One of those sprawling, flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin” (Gilman 32). She observes a certain violence in the pattern, as if “the lame uncertain curves...suddenly commit suicide” (Gilman 32), the word “curves” here evoking men’s imaginations of the female body while the other phrases, “lame,” “uncertain,” and “suddenly commit suicide,” reflect a disconnect with such imaginings. The narrator is especially critical of the color, which she describes as “repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight. It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others” (Gilman 32). Such visceral reactions indicate more than disapproval of the motif or color; the narrator is responding to something that she has read within the wallpaper—both her own self and the diseased version projected by a patriarchal society.

The narrator collapses the wallpaper with a perceived perversion of female procreation and feminine nature, as experienced in and defining her days after childbirth. By subordinating women through the propagated notion of the inherently diseased female body, the patriarchal culture of the late nineteenth century supported its own possessive investments in a sexist hierarchy. Thus, the myth of “diseased maternity” (Fleenor 148) cripples the narrator from writing or working, or doing anything else for herself, for that matter. Her husband physician John asserts his expertise and professionalism over

her weak condition while relying on a model of the sick woman, embodied in the wallpaper itself. As Juliann Fleenor observes in *The Female Gothic*, “The yellow wallpaper symbolizes more than confinement, victimization, and the inability to write. It suggests a disease within the female self” (Fleenor 148). The color, smell, and staining of the wallpaper furthers this conception of the diseased female body, oozing and sticky, swelling and bleeding.

In her vivid descriptions of her own aversions to the wallpaper, the narrator further characterizes this patriarchal societal disgust with the female body, which she perceives and projects onto the yellow surface. She remains defined by men’s prescriptive discourse. As the narrator proclaims, “It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old, foul, bad yellow things. But there is something else about that paper—the smell!” (Gilman 44). In great length, the narrator describes the smell, which creeps into her hair and encroaches upon her in every room, an unavoidable olfactory assault. The house, like her female body, is invaded by the scent of the wallpaper: “It creeps all over the house. I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs” (Gilman 44). The color also permeates everything, thereby infecting “everything it touched” (Gilman 43). John’s sister, Jennie, said that “she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John’s, and she wished we would be more careful!” (Gilman 43). This is a particularly provocative image, which elicits the effect of afterbirth in relation to both the narrator’s bodily self and the house. By conflating the wallpaper’s infectious nature and infected symptoms with the diseased female body, the narrator reascribes the way she is imagined by the patriarchal society onto the wallpaper’s gendered surface and onto her self.

In order to unpeel this false image of the sick woman beneath the wallpaper’s pattern and liberate the imprisoned individual under-

neath, the narrator must assume the role of author; she must read in her own textuality through the print and discover her own discourse beyond her husband physician's interpretation. In her second diary account, the narrator again mentions "that horrid paper" (Gilman 34), but she also begins to focus and recognize images in the print.

The creeping forms behind the paper—and the figure she sees creeping outside—are unsettling, but what she sees becomes uncanny precisely because it is also familiar: she sees herself. As she starts to read the pattern, she simultaneously reads her own confined condition onto the wallpaper's very surface. The narrator thus recognizes a disconnect between the way she is imagined and the way she understands her self and her own experience. Rereading becomes a revisionary act. However, as Judith Fetterley in *Gender and Reading* illustrates, the narrator is then confronted by the reality of her situation: "Forced to read men's texts, women are forced to become characters in those texts. And since the stories men tell assert as fact what women know to be fiction, not only do women lose the power that comes from authoring; more significantly, they are forced to deny their own reality and to commit in effect a kind of psychic suicide" (Fetterley 183). In order to combat such male control of textuality, as embodied in the yellow wallpaper, and its subsequent effect on women's madness, the narrator must unpeel the pattern and assert her own self against her physician husband's oppressive prescriptive discourse.

The narrator turns to the wallpaper as a text, which she subsequently reads into, thus authoring her own analytic interpretation. By subverting the masculine technology of the wallpaper, the narrator claims its grotesque pattern and overwhelming smell through her interpretative power. Although denied the ability to write by her husband physician, the narrator can still read. In "A Map of Rereading," Annette Kolodny asserts, "From that point on, the narrator progressively gives up the attempt to *record* her reality and instead

begins to *read* it—as symbolically adumbrated in her compulsion to discover a consistent and coherent pattern amid ‘the sprawling outlines’ of the wallpaper’s apparently ‘pointless pattern’” (Kolodny 167). Through her attempts to read the wallpaper as her own text, the narrator inevitably imagines her own idealizations. To push further, rereading becomes an authorial act as the narrator imagines an alternative text; reading functions as both revision and rebellion. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar explain in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, “Inevitably she studies its suicidal implications—and inevitably, because of her ‘imaginative power and habit of story-making,’ she revises it, projecting her own passion for escape into its otherwise incomprehensible hieroglyphics” (Gilbert and Gubar 120). Her escape, however, is still confined to her sickness, her debilitated state—a result of the “cure” for her mental illness.

Indeed, the narrator can only escape into madness, but upon confronting “the symbolization of her own untenable and unacceptable reality” (Kolodny 169), she can still assert her own narrative. In order to claim her own story and identity, however, the narrator must transcend both “the oppressive structures of the society in which she finds herself” (Gilbert and Gubar 120) as well as “John’s discourse on his wife’s condition, a discourse based on the unspoken and therefore ‘unheard of contradiction’ that somehow she is both well and ill” (Haney-Peritz 194). Feminist writer Janice Haney-Peritz extends this analysis of discourse to assert, “We may want to be even more specific and say that the oppressive structure at issue is a *man’s prescriptive discourse about a woman*” (Haney-Peritz 194, emphasis added). As we witnessed imprinted across wallpaper’s surface, men project only their manipulated representations through pattern and print while excluding women’s voices of lived experience. By projecting John’s paternalistic and assumptive approach onto the yellow wallpaper, the narrator illustrates this disconnect in discourse.

The tensions between men's false representations and women's own experiences result in the narrator's deteriorated mental state, again projected onto the yellow wallpaper. By continually dismissing her opinion and infantilizing his wife, John not only delegitimizes her ideas, but also constructs her madness and names it as such. Indeed, the yellow wallpaper illustrates these claims to textuality and "the struggle for control over the definition of reality and hence over the definition of sanity and madness" (Fetterley 183). Within the yellow wallpaper, then, the narrator projects her own uncertainties cultivated through John's contradicting claims. By relying "on the very binary oppositions which structure [John's prescriptive] discourse—oppositions like sick and well, the real and the fanciful, order and anarchy, self and other, male and female...the narrator's reflections produce a text in which one line of thinking after another 'suddenly commits suicide—plung[ing] off at outrageous angles, [and] destroy[ing itself] in unheard of contradictions'" (Haney-Peritz 194). In order to actually voice her own narrative, then, the narrator must dismantle this contradicting text by unpeeling the wallpaper to release her trapped self.

As embodied in the wallpaper as text, the narrator must first confront her imagination in tension with John's portrayal of reality. After John continually dismisses his wife's claims while patronizingly referring to her as "little girl" (Gilman 40), the narrator shifts her perceptions of the wallpaper from the symbolic to the imaginary. As Haney-Peritz observes, "From this point on, the narrator sees things otherwise; now the wallpaper's 'outside pattern' is perceived to be bars, while its sub-pattern is perceived to *be* a woman rather than something '*like* a woman'" (Haney-Peritz 197). By affirming her own interpretations of the wallpaper's text to revise reality, the narrator asserts her own voice, even though it is discordant with actuality. By portraying these tensions between John and his wife, Gilman's story reflects "an exploration, within itself, of the gender-inflected interpretive strategies responsible for our mutual misread-

ings, and even horrific misprisons, across sex lines. If neither male nor female reading audiences were prepared to decode properly ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,’ even less, Gilman understood, were they prepared to comprehend one another” (Kolodny 169). Indeed, this disconnect shown in the short story transcends its pages and comments on the tensions between men and women in real life, namely the white middle-class but including both in the literary world and within the history of wallpaper itself. As the projection of men’s imagined gender roles for women, wallpaper, like Gilman’s story, reflects the disconnects between male and female understandings of domesticity.

At the end of “The Yellow Wallpaer,” John finds his wife creeping around her room and demands that she provide an explanation for such behavior. “I’ve got out at last,” she responds, “in spite of you and Jane. And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!” (Gilman 50). In this moment, the narrator rejects her husband’s patriarchal imposition to define and regulate her experience. By unpeeling the wallpaper, the narrator reads, revises, and rebels; she rejects her physician husband’s prescriptive discourse and actualizes her imagined self. However, as Haney-Peritz notes, “Indeed, it may just be that what Gilman learned in writing and reading ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ was that as yet, a woman could only *imagine* that she had found herself, for until the material conditions of social life were radically changed, there would be no ‘real’ way out of [the patriarchal society]” (Haney-Peritz 203). Gilman asserts the necessity to move beyond men’s walls, coated with their confining patterns and prints.

Until then, women can only visualize themselves creeping beneath these surfaces—still, recognizing their true selves is a crucial first step. As Gilbert and Gubar affirm, “What ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ shows [Gilman] knew...is that even when a supposedly ‘mad’ woman has been sentenced to imprisonment in the ‘infected’ house of her

own body, she may discover that, as Sylvia Plath was to put it seventy years later, she has ‘a self to recover, a queen’” (Gilbert and Gubar 122). The significance of recognizing this self and of acknowledging the very existence of one’s own identity is both materially and symbolically encapsulated within the wallpaper print.

Throughout its history, wallpaper has functioned as a political technology through which men regulate women’s experiences within a particular racial and class context. In response to this history, the narrator of the “The Yellow Wallpaper” is only able to express her frustrations in her madness, through her imagined double—a self-divorce resulting from the demands of an unrealistic patriarchal system. Still, she performs a subversive act—she unpeels the wallpaper: “As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake that pattern, I got up and ran to help her. I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper” (Gilman 47). By dismantling this symbol of patriarchy and misrepresentation, the narrator asserts her voice, her experience, and tears down the false images of her own face. She rejects the pattern of men’s prescriptive discourse and finds her voice beneath the pattern of domesticity.

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THE LANGUAGE OF BUILT FORM AS A BLUEPRINT FOR COMEDY IN PLAUTUS' MOSTELLARIA AND MILES GLORIOSUS

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(Excerpted for publication in Body Text)

Abstract

This paper explores the language of building, architecture and space in two of Plautus' comedies. In addition to its relevance to the plot, such language functions within the plays to organize and symbolize themes both unique to each work and characteristic of the playwright overall. This language also constitutes a powerful element of metatheater, as it points in many ways to the structures-within-a-structure and the spaces-within-a-space that embody the performance experience and particularly the experience of ancient Roman comedy. While the broadest goal is to better understand the nature and practice of Plautus' comedy, that objective is founded on close readings of the texts. This project consists of a critical consideration of ways in which architectural language appears in these two plays, and in turn the ways in which that language shapes the plays' impact and significance.

"I never metatheater I didn't like."

-Professor Andrew Fenton, Latin 101

I: Introduction

Titus Maccius Plautus, c. 254-184 B.C.E., is the first Roman playwright from whom we retain an extant corpus, and his texts are a window into ancient practice and thought. The texts don't tell us everything—archaeological evidence and historical accounts offer important information about ancient performance. But the texts are the core of what happened onstage and of the inchoate institution of Western theater that Plautus helped to shape. The 21 works of Plautus, called *fabulae palliatae* or literally “stories in Greek garb,” are comedies modeled in some capacity, whether by direct translation, dis- and re-assembly, or thematic influence, on Greek precedent. *Miles Gloriosus* (*The Braggart Soldier*) is believed to be one of Plautus' earliest and most popular works. It is generally accepted that *Mil.* is a reincarnation of the Greek comedy *Alazon*, and that *Mostellaria* (*Haunted House*), another of Plautus' more popular works, comes from Philemon's *Phasma*. The extent to which Plautus both translated and fashioned original works remains under discussion, though it is agreed that he provides more than a mechanical transposition from one language to another.

We retain almost no certain detail of Plautine theater except the texts: no vase paintings depicting his shows, no descriptions of costumes, no notes on acting style.¹ However, much has been guessed from archaeological records and textual evidence. The Roman theater of Plautus' time appears to have evolved from the wooden stands that Etruscan dancers and musicians erected for their audiences as early as 364 B.C.E.² These stands were temporary and could be set up in any public place or sanctuary. With the development of farce came other types of wooden podiums, varying from simple wood

¹ Slater, Niall W. 1985. *Plautus in Performance: the theatre of the mind*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 5-6.

² See appendix, Fig. A.

floors to double-decker stages.³ Plautus' work was performed in such wooden theaters, which were dismantled after their use, sometimes to make room for games, races, and other festival activities. The stage itself was probably less than five feet tall and long and narrow in shape, representing a segment of the street. Behind the stage, the front wall of the actors' dressing room formed the stage's backdrop, which was probably blank except for a few sturdy doors. An open space, similar in form to a Greek orchestra but not used by Roman performers, lay in between the stage and the seats. Neither the stage nor the seating area was covered by a roof.⁴ "There was no provision for a change of scenery in these open-air and curtainless theaters," writes Bieber. "The podium with its back wall represented whatever the poet wished it to be." Beare elaborates:

The fact that an actor mentions some object as present may sometimes be evidence that that object was actually shown on the stage; at other times we know that the object was not and could not be shown.... [it] had to be suggested to imagination by words... it is much more likely that the references to the natural surroundings were addressed to the imagination.⁵

Certain objects' representation, or lack thereof, was able to influence the extent to which an audience was responsible for creatively supplying parts of the space or action in their minds. The Roman theater's distinctly transitory nature, for which scholars find several reasons, is also pertinent. In addition to the need to quickly make room for other spectacles, Bieber suggests that another reason for the theaters' prompt removal may have been the fire risk they posed to the densely built city of Rome.⁶ Regardless, this setup differs from

³ See appendix, Fig. B.

⁴ Beare, W. 1950. *The Roman Stage*. Totowa, NJ: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 176-77.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bieber 1961, 168.

that in which the Greek works that Plautus (re)interpreted were originally performed,⁷ and must have influenced the evolving ways in which audiences participated in and conceptualized theater.

The language of built form

Mil. and *Mostell.* are in many capacities typical Plautine works—there are stock comedic characters, a focus on trickery and deception, and a clear presence of witty wordplay, for example. However, there are phenomena at work in these plays that may distinguish them from the rest of the corpus. The plays' dialogue contains a notable presence of the language of space and place, and especially of the built forms that demarcate, frame, and comprise that space. Most superficially this is demonstrated by a quantifiable prominence of terms such as *door*, *roof*, or *house*. Architectural references and metaphors sprinkled throughout the plays serve as a unifying motif and a mode of conceptual organization. Milnor writes that attention to the detail of spaces not shown onstage, so prominent in the *Mostell.*, is unusual in Roman comedy. In a footnote she also points to *Mil.* as another example of the same phenomenon within Plautus' corpus.⁸ By studying the two plays together, we explore ways in which Plautus employs his ideas of space and the built environment through dramatic texts.

Such an exploration features a consideration of the extent to which Plautus' architectural and structural language functions as a self-referential element, in line with his employment of other metatheatrical elements. Plautus regularly toys with the dramatic illusion through dialogue with the audience and references to actors and plays, for example, and scholars agree that metatheatricity finds

⁷ See appendix, Fig. C for an example of a permanent stone theater.

⁸ Milnor, Kristina Lynn. 2002. "Playing house: stage, space and domesticity in Plautus' *Mostellaria*." *Helios* 29 (1): 3-25, 11.

many incarnations in his work. I argue that Plautus' architectural language also functions as a metatheatrical element, in reference to the playwright himself and to the craft and experience of performance—an argument that opens up a broader reflection on the ways in which *Mostell.* and *Mil.* animated the ancient Roman theater and inhabited the consciousness of their audiences.

In these two plays, there are some categories of architectural language that appear prominently and consistently, as well as some that make more isolated appearances. The language of the house is arguably the most pronounced. This word group includes the generic terms *aedes* and *domus* (both “house”) as well as more specific parts of the home, such as walls or roofs. Previous scholarship on the topic focuses on the house and its components, especially in *Mostell.* However, domestic structure is also present in *Mil.*, though its peculiarities and function differ. A second category of architectural language in both *Mostell.* and *Mil.*, albeit much smaller in frequency, is the language of ships. Plautus' use of ship imagery draws on many of the same ideas of structure and space that may be most obvious in terms of the aforementioned domestic architecture. There are other structural terms that do not fit neatly into either of these categories, the most notable of which may be *architectus* (architect), a label that appears throughout the plays though there are no actual architects involved in the action. In an article on *Mostell.*'s house imagery, Leach cautions that an investigation of Plautine comedy based on nuances of diction could be misguided: “The reputation of Plautus has never been that of a creator of subtle and significant pattern of language.”⁹ This paper does not aim to promote Plautus as the mastermind of an immaculate linguistic system, but does afford the playwright more credit than Leach in her assessment of his verbal dexterity. The diction of space and architecture is undeniably present and prominent in Plautus' plays, especially

⁹ Leach, Eleanor. 1969. “De exemplo meo ipse aedificato: An organizing idea in the *Mostellaria*.” *Hermes* 97: 318-332, 318.

Mostell. and *Mil.* Leach does at least grant Plautus a facility with figurative language and imagery, features that rely on or incorporate this vocabulary in many ways throughout the corpus.

II: Mostellaria

The young man Philolaches has been enjoying himself at home with his lover (for whose freedom he borrowed a large sum of money) and his friends while his father, Theopropides, has been abroad. When Theopropides returns, his slave Tranio keeps him from entering his house and discovering Philolaches' degeneracy by telling him that the building has become haunted. Then, Tranio tells Theopropides that the debt his son incurred was from a loan taken out to purchase the house next door, which actually belongs to a man named Simo. Eventually the slave's lies are found out and he begs for forgiveness, which he ultimately receives.

Chapter II, excised here for space, discusses architectural language in *Mostellaria* (*Haunted House*). Critical concepts include an awareness of *tearing down* vs. *building up*; power as represented by a distinction between *inside* and *outside*; the importance of doors and their role in all layers of the play from sound effect to symbol; ship imagery as a metaphor for comedy; relationships between Greek and Latin structures; certain spaces' gendered statuses; and self-referentiality via a closing scene in which a character scales the altar comprising a part of the external theater structure.

III: Miles Gloriosus

The slave Palaestrio used to serve a young man, Pleusicles, whose girlfriend Philocomasium was abducted by the soldier Pyrgopolynices while Pleusicles was abroad. Soon after, the slave was seized by pirates and by chance sold to Pyrgopolynices himself. Palaestrio was able to reach Pleusicles with his and Philocomasium's whereabouts,

and the young man hurried there and camped out next door, with a helpful neighbor Periplectomenus. Palaestrio has fashioned a passageway between the houses so the lovers can meet secretly. When a slave, climbing on the roof, spies the lovers together, Palaestrio & company must convince him that the girl was actually Philocomasium's (made-up) twin sister. They need another ploy to get Pyrgopolynices to relinquish Philocomasim to her original lover, so they enlist the help of several other women to fool the soldier. Pyrgopolynices, now confident he is more interested in someone else, gracefully sends away Philocomasium while Pleusicles comes to pick her up in disguise. In the end, the soldier is beaten up for his pompousness, but concludes that he learned his lesson.

The prologue and Palaestrio's plan

Ordinarily, the opening of Plautus' plays take the form of a prologue. Though prologues usually take place before any other dialogue, *Mil.*'s prologue follows an opening scene, featuring the eponymous soldier Pyrgopolynices and his slave Artotrogus. The initial banter welcomes the audience with colorful images of conquest and glistening shields, not to mention the awful chore of being handsome, and once Pyrgopolynices and Artotrogus step offstage, Palaestrio enters to address the audience and prepare them for the show. Right away, the language of place and space assume importance.

Familiarity with the Plautine prologue is helpful for conceptualizing the ways in which dialogue and theater experience interact. The ostensible purpose of such a prologue is to orient the audience to the situations in which the play's characters have found themselves as the performance starts.¹⁰ Of course Plautus did not invent the prologue convention, nor was he the only dramatist to use it in person-

¹⁰ Duckworth 1994, 211.

alized ways. The “nature of the Plautine prologue” has been somewhat difficult to define, since each seems to provide a different type, and even amount, of explanation, revelation, and foreshadowing. Moreover, six of Plautus’ plays have no prologue at all. The personae who speak Plautus’ prologues can be more than just uninvolved announcers; they are characters and even gods, and the information they share ties in some way to the action that will take place later. In *Mil.*, Palaestrio’s first reference to place is “*in festivo loco* (in this festive place)”¹¹ as he situates the theater and everyone in it within its festival context. As the frame of reference shifts from that of the festival to that of the play’s action, it is Palaestrio’s spatial language that both links the two and points out a difference. He glides from “We’re all gathered in this festive spot” to “*hoc oppidum Ephesust* (this town’s called Ephesus).”¹² With the latter statement, he establishes the dramatic reality both in contrast and as a parallel to the holiday zone in which the audience, the actors, and the characters coexist, a place within a place. As he introduces the play, Palaestrio warns anyone not in the mood to pay attention: “*exsurgat foras* (those people can step outdoors).”¹³ Though the phrase literally means “outdoors” and refers to a spectator’s relocation from inside the theater to outside, that theater does not actually have any doors. When the doors return in line 155, the terminology refers to what we might think of as imaginary doors—the ones involved in the play’s action—but these are in fact the doors that physically exist. Through this strange equation and inversion of realities through identical diction, the experience of a spectator who leaves the theater both overlaps and trades places with that of a character who hears his neighbor coming. In between the two opposing door references is the first appearance of *house*. At this point in the prologue, though, the concept of the house has little resonance except for the fact that

¹¹ *Mil.* 83.

¹² *Mil.* 88, cf. *Menaechmi*’s “This is Epidamnus” (Plautus, *Menaechmi* 71-82.)

¹³ *Mil.* 81.

its naming marks a point at which Palaestrio situates himself firmly in the play's inner reality.

The prologue also includes Palaestrio's explanation of his master's plight and the way they schemed to overcome it:

*itaque ego paravi hic intus magnas machinas
qui amantis unum conclave, concubinae quod dedit
miles, quo nemo nisi eapse inferret pedem,
in eo conclavi ego perfodi parietem
qua commeatus clam esset hinc huc mulieri.*¹⁴

Here, *machinas* (machinations) could be read primarily as either a military or a building metaphor, but Hammond et al. argue that the most elaborate imagery in the play is “that of architecture and building as applied to the intellectual cleverness of Palaestrio” and that the latter interpretation is more fitting.¹⁵ That dexterity is the same ability that Plautus himself knowingly demonstrates; he creates the plot, the characters, and the event of performance through verbal cleverness. Palaestrio repeats later in the play, “*Quantas moveo machinas!* (What awesome machinations I’m setting into motion!),”¹⁶ this time with “I move” instead of “I prepared,” a choice that demonstrates more clearly the action and animation involved in this form of building. There is an emphasis on dynamic construction as opposed to static forms.

¹⁴ “And so inside here I got ready with this master plan.
So the room that the soldier gave the girl—it’s her own,
and nobody else can set foot there.
In that very room I bored through the wall
so she can go back and forth for her secret rendezvous.” *Mil.* 138-143.

¹⁵ Hammond et al. 1997, 48.

¹⁶ *Mil.* 813.

This passage also introduces a new term, *conclave* (room) which does not appear beyond these lines, as rooms become less important than the houses they comprise and especially the walls that separate them. The term *paries* (wall) here refers to the wall that Philocomasium crosses over via the secret passageway, the construction of which is summarized in this passage's last two lines. With the verb *perfodi* (I poked through), Plautus highlights the puncture of the wall more so than the construction of the passage, juxtaposing the concept of boundaries and their limits (and their possible fallibility) with the overarching motif of building. In *Mil.*, the slave manipulates other characters by manipulating the accessibility of a wall when he opens up a gap and a window where there was none before. In this case the in/out dichotomy is not as clear-cut as in some other situations, since the gap in the wall leads not from inside to outside but from one inside to a different inside. There is still secrecy—Plautus includes *clam* (in secret)—but *hinc huc* (here and there) is key. This passage hints at the here/there focus that both parallels and adjusts an in/out focus that underscores *Mostell*.

Roof reconnaissance

As Palaestrio finishes his prologue, the door creaks and Periplectomenus enters, flustered by the discovery of the slave Sceledrus spying on his home. His outcry includes *roof*, *house*, and *impluvium*, each twice. In the following conversation in which he explains to Palaestrio what the slave saw, he repeats the same terms even when that information seems unnecessary. Granted, Plautus is known for his repetition and hyperbole, and may have intended only comic effect in this dialogue. However, the terms *roof* and *impluvium* remain particularly noteworthy, because as compared to the *domus*, they were probably not represented onstage. In a Roman house, the *impluvium* was a square aperture in the ceiling of a central atrium. Surrounding walls sloped up toward this skylight, and precipitation that entered through it collected into a shallow basin which in turn

fed into a cistern.¹⁷ Since these structures are not present onstage, their imaginative construction depends on the audience. The standard Roman theater, stage, or set probably included no roof at all, and it is unlikely that one would have been installed for a specific play.¹⁸ Hammond et al., guessing at the play's staging, suggest that Periplectomenus' and Pyrgopolinices' houses were represented immediately adjacent to one another, partially based on the way "Sceledrus moves freely from one roof to the other while chasing a monkey."¹⁹ Since Sceledrus only reports that event in the past tense, however, it remains unlikely that actors scaled a prop roof onstage.

A variation on *tegulae* (roof) has already appeared in the initial exchange between Pyrgopolinices and Artotrogus, as the slave flatters his master: "*nempe illum dicis cum armis aureis,/ quous tu legiones difflavisti spiritu/ quasi ventus folia aut paniculum tectorium.*" *Tegulae*, literally "roof-tiles," is understood to indicate the whole singular roof. Ancient roofs were covered by these shingle-like pieces which overlapped at the edges.²⁰ The term's relationship to *tegere* is also relevant; though the verb can be translated simply as "cover," its shades of meaning (protect, shield, hide) imply the sort of closedness that covers or encapsulates something dangerous or stealthy.

The *impluvium* is a uniquely Roman architectural feature. Leach points to the term's use in *Mil.* as "the most notable example" of Plautus' specific use of Roman domestic structure, though it is also mentioned in *Amphitruo* in addition to a mention of *atria*, also Roman, in the same work.²¹ Hammond et. al., however, do not see

¹⁷ See appendix, Figs. E and F.

¹⁸ Beare 1950, 176.

¹⁹ Hammond et al. 1997, 18. See appendix, Fig. G.

²⁰ See appendix, Fig. H.

²¹ Plautus, *Amphitruo* 1108; 518. Leach 1969, 324.

originality in Plautus' use of the *impluvium*, noting that "since Greek houses were built around a courtyard or *aule*, Plautus presumably substituted the Roman *impluvium* for the *aule* of his original."²² Leach also concedes that "in many cases the rooms of houses are designated by terms that might refer either to the Roman or to the Greek style," indicating that *impluvium* could represent something no different than what would have appeared in a Greek house.²³ However, Plautus has shown no aversion from Greek architectural labels, so it is reasonable to conclude that this house and this skylight, elements of the house with both dramatic and symbolic force, are Roman and not neutral. The audience actively participates in the construction of the house, and does so in a distinctly Roman way; the language prompts a continued engagement with the relationship between Romanness and Greekness, or even simply otherness.

The roof and *impluvium* both reappear in several characters' dialogue as the play progresses. Sceledrus tells Palaestrio:

*nisi quidem ego hodie ambulavi dormiens in tegulis,
certo edepol scio me vidisse hic proxumae vicinia
Philocomasium erilem amicam sibi malam rem quarere.*²⁴

and repeats again, "*simiam hodie sum sectatus nostram in horum tegulis*" and "*forte fortuna per impluvium huc despexi in proximum.*"²⁵ Periplectomenus adds a twist later as he chastises

²² Hammond et al. 1997, 91.

²³ Leach 1969, 324.

²⁴ "Seriously, unless I was asleep while I was up there on the roof, I know for sure that I saw the master's girlfriend Philocomasium right there, in the neighbors' house, asking for trouble." *Mil.* 272-4.

²⁵ "Today I chased a monkey up on our roof"; "I happened to glimpse down through the skylight into the neighbor's house"; "Ibid. 284; 287.

Sceledrus not just for spying but also for ruining his property: “*meas confregisti imbricis et tegulas.*”²⁶ *Imbrex*, a curved tile that covered the juncture between the turned-up edges of two overlapping tiles, most likely comes from *imber* (rainstorm), as it protected the roof’s tiled joints from rainfall;²⁷ such a detail is reminiscent of the play’s initial mention of the figurative roof blown off by a storm.

The language of roofs and skylights is obviously important to the plot, since if it were not for the slave’s vantage point, the lovers could carry on unseen and the fundamental conflict would not exist. These particular terms, however, are also closely linked with thematic elements of power and knowledge. For the moment the spying slave has the power, since it is he who manipulates the building to gain knowledge. In *Mil.*, Plautus’ diction is closely tied to the ideas of (and opposition between) seeing and not seeing. When Periplectomenus asks about the plan, Palaestrio begins, “*Ut eum, qui se hic vidit, verbis vincat ne is se viderit.*”²⁸ To counter what was spied from the roof, they must make the seen unseen, and do so with wit and words—a sentiment that echoes what Palaestrio promised near the end of his prologue: “*ei nos facitis fabricis et doctis dolis/ glaucumam ob oculos obiciemus eumque ita/ faciemus ut quod viderit non viderit.*”²⁹ The same idea appears again in 199: “*id visum ut ne visum siet;*”³⁰ and again, in 226-7: “*cedo calidum consilium*

²⁶ “Since you busted my tiles and roof” *Mil.* 504

²⁷ Hammond et al. 1997, 123. See appendix, Fig. G.

²⁸ “We’ve gotta win with words, and make it so that what he saw, he didn’t really see.” Ibid. 187.

²⁹ “With clever crafts and witty wiles, we’ll blur his vision so the things that were seen become unseen.” Ibid. 147-149.

³⁰ “So the seen might be unseen”

cito, / quae hic sunt visa ut visa ne sint, facta ut facta ne sient."³¹ Being seen is the opposite of being concealed, and it is the houses, walls, and eventually secret passageways that allow that concealment, while other architectural features challenge it. Periplectomenus' house acts as a physically bounded space for secrecy. But architectural forms do not only facilitate concealment, but also allow penetration, as in a house's doors or a particular *impluvium*; architecture thus is shown to underlie both sides of the thematic opposition. The *impluvium* especially, featured only here in Plautus' work, provides an accessible model of boundedness that thoroughly mirrors the theater experience. The skylight is not only an aperture but also a frame; a gap that allows a secret peek but also four solid sides that dictate where that possibility for vision ends.

Here, Palaestrio follows a problem-solving pattern seen elsewhere in Plautus; a conflict sparked by a certain structure must be smoothed out by means of another structure. What was seen from the roof is unseen in two ways: by using the constructed passageway that allows Philocomasium to go back and forth, now as both herself and her sister, and by articulating the claim that she is in fact secure at home. Both plays' cover-ups involve building, but both also draw on the verbal play that Palaestrio describes, as in "*verbis vincat*" or "*facetis fabricis*." The latter phrase in particular spans the overlap successfully, since it can be understood as "witty plans," but draws on the vocabulary of craftsmanship and construction.

The ultimate goal of these machinations remains the same: "*quae hic sunt visa ut visa ne sint, facta ut facta ne sient.*"³² No line could more aptly summarize the process that takes place at a perform-

³¹ "Quick, out with the plan while it's hot—let's make what was seen unseen, and what was done undone."

³² "For things that were seen to be unseen, and things that were done undone."

ance's conclusion. In the theater, things that have been done are made undone as the alternate reality space, no longer bounded by the drama's location and time, dissolves into and is absorbed by the audience's previous and future reality. A character orders the audience to applaud, and once they leave, the space where they sat is removed. In this case, Palaestrio is Plautus' onstage surrogate. As he enacts the stock role of the clever slave by orchestrating others' doings in an effort to fool someone, he mirrors Plautus' craft. This correlates with other textual references to "putting on a show" or "playing a role," but here is more specifically related to the process of envisioning and its inextricability, in *Mil.* at least, from the framework of space and structure.

Creaking fingers and a pounding heart

While Palaestrio mulls over his plans, Periplectomenus steps aside to describe the slave in an extended comparison that draws on several forms of architectural terminology and brings them together in one powerful image. Since the old man temporarily removes himself from the action, he speaks more directly to the audience. His imperatives could be interpreted as his thinking aloud to himself, but given Plautus' tendencies, it is more likely that Periplectomenus means to situate himself alongside the audience in his observation of Palaestrio. This setup adds force to his comparisons since it means they are founded on the theatrical self-awareness of both their in-character speaker and their original author. Periplectomenus observes:

*pectus digitis pultat, cor credo evocaturus foras;
ecce advortit: nixus laevo in femine habet laevum manum,
dextera digitis rationem computat, feriens femur
dexterum. ita vehementer icit: quod agat aegre suppetit.
concrepuit digitis: laborat, crebro commutat status.
eccere autem capite nutat: non placet quod repperit.*

*quidquid est, incoctum non expromet, bene coctum dabit.
 ecce autem aedificat: columnan mento suffigit suo.
 apage, non placet profecto mihi illaec aedificatio;
 nam os columnatum poetae esse indaudiui barbaro,
 quoi bini custodes semper totis horis occubant.
 eugae! euscheme hercle astitit et dulice et comoedice;
 numquam hodie quiescet prius quam id quod petit perfecerit.*³³

Hammond et al. translate *pultat* as “pounds” or “beats,” and notes that Plautus regularly uses the same verb for door-knocking.³⁴ In *Mil.*, this use appears three times.³⁵ When Plautus uses this verb early in the play in Periplectomenus’ comparison, he cannot intend to recall any door-knocking that has already taken place onstage, since those uses do not appear until the play’s final 200 lines. For example, in line 1249 when Milphippida tells Acroteleutium that the doors are closed, the latter threatens to break them,³⁶ and later Pleusicles uses the verb identical to Periplectomenus’ in “*sed fores pultabo* (I’ll pound on the doors).”³⁷ However, even at its initial use in

³³ “He’s pounding his chest with his fingers... maybe he’s going to call his heart outside./ Look, he’s turning: now he’s holding himself up, his left hand on his left leg./ and now he’s counting something on the other hand. Look how hard he hits his leg now!/ He cracks his knuckles: he’s struggling, he keeps shifting his stance./ Now look how he’s shaking his head—he doesn’t seem pleased with what he’s found./ Whatever the plan is, it won’t come out uncooked./ Check it out, he’s building something: he tops a column with his head./ Quit that, I don’t like that building one bit./ Word on the street is, a certain barbarian stands that same way, a guy/ who has two guards keeping tabs on him all the time./ Well done! Wow, he stands there so perfectly, perfect for a slave, perfect for a comedy/ He won’t relax today before he finishes this whole thing just right.” *Mil.* 202-214.

³⁴ Hammond et al. 1997, 95.

³⁵ *Mil.* 1254; 1297; 1298.

³⁶ “*Ecfringam.*” *Mil.* 1249

³⁷ *Mil.* 1296.

Periplectomenus' description, an audience familiar with Plautus' work (or even with other ancient comedy) would associate the verb *pultare* with doors, whether as setpieces onstage, exit and entrance markers, or thematic symbols. If there is still doubt as to the verb's association with architecture, "*I think he's calling his heart outdoors*" dispels it, and moreover, the only previous use of *foras* as "outside" (as opposed to *foris concrepuit*, "the doors are cracking" as in line 154) was in the prologue and referred to the area outside the entire theater.

The ubiquitous creaking doors appear in this passage as well with "*concrepuit digitis* (he cracks his knuckles)."³⁸ *Concrepuit*, like *pultat*, is so linked in Plautus with doors that though they are not mentioned here, as they were above, the reference is clear. Here, Plautus continues to layer architectural symbolism with self-referentiality. The comparison does not merely liken something to something else within the play, but crosses over to the audience's perspective by referring to something that is part of the theater building, the staging equipment, the text and dramatic convention, and the sensory experience of performance all at once. Which doors are real, and what happens when we go through them? Here Palaestrio's fingers creak in the same way that doors of stage houses are said to creak. Duckworth lists several other examples of Plautus' punning on the convention,³⁹ such as the retort in *Pseudolus*: "*CA. Ostium lenonis crepuit. PS. Crura mavellem modo*,"⁴⁰ and another in *Poenulus*: "*COLL. fores hae fecerunt magnum flagitium modo./ ADV. quid id est flagiti? COLL. crepuerunt clare*."⁴¹ Interestingly, in the former, it is a

³⁸ *Mil.* 206.

³⁹ Duckworth 1952, 117. Others listed are *Poenulus* 609 and *Pseudolus* 952.

⁴⁰ "CA. The pimp's door cracked. PS. I wish his legs cracked instead." *Pseudolus* 130-131.

⁴¹ "CO. These doors did something pretty rude just now. AD. They did what? CO. They grumbled out loud!" Plautus, *Poenulus* 609.

character who (hypothetically) behaves like a door, whereas in the latter, the door behaves like a person. Are characters no more real than make-believe doors, or just as real as tangible doors? These questions and more are distilled in Plautus' precise diction. Though this incorporation of a stage convention into the play's comedy can be seen throughout Plautus' corpus, it is also an important component of *Mil.*'s broad focus on built form and its often-transcendental qualities. In addition, the use of *concrepere* (to crack) in Periplectomenus' description is not quite a pun, but rather an inconspicuous part of the equation of man to structure made through familiar vocabulary.

With "*ecce autem aedificat* (look, he's building)," Periplectomenus associates Palaestrio not only with built structures, as he has done so far, but also with the builder of those same structures; here he is both project and architect. He continues with another creative metaphor: "*columnam mentem suffigit suo* (he tops a column with his head)." The column is an interesting addition because it has no obvious link to anything else in the text, since columns do not play a role in the action as houses or walls do. However, in the wooden *phylakes* stages that evolved into those that Plautus' companies performed on, the bottom-most support beams were sometimes replaced with columns, so it is possible that Plautus' venues did have Greek-influenced columns visible to the audience and that a mention of the term may have drawn their attention there.⁴² Plautus repeats *aedificatio* (building) and *columnatum* (column) to reinforce the metaphor, and continues; the "building" does not please Periplectomenus, as he recognizes that a certain "barbarian poet" once assumed a similar stance. There are several possible interpretations of this reference. One, which would explain the presence of the column as an outlier compared to the play's other building terms and is generally accepted, is that the *barbarus* (barbarian) is the poet Nae-

⁴² Bieber 1961, 167. See appendix, Fig. I.

vius, who was imprisoned in 206 B.C.E. It is possible that Naevius was chained to a column as part of his punishment and that an audience would have made this connection.⁴³ In this case, the architectural language would point to an external reality in reference to a current political event. One could also say the poet is Plautus, suggesting that this use of *barbarus* falls in line with its other appearances as a comically self-deprecating term for a Roman, and specifically, himself. Plautus often plays with perspective through such vocabulary, both flipping and inverting points of view, as in the use of *pergraecari* (to act like a Greek) in *Mostell*. Thus it is difficult to pin down exactly whose perspective *barbarus* speaks to, but it may not even be necessary, as these two interpretations are not mutually exclusive and the language has even more force if it evokes both meanings at once.

If “barbarian” is a reorienting term for Romans, then the Greek interjection *eugae* (hey!) and the following adverbs remind the audience that Greekness must also be kept in mind; *euscheme* (well-built), *dulice* (like a slave), and *comoedice* (like in a comedy) all come from Greek (*euschemos*, *doulikos*, *komoidikos*) but have Latin adverbial endings. While these words may seem to be little more than evidence that Plautus transposed the passage directly from Greek text with little attempt to cover his tracks, there are other possibilities. First of all, *euscheme*’s root, *scheme*, relates closely to concepts of structure as well as those of show, pretence, and appearance, and if we translate “gracefully, handsomely,” as Hammond et al. do, we miss some subtlety of meaning.⁴⁴ The second and third adverbs, in fitting with Periplectomenus’ temporary status as observer instead of participant, have a distinctly metatheatrical aspect. When this character says that Palaestrio is standing or behaving in a slave-like manner, he does not mean a manner in which a “real” ancient Ro-

⁴³ Hammond et al. 1997, 96.

⁴⁴ Hammond et al. 1997, 97.

man slave would be understood to act, but the manner in which Plautus' (and other playwrights') stock slave characters act. Though the final line of the passage quoted above contains no specifically architectural terminology, the verb *perfecerit* (he completed) does have a sense of making, creating, and polishing off that retains the connections already made with other language; Palaestrio is struggling not just to think about a plan, but to construct one. By line 217, Periplectomenus has stepped back into a conversation with Palaestrio and away from his momentary association with the audience: "*ibi ego dico. an me ita tu nescis te adloqui? heus Palaestrio.*"⁴⁵

On board with the architect

Fewer than 100 lines later is an incredibly rich passage that highlights the functions of architectural language particular and important to *Mil*. It is Acroteleutium, an accomplice of Palaestrio enlisted to fool the soldier into relinquishing Philocomasium, who voices this incarnation of a ship metaphor:

*nam, mi patrone, hoc cogitato, ubi probus est architectus,
bene lineatam si semel carinam conlocavit,
facile esse navem facere, ubi fundata, et bene statuast,
adsunt fabri architectique ad eam navem haud inperiti.
si non nos materiarius remoratur, quod opust qui det
(novi indolem nostri ingeni), cito erit parata navis.*⁴⁶

⁴⁵ "I'm talking to you. Hey, you listening to me? Hey, Palaestrio."

⁴⁶ "You know, boss, if your architect is good, and makes his creations well-keeled, it's easy to build the ship, if it's got a foundation, and it stands well. We have architects and builders who are up to the task. So if our materials don't take forever to get here, I know how smart we are, soon the ship'll be good to go." Ibid. 915-921.

There is a ship reference in *Mostell.*, but it does not include much detail and so its complexity or relevance may be questionable at first. But the description afforded the ship in *Mil.* demonstrates definitively the ways in which the structure and specifically its built-ness embody several of the play's internal and external discourses. Hammond et al. assign to individual segments of the metaphor their own analogues in the plot:

Ac. refers to the instructions given to her as the keel, the general intrigue as the ship, all the plotters as carpenters and draftsmen ... and finally Py. as the supplier (himself) for the intrigue.⁴⁷

The note grants that many editors consider the repetition of the keel vocabulary a result of manuscript errors,⁴⁸ but nonetheless, even if it were not repeated, the term refers to a part of the ship that demands careful construction. The term *materiarius* is a telling component of this metaphor. The adjective, used here substantively, "seems to have been used chiefly for materials of wood, i.e., lumber," and emphasizes the individual pieces that will eventually be assembled into the ship.⁴⁹ Similarly in *Mostell.*, *ratis* (boat or raft, with emphasis on comprising planks of wood) appears when *navis* (ship) alone would suffice; the parts of the whole are present and important in both examples, since they identify the ship as a built object comparable as such to a house or wall. *Materiarius* is echoed later in the text by Pyrgopolynices as he tells Palestrio how he ever so skillfully got Philocomasium to leave: "*ut multa verba feci, ut lenta materies fuit!*"⁵⁰ For once the language of building is in Pyr-

⁴⁷ Hammond et al. 1997, 158-159.

⁴⁸ *Mil.* 158.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ "I put together a message for her, as if she were a stubborn piece of wood."
Mil. 1203.

gopolinices' use—since the soldier, as the object of the play's major tricks, holds little real control or knowledge, he does not usually get to play architect. But here, he uses what is “possibly (but not necessarily) a simile from sawing tough (clinging) wood.”⁵¹ In any case, *materies* recalls the *materiarius* of the ship passage which does have clear ties to building. In that first passage, vocabulary such as *conlocavit*, *facere*, *fundata*, and *constituast* (he put together; to make; having a foundation; holding together) further emphasize not just the ship's deployment but its construction. Again the ship is used to represent scheming, planning, manipulating, and creating action.

Plautus also links the symbolic ship to a ship that is part of the plot. In *Mil.* this link is a strong unifying force between the play's first half and its second half and conclusion, the latter of which otherwise weakens slightly in terms of the prominence of building language. Once Pyrgopolynices has been convinced to relinquish Philocomasium, the others must organize a way for her lover to retrieve her. Palaestrio tells the soldier the whereabouts of the girls' fabricated family: “*cubare in navi lippam atque oculis turgidis/ nauclerus dixit, qui illas advexit, mihi*,”⁵² and soon, when it is ready: “*ut iubeat ferri in navim si quid imponi velit./ nisi eat, te soluturum esse navim: ventum operam dare*.”⁵³ The literal ship here is not as closely juxtaposed with its figurative counterpart as it was in *Mostell.*, but it does comprise a satisfying conclusion to the plot's major conflict.

An important sign that Plautus' ship should be interpreted specifically as a built structure is *architectus*, a term whose reach extends

⁵¹ Hammond et al. 1997, 186.

⁵² “They're in bed on the ship, eyes all swollen and teary. That's what the captain who brought them here told me.” *Mil.* 1108-1109.

⁵³ “Make sure anything she wants to bring is put on the ship. Say that if she doesn't show up, you're going to set sail anyway—the winds are just right.” *Mil.* 1187-1188.

far beyond this passage. In *Mostell.*, a symbolic *faber* (builder) appears in Philolaches' comparison of men to buildings, and that *faber* reflects several layers of meaning by labeling both character and playwright. However, in that play it is never applied to those personas face to face. In *Mil.* on the other hand Palaestrio is openly identified as the *architectus*. Just prior to *Mil.*'s ship reference, Periplectomenus introduces Palaestrio to Acroteleutium with this label: "Ac: *quis hic, amabo, est/ qui tam pro nota nominat me? Pe: hic noster architectust./ Ac: salve, architecte. Pa: salva sis...*"⁵⁴ These examples demonstrate that the shipbuilding imagery does indeed fit into the same category as that of house-building, since the term architect is used in both its generic sense, most immediately applicable to buildings, and in the metaphor involving the ship. Within 400 lines of the play's conclusion, the term *architectus* appears again alongside further elaboration of building imagery:

MI. quid agis, noster architecte? PA. egone architectus? vah!

MI. quid est?

PA. quia enim non sum dignus prae te palum ut figam in parietem.

*AC. heia vero! PA. nimis facete nimisque facunde mala'st. ut lepide deruncinavit militem!*⁵⁵

So far, nobody has introduced Palaestrio to Milphippida as the architect, so her use of this label is independent from Acroteleutium's. Finally, to describe the successful cheating of the soldier, Plautus uses *deruncinavit*—literally "planed off," as in a carpenter's smoothing a piece of wood—which comes from the Greek word *rhukane*,

⁵⁴ "AC. Who is it? Who said my name? PE. This is our architect. AC. Oh, hello architect. PE. Hello to you too." Ibid. 901-902.

⁵⁵ "MI. What are you up to, architect? PE. Me? The architect? No way. MI. What do you mean?

PA. Compared to you, I'm not even worthy of sticking a peg into a wall.

MI. Oh come on. PA. You're just brimming with badness. Plus, you planed off the soldier so nicely!" *Mil.* 1139-1141.

the name for a craftsman's plane. The most important contribution of this passage is Palaestrio's response. Not only does he use architectural language in yet another creative metaphor, but also with "*palum ut figam in parietem* (sticking a peg into a wall)" he refers figuratively to the most overarching concepts of the theater and performance and literally (and comically) to the secret building project within the text. He claims to be unworthy of driving a peg through a wall, but he already has punctured the *paries*, the same term for which is repeated and emphasized throughout the play. During the same conversation with the two women and Pleusicles, the young man chimes in with one of countless *domus* references and a new architectural twist in an easily overlooked line: "*domi esse ad eam rem video silvai satis:/ mulieres tres, quartus tute's quintus ego, sextus senex.*"⁵⁶ An equivalent of the Greek *hule*, Hammond et al. suggest translating *silvai* with "material."⁵⁷ This image certainly aligns with others considered so far, as the trickery is envisioned as a building, and its construction as reliant on building materials. Since Pleusicles tallies his allies, he makes clear that the characters are his *silvae*, iterating once more (as did Periplectomenus in his observation of Palaestrio) that Plautus' onstage personalities are both builder and built. The continued inclusion of the architect as opposed to a focus only on built forms themselves is reflective of Plautus' agency in the dramatic process and his consciousness thereof.

The magic of *Miles*

The prominence of architectural dialogue in *Mil.* is more notable than other plays, including *Mostell.*, because here, buildings and homes are not as central to the plot. In many ways, *Mil.* expands upon ideas that *Mostell.* only suggests. For example, the opposition

⁵⁶ *Mil.* 1154-1155.

⁵⁷ Hammond et al. 1997, 183.

between inside/outside and here/there is observable in *Mostell.*, as is the notion of boundaries' accessibility or fallibility. But in *Mil.*, the concept of the wall is not only associated with but inseparable from the concept of crossing it. Once Philocomasium has been spied and Palaestrio produces his cover-up, Plautus repeats the idea of crossing (*trans parietem*, *transfugere*, et cetera) and of back-and-forth motion (*hinc huc*) while maintaining the house as a basis for containment, whether of safety or of lies. Moreover, the premise of Philocomasium's scheduled crossings is that she plays two roles—both of herself and an imaginary twin sister. On one side of the wall, she is herself, and on the other, she is (or pretends to be) someone else. Tricks or jokes involving twins are not uncommon in Plautus or in comedy, but here the playwright emphasizes the ideas of transformation, duplication, and imitation through crossing a physical boundary, and specifically crossing it through a carefully carved gap; his play within a play wholly depends on the wall within a wall.

In *Mil.*, there is also a focus on concepts of seeing and the eyes that depend on the iteration of architecture and space. The difference in *Mil.* as compared to *Mostell.* is the addition of a balancing focus on *unseeing* and also on *double vision*. In *Mil.*, the slave sees Philocomasium through the skylight, then is convinced he did not see her, and later sees her as herself and as her twin within different houses. Plautus leaves the audience thinking about what they saw, what they did not see, and where the two may overlap. He also specifically links this concept within the play to its analogue on a metatheatrical level, as when Periplectomenus complains, “*mi equidem iam arbitri vicini sunt meae quit fiat domi.*”⁵⁸ The word *arbitri* originally applied to any kind of witness, but then came to mean specifically “spectators.” Hammond et. al. also note that *mi* acts as an ethical dative rather than a dative of reference, to be translated not as “my neighbors” but “as for me,” a seemingly irrelevant difference in

⁵⁸ As cited and translated in footnote 111: “So now I guess all the neighbors get to watch the show that goes on in my house.” *Mil.* 158.

understanding.⁵⁹ It is possible that the distinction means to highlight the idea that all those nearby, i.e. *Mil.*'s own spectators who are not part of the action and cannot be Periplectomenus' own neighbors, are able to see the spectacle taking place in his home. This demonstrates how the action surrounding the *impluvium* does in fact mirror the theater on a macroscopic level—its hidden information, its walls, et cetera. But here Plautus completely collapses the two, since it is through the *impluvium*, an imaginary aperture in an imaginary onstage roof, that the play's audience gets a peek. Plautus' characters often refer to spectators, plays, and actors, but this example demonstrates further complexity that this language can take on when intertwined with building vocabulary.

The concept of a temporary and bounded cross section of time and space is reminiscent of the ancient *templum* (a delineated space for auguries, among other definitions)— a very different notion than the modern conception of “temple” as a building designated for prayer and worship. The word *templum* appears in *Mil.* only once, but interestingly, it is alongside a mention of the altar which is also present in *Mostell.* As Philocomasium emerges from Periplectomenus' house in the guise of her twin sister, she says:

*inde ignem in aram, ut Ephesia Dianae laeta laudes
gratistique agam eique et Arabico fumificem odore amoene,
quom me in locis Neptuniis templis turbulentis
servavit, saevis fluctibus ubi sum adflictata multum.*⁶⁰

She does not seem to refer to the onstage altar, though, instead indicating a sacrifice she was planning inside the house, however the consistency of her statements is not of utmost relevance as the

⁵⁹ Hammond et al. 1997, 91.

⁶⁰ “Light the fire on the altar, to joyfully give praise and thanks to Diana, and burn sweet smelling incense, for she who saved me in the whirling sea, when I was tossed and turned by the bitter waves.” *Mil.* 411-414.

whole point of what she says is to dupe Sceledrus. Regardless, there is an altar on the stage, and a character uses the word *ara* (altar). In the words of Hammond et. al:

A *templum* was a defined open space on the earth set apart for taking the auguries or building a shrine or *aedes*; it might also be an area of the heavens demarked as one in which to look for an omen, and hence all the heavens might be called the *templa* of Jupiter; by analogy, the ocean became the *templa* of Neptune.⁶¹

This definition erases any traces of the *templum*'s original meaning in the Roman mind, indicating it could be replaced with "sea" or "ocean" or "waves" with no semantic loss. Still, the mention of the *templum* is at least a signal to modern scholars, prompting a consideration of the ways in which ancient Romans may have conceptualized certain space- and time-reliant practices.

Part of the magic of *Miles Gloriosus* is that it develops these vast and abstract ideas through the most microscopic of physical and verbal elements within the text. As in *Mostell.*, there are houses, walls, doors, and ships, but there are also cracking knuckles, heads perched like columns, and miniature windows framed by tessellated roof tiles. There is a voiced focus on the individual responsible for the assembly of all such structures, and a rich enough variety of structures to preclude verbal or thematic monotony. There is still structural violence, which proved a powerful force in *Mostell.* There is confusion as to which house contains whom, and an assault on privacy that takes place from the roof, for example. But perhaps the strongest violence in *Mil.* is actually a liberating violence, a violence that vividly reflects the power of theater and performance—the transgression of a boundary, the penetration of an enclosed space, and the mystical, even sorcerous, duplication and imitation of truth.

⁶¹ Hammond et al. 1997, 114-115.

Comedy is born from a recognition of the absurdity and incomprehensibility of the entire undertaking. This farcical destruction leads to accessibility and possibility, and it is this multilayered possibility that invites Plautus' audiences, ancient and contemporary, into his trance.

IV: Context and Conclusion

In his milestone text *Roman Laughter*, Erich Segal defends Plautus' "Roman artistry" against scholars whose strong opinions still cling to the playwright's reputation.⁶² Citing the playwright's undeniable popularity and resilience to justify his efforts, Segal's study situates Plautine theater firmly in its Roman context, and specifically in its festival context. This scholar establishes a basis for considering Roman comedy as an experience and not as poems in a vacuum, and shows how Plautus' scripts reflect the Saturnalian overthrow that ancient festivals embodied. He writes, "The primary characteristic of 'holiday' is its distinct separation from 'every day,'" emphasizing the anything-goes spirit echoed in the often topsy-turvy content of Plautus' work. Segal demonstrates that Plautus made Romans laugh precisely by creating the kind of comedy where this complete blurring and flip-flopping of reality's boundaries thrived. If Plautus was so successful because of his comedy's engagement with the festival mindset, then it is the specific language comprising the comedy that provides that engagement, and the language of architecture is a powerful example.

⁶² E.g. the following gem from Gilbert Norwood: "When the plays are strongly suffused by Plautus' own personality and interests, they are mostly deplorable ... The result is that we find only one rational principle for discussing his work. The genuinely Greek passages should be distinguished from the far larger bulk where the original has been smothered by barbarous clownery, intolerable verbosity, and an almost complete indifference to dramatic structure." (Segal, Erich. 1968. *Roman Laughter; The Comedy of Plautus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Segal's work underscores my argument in several ways. For one, the idea that the festival context heavily influenced the plays' effect assumes that the audiences were in fact actively engaged with thinking about where they were in space and time. To conceptualize an isolated festival time and place is to recognize that it did not exist yesterday, it will not exist tomorrow, and when the theater is gone it takes with it that spliced section of existence. Plautus shifts, subverts, and obeys such distinctions at many levels in his work. Segal also argues that Plautus purposely represents the chaotic festival spirit in his work, and was not afraid of a painterly result in which he and his work's fabrication were visible; his inclusion of real and metaphorical architects in *Mostell.* and *Mil.* as surrogates for himself is an aspect of this technique.

In many ways, Niall Slater follows in Segal's footsteps by reading Plautus as performance and not just literature, but he distances himself from Segal's reliance on the holiday concept, arguing that a play in itself is not a festival or a ritual but "an autonomous artistic creation of a finite number of artists for a specific theatrical occasion."⁶³ But what Slater adds is an application of performance criticism to several of Plautus' plays, and a demonstration of why this sort of criticism is appropriate:

It begins with the simple proposition that a play is not a text but rather a total artistic event which exists only in a theatre during a performance. The actors and the audience are as much participants in the creation of this artistic event as the author's text.⁶⁴

⁶³ Slater, Niall W. 1985. *Plautus in Performance: the theatre of the mind*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 4.

What he goes on to show, however, is that it is the specifics of that text that reach out to link the playwright, performers, and spectators in a shared conversation. Another of Slater's introductory points supports my argument in an oblique way, as he hints at the impact that a certain setting or conventional background might have on a play's interpretation:

Plays conceived within widely differing conventions and play-houses ... are as generically different as comedy and tragedy and must be read differently—even if we cannot fully recover the precise look of one type.⁶⁵

This is part of a footnote to Slater's regret that we do not have the historical resources to fully reconstruct what Plautus' stage or props looked like. It becomes even more important to consider how we interpret Plautus with respect to what we can reconstruct, namely the theater's constructed and transitory nature and its role in the ancient festival. Slater discusses six plays, which he selects as those in which theatrical self-consciousness is most important to their impact. He does not include *Mostell.* or *Mil.*—perhaps these works' self-consciousness is embedded more deeply in the language of the text. In his comparison of Plautus' work to Greek comedy, Slater says that "Where Menander sought to imitate life, Plautus seeks to have fun with the very idea of imitation," and refers to his comedy as "a theatrical reconceptualization."⁶⁶ My argument demonstrates ways in which Plautus accomplishes both these goals as part of his "celebration of the power of the imagination."⁶⁷

Slater echoes Segal's acknowledgement of Plautus' overwhelming success among ancient audiences, as does Timothy Moore, whose

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Slater 1985, 166-167.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 177.

1998 book deals with the relationship among playwright, performer, and audience and specifically seeks to point out the quest for the audience's favor. He includes a full chapter on the relationship between Greece and Rome, highlighting ways in which the audiences' consideration of changes in place and time influenced how they experienced the plays. However, Moore dwells on direct addresses to the audience and direct references to spectacle, theater, or festival, which help to flesh out my argument but are not at its core. It must be emphasized that Plautus manipulates and draws attention to the relationship between dramatic creator, purveyor, and consumer in both straightforward and subtle ways. As these studies of Plautus' theater have evolved, other scholars have begun to pick up on the elements of space, structure, and building that often infuse his work and to explore how those elements function; at least three of these important studies focus on *Mostell.* Leach's 1969 work introduces the potential of a study of architectural language but it is not until Milnor's 2002 study that a stronger link is forged between structure and behavior and the words that comprise both. Katerina Philippides contributes to the conversation by arguing for a symmetrical and mirror-like way of reading (or watching) *Mostell.* and understanding its symbolism. Her work deals with the importance of the house, but applies it more to the specifics of staging and the symbolism of morals than to the dynamics of figurative language or the significance of built structure in general.

Though Traill looks not at Plautus but Menander, her 2001 discussion of structural language and symbolism also points to new directions in which scholarship of ancient comedy may be evolving. The extension of these questions to *Miles Gloriosus* is both relevant and timely. A paired study of *Mostell.* and *Mil.* demonstrates some of the recurring and different ways in which a certain vocabulary operates, but it now becomes pertinent to consider other works in search of similar phenomena. Are the features discussed here particular to certain Plautine plays, or a component of all of them? Can they be

further traced in Plautus' predecessors or successors? Is there evidence elsewhere for or against their importance? An additional avenue to consider is this study's relevance to modern performance or performance in general. Gay McAuley's *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* is a compendium of proof that intersections among text, theater building, and the performance act continue to puzzle and to fascinate contemporary scholars. In a chapter entitled "Space in the Written Text" she writes, "As I see it... the great strength of the Western theatre tradition is precisely the fact that it is posited on creative interaction between the written and the embodied present of performance."⁶⁸ Her assessment suggests that Plautus' work and its idiosyncracies are truly on to something, and on to something powerful, that continues to evolve throughout entire millennia of literary and artistic tradition. In the afterword, as McAuley reflects on her judgment, she specifies that it is "the interface between past and present, the residual and the emergent" that is born from the combination of the written and enacted form and that comes to inhabit the soul of Western theater.⁶⁹ The combined transition between and juxtaposition of such residual and emergent realities seems to be exactly what Plautus stumbles upon and then highlights with his own literary brilliance. The residual vs. emergent dialectic mirrors so many here/there, in/out, seen/unseen, knowing/not knowing relationships, and also seems particularly suited to comedy as it points to differences between fiction and actuality that, at their realization, inspire laughter.

McAuley's work also points to the theater building as an important component of drama, confirming the proposition that the structure in which Plautus' comedy was performed and viewed resonates with the specific items uttered and seen there:

⁶⁸ McAuley 1999, 232.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 280.

The theatre building frames what goes on inside it, ensuring that its status as performance (i.e., not real) is signaled but ensuring, too, that it comes under the control of civic authorities (a tacit acknowledgement that the “not real” has the power to contaminate or disturb the “real”). In the same way the stage frames everything placed within its confines, transforming every object into a sign and inciting all who witness what is there to attribute meaning to it.⁷⁰

McAuley also picks up on a relevant etymological curiosity: “The playwright... is not conceptualized primarily as a writer but as a “wright,” that is, a builder or maker of plays.”⁷¹ Or, in other words, *hic noster architectus*. Here’s our architect. The application of all such hypotheses to works both within and outside Plautus’ is part of the next step toward a fuller understanding of the strange, elusive, and enchanting practice of ancient Roman comedy, and the flat-footed clown from Umbria who made it his own.

Appendix of Images

Editor’s note: Due to copyright laws, we are unable to print these images. They are, however, available in a PDF file on our website, www.haverford.edu/bodytext. You will need to login with a Haverford user name and password in order to access the file. We apologize for the inconvenience.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 279.

⁷¹ Ibid. 220.

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BEUYS AND CHARDIN:

On Immortality and Inheritance

Kimberly L. Wegel '12

Man and plant are white and black, and the quadrupeds, birds, fish, insects, and amphibians correspond to the intermediate colours which soften the striking contrast. Without these colours -- without the workings of animals, all different from one another, which I refer to with this word -- man, that arrogant animal, made of clay like the others, would have thought he was God on earth and would have worshipped only himself. — La Mettrie.¹

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. — Genesis 2:7.

In 1965, a honey-and-gold-leaf-covered Joseph Beuys cradled a dead hare like a child in a mother's arms and, if we are to take the title of his performative act literally, taught his audience members "how to explain pictures to a dead hare" (Al-Aswad 1, 3).² Twenty years after the Second World War, Beuys, himself a former soldier in the German army, demonstrated the interwovenness of life and death, and the persistent inextricability of suffering from daily emotional turmoil of postwar life. Beuys tenderly touched the hare's foot to the surface of each painting in his gallery, finally settling himself into a chair where he proceeded to explain them to the hare, one by one,

¹ From La Mettrie's *Man as Plant*, as quoted by Sarah R. Cohen in "Chardin's Fur: Painting, Materialism, and the Question of Animal Soul," 51. (See Works Cited.)

² All citations from Al-Aswad denote paragraph numbers.

"because I do not like to explain them to people," he claimed (Kuspit 4).³

A full comprehension of Beuys' work might begin with a nod to Albrecht Dürer's *A Young Hare* (Fig. 1) dating from the turn of the sixteenth century. But if Dürer's portraitesque treatment of the hare serves as the foundation for this dramatic gesture a full five centuries later, then it is to Chardin's eighteenth-century depictions of the same subject that I turn so as to ground firmly the rich evocations of *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (Fig. 2). Through a reading of Chardin's works and the philosophical discussions of the human and animal immortal soul of the same period, it is possible to grasp most fully the complexity of Beuys' performance, at once a commentary on life and death, language, filial relations, and Germany's historical narrative.

Beginning in the late 1720s and continuing into the mid-eighteenth century, Chardin's fixation upon rendering the corpse of the dead hare in painterly terms came to represent a significant number of his works. In an essay on his rabbits, Sarah R. Cohen begins by noting the "blunt materiality" of their forms, where "paint physically stands in for, rather than pictures, the substance of the furry body," indicating that "the broken stabs and scumbles of paint coalesce into an illusion of physical presence" which appears "weighty and tangible" (40-41). There is something vital about Chardin's fur, she claims, which betrays the lifelessness of the hare's body, typically tacked to a wall through a nail in its foot, and sometimes surrounded by other slain animals and hunting elements. For Cohen,

³ All citations from Kuspit denote paragraph numbers.

this painterly vitality, the *trompe l'oeil*⁴ of the hare's fur, is given to the viewer via Chardin's insistence upon depicting the creature's blood. The inclusion of blood in game paintings had, by the eighteenth century, become the standard, enabling the painter to fuse the liquidity of blood and paint in metaphorical terms. Chardin's paint-blood appears "with startling physicality," she writes, "as if the artist had actually been using blood, with its tendency to smear and splatter, instead of oil paint" (41). Chardin's *Hare with Powder Flask and Game Bag* (Fig. 3) is not only splayed open as though already dressed out post-hunt, but is splattered with his own blood—a sort of splattering that, in the case of a real hare and a real hunter, would occur, but that betrays the thickness of oil paint, typically resistant to splattering and dripping.

Not only were Chardin's hares alive in their deadness—they were also put forth before the viewer unapologetically, "bluntly and overtly" (43). Struck by the dramatic nature of their presentation, which she likens to human figural paintings, Cohen wonders "whether Chardin's early training in history painting could have found an implicit expression in these dead animals, their wounded bodies displayed, like those of martyred saints, for our contemplation" (43). In fact, she asserts, in the eighteenth century there was significantly more at stake in viewing the dissected animal corpse. Chardin's martyred hares with their living blood might have been critically engaged with the philosophical debates emerging among figures such as La Mettrie and Descartes, as they explored the tensions between the human and the animal, the living and the dead, by way of a quest for the immortal soul and its relationship to the body and the blood.

⁴ The term *trompe l'oeil* is taken from the French "to deceive the eye" and is understood to be a technique used by painters in which figures on a canvas appear ultra-realistic and three-dimensional, giving the viewer the sense of a tactile engagement by way of a visual experience. There is often understood to be an aura of illusionism about these works.

In the late sixteenth century, depictions of dead animals were implicitly read as metaphors for the human body, owing to the increasing prevalence of the study of comparative anatomy (*The British Medical Journal*). As mounting evidence demonstrated the similarities between the physicality of the human and the animal, those philosophers such as Descartes maintained that it was the immortal and immaterial soul that distinguished man—but as the interior of the body became ever more visible, so too mounted the "anxieties over how such a demonstrably physical substance could house the immortal soul" (45). Descartes could not deny the anatomical relatedness of human and animal, now understood by anatomists of the time as mechanical, but argued that it was man's capacity for speech and reason that could provide evidence to defend the presence of an immortal soul, thus separating the human/spiritual from the animal/mechanical. "For Descartes," writes Cohen, "it was precisely through [the] comparison of human to animal that one could perceive the spiritual distinctiveness of [the] human soul, the spiritual being understood fundamentally as intellectual and the seat of human reason. Animals, by contrast, have a soul that is fully material and identified directly with their blood" (45).

But, if Descartes' animal soul ran in the blood, then Chardin's bloodied hare demands the viewer's critical attention: see, the hare's blood runs red like yours. For an eighteenth-century viewer, this physical reality upset the purely intelligible basis for what distinguished him from those lower forms of life. In death, we all bleed the same blood.

In fact, Cohen cites Elisabeth de Fontenay, who argues that Descartes might have drawn his proclamations from passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, summarizing, "for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof" (45). Descartes' animal soul was ultimately a reworking of that notion, as he reasoned "that the blood of the animal is converted by the heat of the heart into an *esprit* ("animal spirit")

that penetrates into the brain, the nerves, and the muscles" (45). Chardin's opened hares bore testament to the materiality of blood, and emphasized mortality. Questions about the immortal soul, and whether and where it resided, certainly weighed heavily on the minds of his eighteenth-century viewers. As they pondered his martyred hares, remembered images of the martyred Christ-figure, the penultimate immortal soul and his blood shed for them, would most definitely have been called to mind.

When Diderot comments upon Chardin's paintings in the 1760s, he is taken by the substantive nature of them, the way in which Chardin's paint resembled the physical matter of the depicted subject itself. Of his *Jar of Olives*, Diderot declares, "Oh Chardin! It's not white, red, or black pigment that you crush on your palette; it's the very substance of the objects" (48). But if Diderot was captivated by the olives, it is to his *The Ray* that Cohen turns, arguing that his treatment of this corpse is a further extension of the blood/paint metaphor established in his hares: "The actively brushed and scumbled paint used to define fur, scales, and cartilage invites metaphorical comparison with the entrails of the fish, as if Chardin were here announcing painterly substance itself as the "guts" of his own art" (48). The very visceral nature of Chardin's wounded subjects, for Diderot, "affect[ed him] as though [he'd seen] the thing itself" (48). It is this apparent physical reality, Chardin's perceptual trickery, which occasions an exchange between the viewer and the dead animal, a moment of identification between the viewer, the blood running warm in his veins, and the *trompe l'oeil* of the hare's blood on his canvas.

Thus it is in the moment of identification with the dead hare, by way of its woundedness, that the viewer might begin to realize just what is at stake in Chardin's works. His paintings are illustrative of the key philosophical binaries of the eighteenth century: the mortal and the immortal, the divine and the spiritual, the earthly and the mate-

rial. It is in part this distinction between the animal and the human by way of the immortal soul which Beuys dramatizes in *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. If Diderot was touched, so to speak, by the emotional affect aroused in viewing Chardin's olives, then Beuys literally touches the corpse of a dead hare. But like the *trompe l'oeil*, the apparent vitality and physicality of Chardin's hares, Beuys refuses to acknowledge that the hare in his arms is, albeit physically, not consciously present—he continues to speak to it, indeed, explain pictures to it, blatantly disregarding the deafness of death continuing to stroke its fur. But to what does this touch connect Beuys? What is at stake in their moment of exchange?

Beuys' participation in the war left him physically wounded, and his fantastical narrative detailing his rescue by the Tatars of the Crimea after he was shot down established him as at once vulnerable to and indebted to nature—wounded in his fleshly, corporeal reality, he claimed that the Tatars of the Crimea "kept him alive in furs and animal fat" (Al-Aswad 4). In his performance, Beuys returns to fur and questions of woundedness and vulnerability in a gesture that upsets the terms of his rescue narrative—many did not survive the war. His reengagement with the war and this German history of death and destruction was most certainly in part an apologetic gesture, an apology for the role which he had played in contributing to the incredible death toll after WWII, perhaps most directly as regards his fellow soldiers, but significantly also his indirect contribution to the killing of those populations in the death camps. His gesture was one undertaken with great sadness, both a reenactment of mourning for the dead and of the denial of death and his agency in occasioning those deaths in the camps. Despite his years of military service, Beuys was not a Nazi sympathizer, and indeed came to the fore of public attention when he was assaulted while taking part in a performance intended to remember the failed assassination attempt of Hitler (8). His insistence upon touching the hare, whispering into its ear and stroking it as though hoping to soothe it, to ease its pain

and suffering (of course, already eased by the release of death), quite literally implicated his hands, as though at once asking what role his unwilling (but complicit) hands had played in eliciting those deaths, and making a mockery of the act of apology—it was too late to apologize, to touch the dead hare's fur. Beuys was a failed Pygmalion who refused to acknowledge his impotence—during the war his hands had been hands that brought death, not animation, and although his touch was softer now, it could not bring the hare (nor a human population) back to life.

But, there is something more at stake in Beuys' gesture than an apology. If Descartes emphasized the stratification of the animal and the human so as to assert the primacy of the latter, Beuys' return to the war by way of the wounded animal engaged with the other side of the eighteenth century debate about the immortality of the soul. For La Mettrie, man was, in his fundamental essence, of the same substance as his animal other. "Man is not moulded from a more precious clay [than animals];" he writes, "nature has only used one and the same dough, merely changing the yeast" (Cohen 50). If this assertion at once recalls the Judeo-Christian narrative of Creation, it also reiterates the humanness of the blood in Chardin's paintings—the same glimmering, thick red blood that dotted Chardin's canvas, if it was to La Mettrie's words that viewers turned, was also the viewer's own—the hare's mortality was his own mortality, and the question of the immortal soul is just as impossible to answer from the corpse of a hare as from that of a human.

Chardin's use of an animal's body to stake his claims about the physicality of death might have been, then, in La Mettrie's terms, an attempt to return to the foundation of life, to its very origins in the earth. In the National Socialist years in Germany, a similar call to return to earthy origins was made, claiming a philosophy of "Blut und Boden," a call to nationalism that emphasized racial purity and German heritage as relating German blood fundamentally to the

country's very soil. On the one hand indebted to the Creation in Genesis, the formation of man from the dust of the ground, it also thus remembered the innocence of man in the moment of his creation, before the taint of sin and evil. But Beuys reopens the latter half of the Creation myth, perverted during the National Socialist years, revealing that the blood formed of the earth is also to be returned the same earth. In their Blut-und-Boden racial purges, the Germans returned the blood of millions to the soil from which it—and, Beuys reiterates, that of every man—first came. Returning to Chardin's lowly hare, Beuys takes it up in his arms. Beuys' hare is Chardin's in its physical, anatomical humanity, but beyond that, it is also the martyred hare, the one whose blood was shed to remind a people of their mortality—and in the Christian tradition, to guarantee their common transcendent immortality, thanks to the shedding of Christ's martyred blood. If Descartes' animal soul had its origins in Leviticus, Beuys reengagement with the animal and thus, by way of La Mettrie, the human soul, was also a reengagement with the first fathers of Judaism, and a legacy of ancestry and inheritance. What had man, specifically the Germans, learned from their Fathers?

In the legacy of post-World War Two Germany, the paternal legacy of bloodshed was not far in the past—left to them by their fathers was the not-so-distant memory of the First World War, and the horror of the blood shed in trenches. Beuys, cradling the hare in his arms like a somber parent, again engages with what had then become a much more frightening question about legacy and inheritance—what had the generation of World War Two soldiers, sympathizers, and bystanders left for their children? Beuys' apparent inability to accept the hare in his arms as dead affirms that a generation had forgotten the fragility of human life, and the promise that "from dust you were created and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Having his own share in this returning-to-dust, Beuys acknowledges his hands as impotent to create, and although he at

once reveals himself to be a survivor, left to mourn the mass tragedy, also affirms his own mortality; he, too, will return to dust. This time not as the literally immortal Christ, but as an emblem for the immortally-repetitive nature of bloodshed, Beuys' hare asks a generation of new Fathers what they have left to their children. The immortal history of violence and human misunderstanding begged, then, for a new immortality—the immortality of memory, of a responsibility to not allow the past to fall into the silence of literal death and figurative forgottenness. But how does a generation communicate such a horrifying legacy? Beuys' gesture testifies to the insufficiency of words to explain or atone, as they literally fall upon deaf (read: dead) ears.

But, for an audience in Beuys' gallery watching this uncanny scene, his words are similarly inaudible. What is left to them is little more than the sight of this pathetic spectacle. For the hare, Beuys' soft touch, his voice low as a mother's in a nursery, has come too late. But maybe not for us. If Chardin's viewers identified with his hare because of the baseness of its blood, a sight that at once invoked the viewer's sense of a tangible reality, Beuys' also re-invokes the realm of the tangible, and for his viewers, then, a sort of pre-lingual, rather than semiotic, relationship.

Like Diderot, La Mettrie engages with the emotional component of matter, bringing an emotional touch to the physical touch, concluding, as Cohen paraphrases, that "in matter is feeling, and in feeling is life" (51). In La Mettrie's terms, there was a "language of feeling," more basic than spoken language, which was common to man and to animals: a language of "moans, cries, caresses, flight, sighs, song, in a word all the expressions of pain, sadness, aversion, fear, daring, submission, anger, pleasure, joy, tenderness" (51).

Beuys' dead hare is, of course, at once his animal other, and at once his historical other. The dead hare on his lap immediately evokes

the man/nature binary, but for a German audience, also evokes that historical slaughterhouse of the Holocaust. Similarly, Beuys' linguistic engagement with the hare is first La Mettrie's language of feeling. He begins the performance with the hare in his arms, touching its foot to the surface of each painting. If it is his capacity for language and reason which distinguishes man from his animal counterparts, Beuys demonstrates that the first relationship between himself and his hare is a shared pre-lingual engagement with physical touch and the visual surface of a picture. However, this intention, the significance that Beuys perceives in these paintings, might be misunderstood by the hare, and thus Beuys proceeded to explain, verbally, each image. Relating to a larger historical misunderstanding, which caused the National Socialists to target the Jewish population for the downfalls of the German nation, Beuys' framing of each pre-lingual message in symbolic, communicable, linguistic terms, bears witness to a larger historical and cultural misunderstanding—that which precedes a shared language. It is the misunderstanding between the Nazi party and an extinguished population, an antagonism beyond words. But if words were insufficient to prevent a misunderstanding, how could they possibly apologize, or prevent another?

In those years following the war, Adorno's proclamation about the fitness of the German language for the realm of the aesthetic rang in the ears of the German people: "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (Rothberg 46). In postwar Austria and Germany, writers Ingeborg Bachmann, Thomas Bernhard, and Paul Celan were exploring the possibilities left to their haunted language, fearing the looming presence of a sort of "everyday fascism" that hung heavily in every word. For Bachmann, the inheritance of language from generation to generation was a duplication of other inherited histories—if the ghosts of the Holocaust, and perhaps even the impetus for those events, rested in the very words of her language, then the

historical responsibility to that troubled past was doubly inherited by the generation born after the war.

La Mettrie hypothesized that if animals possessed that fundamental capacity to communicate, then it might be possible "with the right training... to teach monkeys our own, human language, thus dissolving the difference between them and us" (52). Invoking the language of inheritance almost two centuries before Bachmann, he postulates language as its own artform and declares that "art... is the child of nature, and nature must have long preceded it" (52). If La Mettrie could erase the distance between humans and animals, certainly humans could erase the distances between one another. So perhaps Beuys' performance takes every step in the right order—although too late for the hare, it is not too late for his audience.

Chardin ends his series of hares with *A Rabbit, Two Thrushes and Some Straw on a Stone Table* (Fig. 4). The painting is his ultimate evocation of the relationship between human and animal, life and death, locating both at their origins and ends simultaneously. "The positioning of the rabbit," remarks Cohen, "suggests not just the still finality of death but also, in its fetal curve, the sleep that imitates life in the mammalian womb" (55). Although there is no mistaking that the hare in this painting is dead (as hares most certainly do not sleep on their sides), the eerily fetal positioning of its body establishes a powerful relationship between its corpse and the human viewer. The fetal-hare emblemizes the Christian death in life (the dirt of the ground from which we all were made, and the sense of awaiting our imminent return to the same dust), and it is the promise of life in death (the promise of the transcendent immortal soul). Significantly, this hare is not bloodied. Its body is fully intact like the hare in Beuys' arms; perhaps if we could reach out and touch its glossy fur, it would awaken. Chardin's painting gains its significance from the power of human denial, the inability to accept the animal as dead—similarly, Beuys' insistence upon speaking to his hare is

our gentle prodding of Chardin's painted hare—the hope that it might awaken, that we could take back the moment of death.

Beuys' introduction of speech to this gesture adds another layer of absurdity. His vain attempt declares to a German audience that neither their words nor their gentle touch can reclaim a population from the earth to which they've returned. His words are the language of the Father in a Biblical sense, who revealed all men to have had their origins in the same dust, and simultaneously guaranteed that all men share in the same ultimate fate. They are the words of Beuys' father, and the generations before, who failed to recognize the growing distance between our words and our understanding—that "Blut und Boden" came to mean racial purity rather than likeness and equality. They are the words of Beuys himself and generations to come, who must find a new way to speak to each other, and to their children. For Beuys, his performative gesture in itself was already a way of bringing the dead back into the realm of the living. Like Chardin, Beuys "show[s] the wound we inflicted on ourselves in the course of our development," associating language and himself as a living speaker with death and incommunicability, explanation with misunderstanding (Suquet 149).⁵ It is to his artistic fathers, Chardin and Dürer, that Beuys turns when he picks up a hare to beg his own questions about inheritance and legacy. Of Chardin, why did he slay Dürer's hare? Only to prove that its blood looked like his? Of himself, Beuys asks, why did I slay the hare? His fathers left him the legacy of World War I, and not having seen the blood red on his own hands, Beuys, too, would play a part in another catastrophe of human sacrifice. Beuys performs his moment of identification with death and mortality, perhaps hoping beyond all hope that it will be sufficient proof of death and despair for subsequent generations. *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* is Beuys' proclamation that biological death, albeit an end to a life in itself, should

⁵ Beuys's quote, as quoted in Leeb: ("Josephy Beuys" (interview). *Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne*, no. 4. Paris—as quoted by Annie Suquet.

not also bring an end to memory and communication, both spoken and felt. "[A]ll things are connected—plants, animals, the earth ... man," he asserts (Suquet 150).⁶ This connection is Beuys' immortality in which we all share, and it is up to us to determine what we will contribute to mankind's timeless legacy.

Appendix of Images

Editor's note: Due to copyright laws, we are unable to print these images here. They are, however, available in a PDF file on our website, www.haverford.edu/bodytext. (You will need to login with a Haverford user name and password in order to access the file.) Alternatively, the figures are identified below with their ARTstor ID numbers so that you might look them up online. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Figure 1. Albrecht Dürer, *A Young Hare*. 1502. ARTstor Collection, ID # 40-13-02/37.

Figure 2. Joseph Beuys, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. 1965. ARTstor Collection, ID # STFig32_48SWAT.

Figure 3. Jean- Siméon Chardin, *Dead Hare with Powder Flask and Game-bag*. 1730. ARTstor Collection, ID # 40-12-16/16.

Figure 4. Jean- Siméon Chardin, *Hare, Two Dead Thrushes, a Few Stalks of Straw on a Stone Table*. c. 1750. ARTstor Collection, ID # 40-12-16/22.

⁶ Beuys's quote, as quoted in Goldcymer and Reithman: "Le dernier space avec introspecteur" (interview). *Art Press* 58—as quoted by Annie Suquet.

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